Fear of failure Among Young Elite Athletes

By

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Abstract

Fear of failure has negative psychological and physiological effects on children in achievement settings. Perceiving the consequences of failure to be aversive provides the basis for fear of failure, and the anticipation of threatening outcome elicits fear. This thesis focuses on investigating fear of failure in the sport domain, specifically among young elite athletes. The first study (chapter 4) examined young athletes' (n=9; ages 14-17 years) perceptions of the consequences of failure, the effects of fear of failure on them, and their coping responses to the effects of fear of failure. Data analysis revealed that the most commonly perceived aversive consequences of failure were diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, and the emotional cost of failure. Fear of failure affected the athletes' well-being, interpersonal relationships, schoolwork, and sporting performance. They employed a combination of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance-focused coping strategies, the latter being the most frequently reported strategy.

Study 2 (chapter 5) aimed to examine the developmental origins of fear of failure among young elite athletes. Three intact families of young elite athletes (ages 13-14 years) volunteered to participate in this study. Data analysis revealed three mechanisms of fear of failure transmission: parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations. The athletes and their parents reported common fears of failure, such as fears of negative judgment, of not attaining aspirations, of losing ranking, and of non-selection to future competitions. The study provided evidence to support an intergenerational transmission of fear of failure from parents to young elite athletes through recurrent patterns of parent-child interaction.

The third and final study (chapter 6) designed an intervention programme whose primary aim was to reduce young elite athletes' (n=6, ages 13-15 years) fear of failure levels through parental training, and its secondary aim was to reduce their parents' fears of their child's failure. The intervention comprised two separate educational programmes. The first programme offered the parents (6 couples) a one-off educational seminar (Study 3a) and the second programme offered a young elite athlete and her parents ten weekly one-to-one intervention sessions (Study 3b). Both programmes aimed to teach parents about fear of failure and about their role in the development of their child's FF, specifically addressing issues of parent-child communication and interaction. Cognitive-behavioural therapy provided the framework for the intervention. Findings from both programmes showed that the parents reduced their punitive behaviours and adopted more favourable ways of reacting

to their child's failures. Both programmes showed that the athletes' and parents' fear of failure levels had decreased post-intervention. Avoidance motivation goals also decreased for most of the athletes.

This research extends our knowledge on the FF phenomenon in the youth sport context, where research on FF has been greatly neglected. It provides the first scientific documentation of young elite athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure, the effects of fear of failure on them, and their coping responses to these effects. It also provides the first evidence to support intergenerational transmission of fear of failure from parents to young elite athletes; thus, implicating parents in the developmental origins of fear of failure in young elite athletes. The intervention programme offers the first documented scientific programme designed to reduce fear of failure levels of young elite athletes and their parents, thus, enhancing our knowledge about the treatment of FF. The findings of this research can be used to inform assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of fear of failure in sport. A better understanding of the fear of failure phenomenon in sport will enable sport psychologists to enhance young athletes' performances, well-being, and social development.

Conference Presentations Resulting From This Thesis

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Sagar, S.S., Lavallee, D. & Spray, C.M. (May, 2006). "'We played....We won....We lost': Examining parental sporting involvement through language". Paper presented at The 2nd International Conference for Qualitative Research in Sport & Exercise, Liverpool, UK

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter overview:

This chapter presents an introduction to my PhD research. It begins with a section on the background to my research (section 1.1). This is followed by a section that outlines the rationale for my research and the aims of each of the three studies that I have undertaken (section 1.2). The chapter ends with an overview of my thesis, offering a summary of the content of each chapter (section 1.3).

1.1 Research Background

Fear of failure is prominent in both sexes and across levels of actual and perceived ability (Covington, 1992; Elliot, 1999). The prevalence of problems associated with FF in achievement settings (e.g., substance abuse, eating disorders, classroom struggle, health problems, performance decrement, dropout; e.g., Anshel, 1991; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003; Orlick, 1974) highlights an important social concern (Conroy, 2001a). To date, research on FF has been conducted primarily in academic (e.g., Martin & Marsh, 2003; Schouwenburg, 1992; Thompson, 1997) and business environments (e.g., Fried-Buchalter, 1997; Zaleznik, 1963) but has been greatly neglected in sport, despite sport representing one of the most significant achievement domains for children (Roberts, 1984; Treasure, 2001).

Success and failure are aspects of competitive sport and most youth sport participants view winning as important and desirable (Passer, 1984). It is, therefore, not surprising that win-loss outcomes influence children's emotional state post-competition (e.g., after losing they experience high levels of anxiety and dissatisfaction with their performance and less enjoyment; Passer, 1988). Losing is the most potent situational source of post-competitive stress. Many children interpret a win as a standard for success, thus, losing becomes a threat and, accordingly, is defined as failure (Scanlan, 1984). If success and failure are so defined, the experience of failure can be pervasive since at least half of the competitors at any given competition suffer defeat. Passer (1984) contended that children also perceive success to represent the quality of the performance. Others suggested that feelings of success and failure are based on perceptions of whether one's goals are achieved or not (Maehr & Nicholls, 1980), and on perceptions of personal accomplishment and standard of excellence

(either self- or sport-imposed; McAuley, 1985). Thus, perceptions of success and failure are determined by performance outcome (i.e., winning or losing), the quality of the performance, meeting one's goals, and achieving standard of excellence.

Concerns about performance failure and negative social evaluation are the most prevalent sources of worry for athletes (e.g., Passer, 1983; Martens, Vealey, & Burton, 1990). Worries about process (e.g., not playing well, making mistakes) and outcome (e.g., losing, criticism from parents and coaches) contribute to FF among children participating in sport (Passer, 1983). Researchers have reported that FF and fear of social evaluation were predominant sources of worry for most young athletes (e.g., Feltz & Albrecht, 1986; Gould, Horn, & Spreeman, 1983; Passer, 1983; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984).

Ignoring the problems associated with FF can have negative outcomes for children in achievement settings because they might continue to experience distress in such settings (Conroy, 2001a). This distress can lead to performance decrements and frustration over the discrepancy between their potential and actual performance and can detract from the quality of their experience. Eventually this learnt negative association (i.e., associating distress with achievement activity) can serve as a barrier to their future participation in achievement activities. Such children might be disadvantaged from the beginning because early performance levels often determine later achievement opportunities (Conroy 2001a). Moreover, effects of FF will continue and may become worse over time. Therefore, by reducing children's FF we can help enhance their performances, experiences in achievement activities, and their well-being; thereby, reducing the problems associated with high FF. The important role of sport in children's lives places sport psychologists in a good position to contribute not only to young people's sporting performance but also to the quality of their lives and their social development.

1.2 Research Rationale and Aims

Based on a review of the existing literature on FF (chapter 2), three issues led to the development of my research. First, research has documented prevalence of problems attributed to FF in achievement settings (e.g., Anshel, 1991; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003; Orlick, 1974). Secondly, sport is a popular and a significant achievement setting for children and adolescents (Roberts, 1984; Treasure, 2001), where winning is important and is the typical demand (Passer, 1988). Thirdly, there is a lack of research on FF among this population, particularly among young elite athletes. Accordingly, the focus of my research was to investigate FF among young elite athletes who typically perform in

competitions (nationally and internationally) that are in public arenas and whose performances are regularly evaluated by selectors (or judges) and the public, where failure can have adverse consequences for them. Elite level athletes invest substantial time in their sport and the results of their performances can have a potent outcome on their lives and future sporting careers (Conroy, Poczwardowski, & Henschen, 2001). As such, failure can be perceived a threat and evoke FF. Moreover, it is likely that young athletes competing at the elite level will fear failure because sport is a highly competitive domain where the increasing pressure to win and to achieve top performance can bring with it an increase in FF among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Therefore, the focus of my research was to investigate FF in sport, specifically among young elite athletes.

My initial study (Study 1, chapter 3) represents the first endeavour to examine FF in the sport domain among young elite athletes. This study sought to ascertain the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes (because beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure provide the basis for FF; Birney, Burdick, & Teevan, 1969; Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002), to examine the effects that FF have on such athletes, and to find out how they coped with the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences can induce prior to competition.

My second study (chapter 4) aimed to examine the developmental origins of FF among young elite athletes. Achievement motivation theorists have long asserted that the motive to avoid failure (i.e., FF) is socially learnt during childhood between ages 5 and 9 years (e.g., McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). Parents have been implicated in the development of FF due to their primary caregiver role and attachment (e.g., Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). However, despite the conceptual and applied importance of the FF construct, surprisingly little research has been conducted on its developmental origins. Recently, researchers in education have provided evidence to support an intergenerational transmission of FF (Elliot & Thrash, 2004). To date, however, researchers have not examined the origins of FF within the youth sport context, consequently, the mechanisms of FF transmission within the sport context are not yet known.

My third study (chapter 5) was designed to extend and apply findings from studies 1 and 2. These studies recommended the development of intervention programmes to educate parents about causes of and contributors to FF development in young elite athletes. As such, the primary aim of this study was to intervene in parent-child interaction in order to reduce FF levels among young elite athletes, and its secondary aim was to reduce parents'

own fear of their child's failure. An educational programme was designed to teach parents about FF and about their role in the development of FF in their child-athlete, addressing issues of parental socialisation and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. The programme sought to help parents improve the quality of their interaction with their children and, thereby, to reduce children's levels of FF; such an educational programme can possibly help over time to reduce the transmission of FF from parents to child and the development of FF among young athletes. The intervention comprised two programmes, which were delivered concurrently over ten weeks. The first programme (Study 3a) offered parents (6 couples) of young elite athletes (ages 13-15 years) a one-off educational seminar, and the second programme (Study 3b) offered a young elite athlete and her parents ten weekly one-to-one intervention sessions.

An educational programme was designed to teach parents about FF and about their role in the development of FF in their child-athlete, addressing issues of parental socialization and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. The programme sought to help parents improve the quality of their interaction with their children and, thereby, to reduce children's levels of FF. Cognitive-behavioural techniques were deemed helpful to challenge and reduce the strength of beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure, which provides the basis for FF, thereby reducing the levels both of the athletes' FF and their parents' fear for their child's failure.

My PhD research represents one of the first endeavours to investigate FF among young elite athletes. Accordingly, it provides the first scientific documentation of young elite athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure, the effects that FF have on such athletes, and their coping responses to the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences can induce prior to competitions. Examining the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF within the sport domain offers the first insight into the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes. Finally, the intervention programme offers the first documented programme designed to reduce FF levels of young elite athletes and their parents. Therefore, this research extends our knowledge and enhances our understanding of the FF phenomenon in youth sport context where research on FF has been greatly neglected. Moreover, it can be used to inform the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of FF in sport.

1.3 Overview of The Thesis

This section presents an overview of the thesis. It includes a summary of the content of chapters 2-7.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature.

In this chapter, I review relevant theories of FF and report findings from selected studies that have investigated FF. The chapter outlines the evolution of FF research from the 1930's to date, examines FF theories from the achievement motivation and the anxiety perspectives, and explains the existing two multidimensional models of FF.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Inquiry- Epistemology, Paradigms, and Methodology.

This chapter explains the rationale for employing a qualitative method of inquiry in my PhD research. It outlines epistemology, paradigms and methodology, and explains the theoretical frameworks of constructionism, interpretivism and symbolism interactionism that guided my research. The chapter also discusses evaluative criteria in qualitative research, including issues of trustworthiness, credibility of data, objectivity, and reflexivity. Finally, it discusses computer assisted qualitative data analysis, focusing on the use of QSR NUD*IST in my research.

Chapter 4: Study 1- Fear of Failure Among Young Elite Athletes: An Exploratory Study.

My first two studies (1a and 1b) are presented in this chapter. These studies examined a group of young elite athletes. Each study is presented in its entirety; including introduction, method, results, and discussion sections. The studies are entitled: "Why young elite athletes fear failure: Consequences of Failure" (Study 1a), and "Coping with the effects of fear of failure: An examination of young elite athletes" (Study 1b).

Chapter 5: Study 2- The Developmental Origins of Fear of Failure in Young Elite Athletes: Examining Intergenerational Transmission of Fear of Failure.

This chapter presents my second study, which investigated the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes. The chapter begins by reviewing research on intergenerational transmission, socialisation, and parental expectations, involvement, and controlling behaviour. It then presents and discusses separately the findings ascertained from each of the three participating families of young elite athletes.

Chapter 6: Study 3- Intervention Programme to Reduce the Fear of Failure of Young
        Elite Athletes and Their Parents.

This chapter presents my third study, which aimed to design an intervention programme to reduce the FF of young elite athletes and their parents. The chapter outlines the approach-avoidance achievement motivation model (Elliot & Church, 1997) and cognitive-behavioural therapy, which was employed as a framework for the intervention. This study was divided into two intervention programmes that were delivered concurrently. One programme was entitled: "Reducing young elite athletes' FF through parental education" (Study 3a), and the other, "One-to-one intervention to reduce the FF of a young elite athlete and her parents" (Study 3b). Each programme and its outcomes are presented and discussed separately.

Chapter 7: General summary, discussion, and conclusions.

This final chapter offers a summary and a general discussion of the research in this thesis. Thus, it offers a complete picture of the FF phenomenon among young elite athletes, as established by my PhD research: understanding young athletes' perceptions of the aversive consequences of failure; their coping with the effects of FF; the developmental origins of FF; and an intervention to reduce the FF of young athletes and their parents. This chapter begins with a general summary section, encompassing two sub-sections: a summary of the research background, rationale and aims; and a summary of studies. This is followed by a general discussion section that discusses the main findings from each of the three studies. The next section, entitled 'research contribution', outlines the contribution of my PhD research to scientific research and theory and to applied practice. It also makes recommendations for future research on FF. The chapter ends with a conclusions section.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Fear of Failure

Chapter overview:

In this chapter, I review the relevant fear of failure (FF) literature. I review theories of FF and report findings from pertinent studies that have investigated FF. The chapter begins with a section introducing FF and the nature of fear (section 2.1). The following section (section 2.2) outlines the evolution of FF research from the 1930's to date. As researchers have examined FF from two perspectives, achievement motivation and anxiety, this section encompasses subsections on early FF research, achievement motivation research and FF, and anxiety research and FF. In the following section I review two multidimensional models of FF (section 2.3). The chapter ends with a summary of the literature reviewed (section 2.4) and with a section that explains the aims and rationale of my PhD research and establishes its focus and identifies its location within the existing FF literature (section 2.5).

2.1 Introducing Fear of Failure

Within the achievement motivation literature, FF has been defined as the motive to *avoid failure in achievement settings (e.g., McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953 &* 1958). As such, FF represents an avoidance-based achievement motive. To date, FF has been studied largely in academic settings (e.g., Guyton, Corbin, Zimmer, et al., 1989; Martin & Marsh, 2003; Schouwenburg, 1992; Thompson, 1997) and in business environments (e.g., Fried-Buchalter, 1997; Zaleznik, 1963) and was classified into two broad categories: fears relating to academic or intellectual failure, and fears relating to interpersonal failure (Golden, 1987).

Fear of failure presents a great emotional burden for children and adults and many aspects of their lives are vulnerable to and affected by FF. Children learn (through verbal and non-verbal communications) that successful performance brings added affection and approval, whereas failure can lead to their withdrawal; so children place a high priority on not failing. This adaptation leads to experiencing stress, performance decrements, frustration and detraction from the quality of experiences, and eventually serving as a

barrier to future participation in achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a). Gifted children are believed to be especially vulnerable to experiencing FF (Adderhodt, 1991).

Researchers have associated high FF levels with a prevalence of problems. For example, it was associated with childhood depression, anxiety (Singh, 1992), anorexia nervosa (Weeda, Winney & Drop, 1985), clinical headache disorders (Passchier, Van der Helm & Orlebeke, 1984), high attention seeking (Singh, 1992), and academic cheating (Monte & Fish, 1987). Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) proposed that students who fear failure are more likely to adopt avoidance achievement goals. These goals represent high FF and low competence expectancies and are focused on a potential negative outcome. They reported that avoidance goal orientation in academic domain mediated outcomes such as, decreased satisfaction with academic progress, decreased grades, decreased subjective well-being (e.g., self-esteem, personal control, vitality, life satisfaction; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997), and decreased intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Harackiewick, 1996; Elliot & Church, 1997). In sport, limited research has associated FF with athletic stress (Gould, Horn & Spreeman, 1983), burnout and turnover among sport umpires (Taylor, Daniel, Leith & Burke, 1990; Rainey, 1995a & 1995b; Stewart & Ellery, 1998), youth dropout, barriers to sport participation (Orlick, 1974), and drug abuse by athletes (Anshel, 1991).

The prevalence of the negative effects of FF in achievement settings highlights an important social concern (Conroy, 2001a). To date, unfortunately, research on FF has been greatly neglected in sport, despite the fact that sport represents a significant achievement domain for children and adolescents (Roberts, 1984; Treasure, 2001) and that the increasing pressure to achieve top sporting performances can bring with it an increase in FF among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Therefore, the focus of my PhD research was to investigate FF in sport, specifically, among young elite athletes.

2.1.1 The Nature of Fear

Fear is usually thought of as a subjective emotion confined to the human psyche. It is an emotion that is generally viewed as a state of mind or of feeling that has antecedents in the environment that leads to certain causal consequences in behaviour (Gray, 1987). Watson's theory (1924) of fear proposed that the innate stimuli (those that cause fear without special learning) for fear is limited to loud noises, sudden loss of support and pain, and that all other stimuli producing fear are the result of a form of learning; referred to as "classical

conditioning". Classical conditioning is important in the genesis of fear as it contributes to the attainment of the capacity to elicit fear.

Fear, like other emotions (e.g., hate, anger, joy, shame, guilt), represents a reaction to "reinforced events"; these are reward and punishment and include the removal of a reward or the failure of an expected punishment to occur (Gray, 1987). Thus, fear is an emotional reaction to the threat of punishment, where punishment is defined as "any stimulus, which one will work to terminate, escape or avoid" (Gray, 1987, p. 3). Many conditions, therefore, can give rise to fear. Gray proposed three consequence behaviour of fear when faced (humans and animals) with punishment or the threat of punishment: freeze (keeping still and silent); flight or fight; or learn something new that will terminate the danger or keep us out of the dangerous situation in the future.

Gray (1987) proposed two kinds of fear-motivated behaviours: "active avoidance", where individuals learn new ways (or behaviours) that enables them to avoid punishment, and "passive avoidance", where individuals abandon the desired activity because it is followed by a punishment. In the passive avoidance behaviour, the individual has to choose between approaching and avoiding a particular activity. This is known as the "approach-avoidance conflict", which is a common conflict in people's lives. Approach is stimulated by incentive motivation whereas passive avoidance is stimulated by fear. Similarly, Lazarus and Averill (1972) also suggested that fear-related emotions might be expressed openly in avoidance behaviour or involve other ways of coping such as denial, repression and intellectualisation.

2.2 The Evolution of Fear of Failure Research

2.2.1 Early Fear of Failure Research

The conception of FF as a stable personality trait has its historical roots in clinical problems such as anxiety, guilt, shame and feeling of inferiority. Later, the FF concept was studied in Level of Aspiration research, which was at its highest during the 1930's and 1940's. This research suggested that success and failure depended on attainment or non-attainment of the level of aspiration (or goals). For example, Frank (1935) concluded that feelings of failure were aroused by non-attainment of one's level of aspiration. He suggested that people who consistently set their level of aspiration below their actual performance (i.e., ability) did so in order to avoid the experience of failure. Although this conclusion was based on the observation on one participant and was analytical rather than

empirical, it remained the basic principle of level of aspiration research. Haussman (1933) attempted to establish a connection between personality and the differences between performance and aspiration level. He was one of the first researchers to describe the goal-setting behaviour of people that we now conceive as FF. Although his study suffered from several weaknesses (e.g., it did not determine whether the goal-setting of the high FF participants would have been negative or positive goal discrepancy scores, it was not possible to compare the nature of the goal-setting in his study to the goal setting in other Level of Aspiration studies, the study used six participants only) and his conclusions were considered only tentative, his methodology became a model for the Level of Aspiration research.

Gould (1939) obtained goal-discrepancy scores for six different tasks. She reported that participants with low discrepancy scores appeared to be fearful of failure, anticipated decrease in their performance levels, and considered performance increases as flukes. She suggested that high discrepancy scores could also be an expression of failure fears and that the desire to avoid failure could produce high or low estimates and that these were merely different ways of coping with the problem; thus, FF attitude could characterise those with low and high discrepancy scores. Similarly, Sears (1940) reported that participants with high discrepancy scores appeared to be unresponsive and inflexible and reacted to failure by becoming apathetic. The studies of Gould (1939) and of Sears (1940) suggest the goal-setting patterns function as interpersonal strategies. People who set their goals (or aspirations) below their actual performances may not be doing so in order to avoid failure, as was previously assumed (e.g., Frank, 1935), but to present themselves as modest people. In contrast, those who set their goals above their actual performances may want to impress others with their self-confidence. Hence, while early researchers claimed that individuals who fear failure set their goals lower or higher than their actual ability (Gould, 1939; Sears, 1940), later researchers suggested that such individuals engage in both goals (Rotter, 1954; Mahone, 1960).

It is difficult to fully comprehend the FF phenomenon from this early Level of Aspiration research as it suffered from methodological problems, such as using small sample size, the type of questioned asked, and not standardising the tasks given and the questions asked. Also, goal discrepancy scores varied with the questions asked and the inter-correlation among the answers was not perfect (Birney, Burkdick & Teevan, 1969). Another problem with that early research was the difficulty to interpret the goal discrepancy scores. Finally, the research lacked an independent measure of success and failure

orientation, instead it used goal-setting as an indication of success and failure attitude. The researchers assumed that low goal-setters were fearful of failure and, therefore, low goal-setting was a way for them to avoid failure. In the absence of an independent measure of FF, their conclusions regarding the relationship between FF and goal-setting were intuitive rather than objective (Birney et al., 1969). Interest in FF research revived again in the 1950's and 1960's by achievement motivation researchers.

2.2.2 Achievement Motivation Research and Fear of Failure

The two predominant early achievement motivation theories that linked achievement motivation and FF were conceptualised by McClelland and Atkinson and their colleagues in the 1950's and 1960's (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953 & 1958; Atkinson, 1964). Recently, Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewick, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 1999) offered contemporary achievement motivation theories that also connected FF and achievement motivation. Each of these approaches, the early and the contemporary, will be outlined below.

- *Early achievement motivation theories and fear of failure*

McClelland and Atkinson and their colleagues (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953 & 1958; Atkinson, 1964; Atkinson & Feather, 1966) viewed FF as an important influence on achievement behaviour and, accordingly, advocated that an adequate understanding of achievement behaviour must include failure and achievement motivation. Their research sought to understand whether individuals approach success or avoid failure and with what intensity and persistence. Affects that are involved in achievement situations are central to their conception of FF. The tendency to react with anxiety to FF was viewed as reducing motivation to engage in achievement activities, and concerns or anxiety about evaluation was a central theme of a number of their achievement motivation theories.

McClelland et al.'s (1953) theory of achievement motivation, which is the most widely cited, views achievement motivation as a stable personality trait. That is, high achievers tend to strive for success in almost any situation that is interpreted as achievement related, while low achievers tend to avoid achievement-related situations. Accordingly, they proposed two achievement orientations: one that orients individuals towards the attainment of success (need achievement; nAch motive) and one that orients individuals to seek the avoidance of failure in achievement settings (because one feels shame upon failure; FF motive). Thus, they conceptualised need for achievement and FF as two separate motive

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dispositions and, therefore, proposed approach and avoidance motivation as independent tendencies (or components) of achievement motivation. They viewed FF as a dispositional tendency (personality trait) in terms of a capacity to anticipate negative affects in achievement or evaluative situations. Achievement motives like FF, they suggested, are socialised during childhood between the ages of 5 and 9 years (Atkinson, 1957; McClelland, 1958).

The need for achievement theory was originally proposed by Murray (1938) but investigated extensively by McClelland and his colleagues. This research sought to explain the social determinant of the high- versus low-need achievers personality. Need for achievement describes a strong desire to accomplish goals and attain a high standard of performance and personal fulfilment (McClelland et al., 1953). McClelland et al. proposed that it is the desire to do well relative to a standard of excellence that motivates individuals to seek "success in competition with a standard of excellence". Standards of excellence encompass competitions with the self (e.g., running a race in a personal best time), competitions with a task (e.g., writing a good essay), or competition against others (e.g., winning a competition). Standards of excellence activate the need for achievement because they provide a highly meaningful arena for evaluating one's competence level.

McClelland et al. (1953) asserted that FF is an important variable that interacts with need achievement. People with high need for achievement often undertake tasks in which there is a reasonable probability of success, and avoid tasks that are either too easy (because of lack of challenge) or too difficult (because of FF). Furthermore, those with high need for achievement tend to attribute their performance to internal factors (e.g., ability, effort) while those with low need for achievement tend to attribute their performance to external factors (e.g., luck, ease of task).

Atkinson (1957, 1964) argued that need for achievement only partly predicted achievement behaviour and, therefore, offered a theory that encompassed four variables, achievement behaviour and its three predictors: nAch (the strength of one's nAch; motive to succeed), probability of success or failure (the strength of the perceived probability), and incentive value associated with success or failure at the task. Thus, achievement behaviour depends on individuals' need for achievement, their perceived probability of attaining success or failure at the task, and their incentive value for succeeding or failing at that task. Atkinson viewed probability of success and incentive value for succeeding as contextual variables that are situationally determined. Thus, some tasks have high probabilities for success and some have low probabilities, and some offer greater incentive for success than

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others (for example, each module in a degree course has its own probability of success and its own incentive value for success. Obtaining a high grade in a module that one considers important is valued more than obtaining a high grade in a module that one considers unimportant). Atkinson postulated that the uncertainty of the situational outcome provokes FF.

Atkinson (1957, 1964) stated that although people are motivated by attaining standards of excellence and need for achievement, they are also motivated to avoid failure. He defined the motive to avoid failure as "a disposition to avoid failure and or a capacity for experiencing shame or humiliation as a consequence of failure" (Atkinson, 1966; p. 13). Thus, individuals fear experiencing the shame and humiliation that accompany failure. Achievement behaviour, he contended, exists as a balance between the emotions and beliefs underlying the tendency to approach success and the emotions and beliefs underlying the tendency to avoid failure. Thus, people feel excitement and hope and anticipate the pride of achieving standards of excellence (e.g., high grade, winning a competition) and at the same can feel anxiety and fear and anticipate the shame of possible failure. Atkinson (1966) conceptualised need for achievement as a force within the person to seek out achievement situations, and the motive to avoid failure as a force within the person that escape from (or feel anxious) achievement situations. Thus, taking on any achievement task involves entering into a risk-taking dilemma in which the person struggles to find a balance between the attraction of hope, pride, and social respect, against the unattraction of fear, shame, and social humiliation. When the need for achievement motive (or the motive to achieve success) is greater than the motive to avoid failure, then the person will engage in the task (to test personal competence against the standard of excellence). However, when the motive to avoid failure is greater than the need for achievement, then the person will avoid engaging in the task. Hence, Atkinson's theory treats achievement behaviour as a choice to accept and approach a task (or a standard of excellence) or reject and avoid it.

Similarly, Atkinson and Feather (1966) proposed that achievement behaviour is dependent on a variety of factors in the individual such as, perceptions of task difficulty, attributions about success and failure, and the level of anxiety that the individual experiences. They suggested that individuals high in FF (when FF exceeds hope of success) will choose easy tasks, so that they can succeed in them, or difficult tasks, so that no one could success in them; thus, minimising anxiety about failure. In contrast, individuals high in need for achievement will choose tasks of moderate difficulty that require maximum

challenge and will increase their goals as they master the tasks (unlike high FF individuals who will retain easy tasks despite success).

- *Contemporary achievement motivation theories and fear of failure*

The early achievement motivation theorists (e.g., Atkinson 1957; McClelland et al., 1953) sought to understand whether people will approach success or avoid failure and with what intensity and persistence (achievement motive theories). Contemporary achievement motivation theories (e.g., Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Nicholls, 1984) sought to understand why people adopt one type of achievement goal over another type (achievement goal theories). Thus, they investigated why a person shows achievement behaviour and not whether the achievement behaviour occurs, as was investigated by the early achievement motivation theorists. The two main achievement goals that they have proposed were performance goals (seeking to demonstrate normative competence and ability) and mastery goals (seeking a self-based or a task-based evaluation of one's competence and to develop, improve competence, and master a task) (e.g., Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986)

Recently, Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewick, 1996; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) criticised the early approach to achievement motivation for not predicting behaviour in specific settings and argued that personality factors are not the regulators of achievement behaviour in specific life domains (e.g., school, sport, work). This led Elliot and Church (1997) to develop a hierarchal model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. The model integrated the central constructs from two of the prominent theories, the achievement motive approach (the "classic" achievement motivation research; e.g., McClelland et al., 1953; Atkinson, 1957) and the achievement goal approach (the "contemporary" achievement motivation research; e.g., Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984) into a single path model (see Figure 2.1). Integrating both theories allowed for the prediction of achievement behaviour in specific situations (by using achievement goals) and for the explanation from where these goals arise (by using personality dispositions and competence perception).
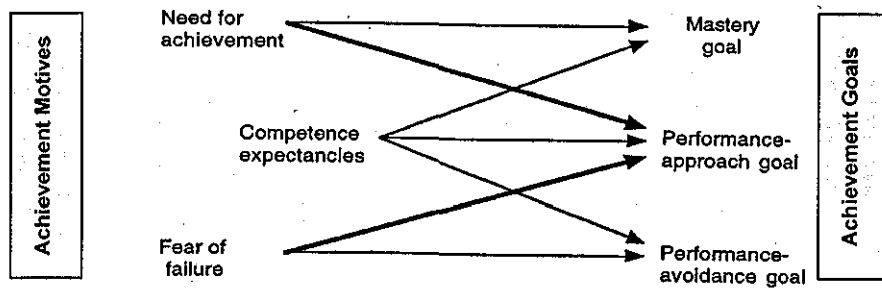
Figure 2.1: Elliot and Church's (1997) hierarchical model of
approach-avoidance achievement motivation.

Achievement motives and goals are central to Elliot and Church's (1997) model. In the
model, achievement goals mediate the relationship between motives and approach and
avoidance orientation. Achievement motives (need for achievement and FF) are constructed
as general higher order motivational tendencies that direct individuals toward positive and
negative possibilities. Achievement goals are constructed as concrete midlevel cognitive
representations that direct individuals toward specific end states. Performance goal
orientation is divided into two separate components, approach and avoidance. Accordingly,
the model suggests two types of performance goals: *performance-approach goals* (focused
on the attainment of competence relative to others) and *performance-avoidance goals*
(focused on the avoidance of incompetence relative to others). Performance-approach goals
derive from people's need for achievement and the tendency to approach success, whereas
performance-avoidance goals derive from people's FF and the tendency to avoid failure.
The model also considers mastery orientation and suggests *mastery goals* (focused on the
development of competence or the attainment of task mastery). Mastery and performance-
approach goals are conceptualised as approach orientations because they represent
regulation according to potential positive outcomes (mastery is associated with self/ task-
referential competence and performance-approach is associated with normative
competence). Performance-avoidance goals are conceptualised as avoidance orientation
because they represent regulation according to a potential negative outcome (normative
incompetence).

Achievement goals are conceptualised as a representation of a higher-order
competence-relevant motives of the need for achievement (the generalised desire for
success) and FF (the generalised desire to avoid failure). The model assumes that both self-
attributed (conscious) and implicit (unconscious) need for achievement and FF are
grounded in affect that energises achievement activity and orients people toward success or

failure. Thus, it is the anticipation of or the preference for an affective experience that is the drive for action. Need for achievement and FF are assumed indirectly to influence specific achievement-relevant processes and outcomes, and their cognitive dimension to directly regulate achievement behaviour.

The model suggests that motives and goals work together to regulate achievement behaviour. It views achievement motives as antecedents of achievement goal adoption, and in turn, as direct predictors of performance outcomes (or achievement-relevant outcomes). Thus, it assumes that achievement motives indirectly (distal) influence performance outcomes and achievement goals directly (proximal) influence performance outcomes. Elliot and Church (1997) postulated that need for achievement serves as an antecedent for adopting mastery and performance-approach goals, FF serves as an antecedent for adopting performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals, and competence expectancies serves as an antecedent for adopting mastery and performance-approach goals (and for rejecting performance-avoidance goals). Their findings also showed that adopting mastery goals increased intrinsic motivation and enhanced performance (in a college classroom), while adopting performance-avoidance goals decreased intrinsic motivation and undermined performance. Thus, performance-avoidance goals lead to negative outcomes, whereas performance-approach goals lead to positive outcomes.

The motive and goal constructs serve vital and complementary roles in the model. Need for achievement and FF explain why people engage in effortful achievement pursuits (provide "energization" for self-regulation) and achievement goals explain how people engage in effortful achievement pursuits (provide direction for the motive-derived energy). Achievement-relevant motives and competence expectancies are assumed to account for variance in the adoption of achievement goals. Both are assumed to orient individuals toward the possibility of success or failure and to exert their influence directly on achievement behaviour via their effect on achievement goal adoption. Need for achievement orients individuals toward the possibility of success and, consequently, is likely to promote the adoption of self-regulatory forms focused on the attainment of positive outcomes (mastery and performance-approach goals). Similarly, FF orients individuals toward the possibility of failure and, consequently, is likely to promote the adoption of performance avoidance goals that focus on the avoidance of negative outcomes. Performance-approach goals can also, at times, serve a failure-avoidance function. Thus, the generalised desire to avoid failure can evoke self-regulatory forms that are focused on attainment of positive outcomes (approach in order to avoid failure), as well as those

focused on the avoidance of negative outcomes. Although it is more likely that performance-approach goals will serve as a failure-avoidance function, it is also possible that mastery goal could do so. Demonstrating normative competence in achievement settings directly lessens concern about failure, whereas the development of competence often entails a prolonged process inclusive of failure experiences.

Elliot and Church's (1997) model portrays mastery and performance-avoidance goals as forms of regulation in that they serve a motivational function (need for achievement and FF, respectively) and the focus of each goal is similar to its underlying motive. In contrast, performance-approach goal is viewed as a more complex form of regulation in that it can serve either approach (need for achievement) or avoidance (FF) or both motivational functions, and the focus of the goal is not always similar to its underlying motives. In challenging achievement settings (e.g., possibility for success with little chance of failure), only the need for achievement is activated and the performance-approach goal represents a form of approach regulation similar to the mastery goal. In threatening achievement settings (e.g., possibility for failure with little chance of success), only FF is activated, and if performance-approach goal is adopted it represents approach in order to avoid failure. In challenging and threatening achievement settings (e.g., where success and failure are possible) both motives are active and the performance-approach goal represents a combination of approach and avoidance tendencies (both approach in order to avoid failure and approach in order to succeed). Thus, performance-approach goals can be deceptive in that the same regulatory form can represent diverse motivational tendencies.

Competence expectancies are conceptualised in the model as antecedents of achievement goals (rather than as moderator of their effects) and as independent of motive dispositions. Thus, competence expectancies, like motive dispositions, exert their influence on achievement behaviour indirectly, through their effect on achievement goal adoption. In other words, competence perceptions are antecedents of achievement goal adoption. High perceived competence orients individuals to the possibility of success and to adopting both forms of approach goals (i.e., mastery and performance-approach goals), whereas low perceived competence orients individuals to the possibility of failure and to adopting performance-avoidance goals. Thus, performance-avoidance goals are grounded in FF and low competence expectancies. Mastery goals are grounded in need for achievement and high competence expectancies and performance-approach goals are grounded in high competence expectancies and a variety of motivational patterns (i.e., need for achievement,

FF, or both). In other words, perceptions of competence exert their influence indirectly on processes and outcomes thorough their effect on achievement goal adoption.

The effects of FF and avoidance regulation on individuals' well-being

Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) also examined the effects of FF and avoidance regulation on individuals' adjustment and well-being. For example, Elliot and Harackiewick (1996) reported that performance-avoidance goals were the only form of regulation harmful to intrinsic motivation, whereas performance-approach goals manifested intrinsic motivation similar to that of mastery goals. Moreover, performance-avoidance participants reported less enjoyment of the task than performance-approach participants. Elliot and Harackiewick suggested that performance-approach goals that are grounded in high competence expectancies can elicit positive processes (e.g., effort persistence) that support active and effective engagement in the activity. In contrast, performance-approach goals that are grounded in FF can elicit anxiety, low self-determination, and other negative processes that make the experience of engaging in the activity adverse. Although this form of approaching in order to avoid failure can promote vigorous action that can result in successful accomplishment, if prolonged, it can begin to erode the quantitative (e.g., effort, performance) and qualitative (e.g., intrinsic motivation, satisfaction) aspects of achievement motivation. Finally, Elliot and Harackiewicz and Elliot and Church advocated that FF motivates people to regulate their behaviours in ways that interfere with performance, persistence, and emotionality. It prompts people to adopt performance-avoidance goals that lead them to under perform, to lose interest in the activity and to quit quickly.

Elliot and Sheldon (1997) examined the antecedents and consequences of pursuing avoidance achievement goals during an academic semester. They studied the process and outcome of goal pursuit (e.g., satisfaction with progress, positive and negative affect responses to progress, the extent to which goal pursuit was experienced as enjoyable and fulfilling) and global personality functioning (general well-being). Their findings showed that avoidance regulation led to negative achievement-relevant outcomes and had negative implications (longitudinal change) for students' general subjective well-being outcomes at the end of the semester. The more the students feared failure, the more they adopted performance-avoidance goals and the poorer their well-being was (on measures of self-esteem, personal control, vitality, life satisfaction and subjective well-being). The main reason for these negative effects on the students' well-being was their striving to avoid poor

performances and, as a result, regulated their day-to-day behaviour in a ways that produced dissatisfaction, negative affect, and little enjoyment or sense of fulfilment. Pursuing avoidance achievement goals was associated with low perceptions of competence during the semester, and it was this low perceived competence that had negative implications for achievement-relevant and general well-being at the end of the semester. Elliot and Sheldon concluded that avoidance achievement goals were not merely a by-product of the motive to avoid failure, but that they actually played a central role in the regulation of achievement behaviour. They stated that avoidance achievement regulation has negative implications for overall personal adjustment and well-being since personal goals are self-investments that provide people with a sense of meaning, structure, and identity. It appears, therefore, that FF leads to the pursuit of avoidance achievement goals and it is this avoidance regulation that has adverse consequences for achievement-relevant and general well-being outcomes.

Elliot, Sheldon, and Church (1997) posited that dispositional characteristics predisposed people to adopt performance-avoidance goals. They suggested that people high in FF, high in neuroticism, low in life-skill (e.g., social skills, time management), and low in perceived competence tend to adopt performance avoidance goals, such as avoid procrastination, avoid being followers, and avoid being lonely. The avoidance to do something is a hard thing to do and people who pursue avoidance goals generally perceive that they make little progress in their effort. This perception leads to dissatisfaction, negative affect, and diminished interest. Experiencing such motivational and emotional states over time eventually undermine subjective well-being (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction, personal control, vitality). In contrast, the pursuit of approach-oriented goals produces a self-regulatory style that is more positive and productive than the pursuit of performance-avoidance goals and facilitates positive life outcomes. The results of their research showed that mastery goals were not more productive goal orientation than performance goals, but that it was the pursuit of approach-oriented goals (mastery or performance-approach goals) that produced a self-regulatory style that was more positive than the pursuit of performance-avoidance goals. Thus, performance-avoidance goals undermine achievement and positive life outcomes, whereas mastery and performance-approach goals facilitate them.

2.2.3 Anxiety Research and Fear of Failure

Fear of failure was also investigated from the anxiety perspective, specifically by test anxiety researchers who considered FF an important component of trait test anxiety (e.g., Hackfort & Spielberger, 1989; Hagtvet, 1983; Heckhausen, 1975; Schwarzer, Van-der-ploeg & Spielberger, 1982; Spielberger, Gonzalez, Taylor, Algaze, & Anton, 1978). These researchers viewed anxiety as a multidimensional construct and defined it as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition that is characterised by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1972, p. 482). Similarly, Leary (1982) defined anxiety as "a cognitive-affective response characterised be arousal and apprehension regarding a potential negative outcome" (p. 99). Test anxiety was described as the experience of apprehension of evaluation during the examination process, and the basic premise of this approach was that text anxiety undermined performance attainment (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). Test anxiety research was taken as a prototype for FF and anxiety research because the evaluational role of the test is its most important aspect (Sarason, 1986).

Achievement motivation researchers (e.g., Atkinson & Feather, 1966; Atkinson, 1966) also considered test anxiety and FF constructs as essentially the same and, therefore, typically employed trait test anxiety measures as an alternative for FF measures. They viewed these two constructs as representing a dispositional tendency to experience apprehension of evaluation in achievement settings and, thus, as affective-motivational constructs that orient people toward negative possibilities. Recently, however, Elliot and McGregor (1999) argued that conceptually, but not operationally, trait test anxiety and FF could be viewed as related constructs. They proposed that trait test anxiety and FF directly (proximal) induce the adoption of performance-avoidance and performance-approach goals, which in turn (indirectly; distal) influence achievement-relevant outcomes (i.e., performance). Operationally, they argued, the two constructs are distant because trait test anxiety measures focus entirely on examination settings, whereas FF measures focus more broadly on achievement-relevant contexts in general. They proposed that it may be appropriate to use trait test anxiety as an alternative for FF when investigating issues relating to exam performance. However, when investigating other achievement-relevant contexts, broader indicators of FF are required.

- *Distinguishing Fear from Anxiety*

Researchers have long differentiated fear from anxiety. For example, Goldstein (1939) stated that human beings have a basic need to comprehend and cope with their environment and when this need is threatened they experience anxiety. Fear of a specific event is less stressful than anxiety as it allows individuals to take action. That is, they can assess the nature of the threat and react to it (e.g., flight), whereas with anxiety the threat is vague, objectless, appears to be total, and there is no effective action against it. Thus, with anxiety the threat is to the psychological existence of the organism and the reaction is anxiety, which consists of apprehension of the state. Similarly, May (1950) also conceived anxiety as an emotional reaction of apprehension to a threat and stated that anxiety differed form fear in that it is unspecific, vague, and objectless. May viewed anxiety as more diffuse than fear and that it changes into fear when the source of the threat is identified. When anxiety is reacted to with avoidance response, fear will occur. Thus, anxiety is a development stage in the production of fear. May posited that anxiety involved a threat to the individual's "existence as a personality"; which is highly valued by the individual. Thus, May associated anxiety with a threat to the disintegration of the personality.

Lazarus (1966), like May (1950) and Goldstein (1939), also viewed anxiety as an emotional response to a threat that its source is unidentified and, as such, it is unclear as to what action to take (or what coping response to select). Thus, anxiety results from incomplete appraisal of the threat situation. This absence of secondary appraisal gives rise to anxiety, which is then replaced by other emotions that will be determined by the nature of the coping reaction. If the decision is to flee, the emotion will be fear, and if it is to attack, the emotion will be anger. Lazarus and Averill (1972) proposed that fear-related emotions might be expressed openly in avoidance behaviour or involve other ways of coping, such as denial, repression, and intellectualisation. However, they asserted that it was difficult to define any emotion (including anxiety) solely on the basis of response as there was a variety of possible reactions. Later, Lazarus (1991) proposed that anxiety was an emotion associated with "an action tendency to withdraw from or avoid threats" (p. 238). Thus, he conceptualized avoidance orientations as characteristic of anxiety and suggested that fears were parallel with avoidance motivational orientations because they represented undesired states for individuals.

Epstein (1972) disagreed with researchers' (e.g., May, 1950; Lazarus, 1966) assertion that anxiety was a product of an unknown threat source. He argued that anxiety existed both when the source of the threat was known and unknown. He defined anxiety as "an

unresolved fear, or alternatively, as a state of undirected arousal following the perception of threat" (p. 311). Thus, arousal is evoked by the perception of a threat and this is followed by a rapid assessment of the situation and action (e.g., fight or flight) will be taken to diffuse the arousal. When a threat is perceived the combination of state of arousal and avoidance tendencies will evoke a state of anxiety. This state of anxiety will remain until the arousal is channelled into some directed states such as fear (that supports action such as flight) or aggression (that supports action such as attack). Undirected arousal can produce a highly disturbing state that produces anxiety. Where the action is uncertain there will be anxiety, where there is an avoidance action there will be fear, and in any one situation there can be some fear and some anxiety. Thus, some situations produce fear, some produce anxiety, and some produce a combination of the two. In short, Epstein viewed anxiety as a state in which the individual experiences arousal but is unable to direct it into action for various reasons (e.g., indecision, repression, external restraint). He viewed fear as an avoidance motive that would support the action of flight when there are no restraints (internal or external).

More recently, Catherall (2003) stated that fear and anxiety are two different constructs and that the difficulty to distinguish between them reflects the fact that specific fears underlie anxieties. Fear is stimulated by perception (an alarm state precipitated by sensory input) while anxiety is stimulated by cognition (an alarm state precipitated by cognitive input). Although both produce similar physiological arousal (activated by the central nervous system) they produce significantly different states. The differences between fear and anxiety relate to the proximity of the threat. Individuals in a state of fear perceive the threat real and immediate, demanding active response, while those in a state of anxiety do not perceive an immediate threat and focus on a potential (something might or might not happen) threat in the future (near or distant). As such, they cannot determine whether to or how to act. Thus, the solution to a fear state requires action directed at the source of the fear, while the solution to an anxiety state is unclear and individuals can not do much to resolve the threat; therefore, they either continue to think about the treat and remain anxious or attend to the anxiety itself. Thus, fear-producing threat differs from anxiety-producing threat. Catherall's distinction between fear and anxiety is similar to that offered by the early researchers (e.g., Goldstein, 1939; May 1950; Lazarus, 1966).

Finally, Beck, Emery and Greenberg (2005) contended that people are "programmed" to fear potentially harmful places and events. A fear can be produced at three level: fear of a situation, of a specific place, or of an object or an event. Fear of having an unpleasant

affect (e.g., anxiety, shame) or fear of consequences of being in a particular place, activate the symptom anxiety as the person approaches it. Thus, Beck et al. conceptualised anxiety as a symptom of fear and the anticipation of the fear as anxiety-provoking.

- *Worry, Emotionality and Fear of Failure*

Anxiety researchers distinguished worry from emotionality. For example, Liebert and Morris (1967) proposed a two-component conceptualisation of anxiety: worry and emotionality. They defined worry as "primarily a cognitive concern about the consequences of failing, the ability of others relative to one's own" (p. 975). Thus, worry relates to cognitive elements of the anxiety experience (such as negative expectations and cognitive concerns about the self, the situation at hand, and potential consequences). Emotionality was defined as "autonomic reactions that tend to occur under examination stress" (p. 975). Thus, emotionality refers to the individual's perception of the physiological-affective components of the anxiety experience. That is, awareness of bodily arousal and of unpleasant feeling states such as nervousness and tension. This model, however, focused on state test anxiety (i.e., the degree of worry and emotionality experienced in specific testing situations) but not on trait test anxiety (i.e., the stable tendencies of individuals to experience state worry and state emotionality in test situations; personality trait).

Schmalt's (1982) model of FF also incorporated worry and emotionality constructs. It suggested that FF had two components: a motive component (FF_1), which related to self-concept of low ability and to worry about the correctness of one's performance, and an emotionality component (FF_2), which related to the anticipation of FF and of the negative consequences of failure. Thus, FF_1 is worry and FF_2 is emotionality. In his recent model, Schmalt (2005) proposed two factors of FF: "active" and "passive". Passive FF describes worry and self-depreciative thoughts about one's competence; leading to negative efficacy evaluation and withdrawal from achievement settings (this conceptualisation is similar to the traditional conception FF as an inhibitory tendency of FF; e.g., Atkinson & Feather, 1966). Active FF consists of emotional experiences and anticipation of impending failure, and describes the emotional component of FF. Schmalt contended that individuals high in passive FF tend to attribute their failure to lack of ability, whereas those high in active FF tend to attribute it to lack of effort.

Hagtvet (1983) also viewed the worry-emotionality distinction as separate response factors. He proposed a hierarchical structure of test anxiety consisting of three constructs: FF, worry, and emotionality. These factors were positively intercorrelated, however, FF

was assumed to consist primarily of motivational-perceptual processes that might be measured by indicators of worry and emotionality. Hagtvet stated that although conceptually FF and emotionality deal with affects, FF is primarily concerned with the individual tendency to perceive testing situations (and other evaluative situations) as threatening or personally dangerous. Emotionality refers to the tendency of experiencing actual autonomic arousal and unpleasant feeling states (e.g., tension and nervousness). Thus, FF is concerned with perceptual process while emotionality deals with processes of autonomic nature, which are easily elicited in evaluative situations. Hagtvet concluded that although testing procedure activates FF, emotionality and worry, it is cognitively oriented worry that is the most salient factor in performance decrements.

Herman (1990) showed a weak relation between trait anxiety (FF) and state anxiety (emotionality and worry), thus, indicating that FF, worry, and emotionality were independent measures of test anxiety. He suggested that FF explained more variances in achievement variables than emotionality and worry. Thus, FF was a stronger predictor of academic performance than worry or emotionality (alone or combined). Herman concluded that FF can be viewed as a personality trait component of test anxiety, which manifests itself as a situational state component of test anxiety (emotionality and worry) under performance conditions.

Hosek and Man (1989) also suggested that FF has no direct effect on performance, but that it influences cognitive performance primarily indirectly, via worry cognitions. Thus, only worry cognitions interfere with optimal performance. Individuals high in FF will engage primarily in irrelevant self-perception of affective emotional arousal. Hosek and Man further suggested that emotionality is high in the period prior to an important event primarily due to the possible consequences of failure. This increase in the period immediately pre-event (caused by increasing mental stress) can lead to a decline of performance or even to a failure. Similarly, Deffenbacher (1980) stated that the worry component represents cognitive reactions (e.g., self-criticism, concern about consequences of failure) that undermine performance by diverting attention from the task demands and interfering with processes, while the emotionality component represents physiological and affective reactions (e.g., increased heart rate and nervousness) that have little or no effect on performance.

Sarason (1975) considered the self-focusing aspect of worry as a key construct in cognitive-attentional approach to test anxiety and suggested that the basic process was not anxiety, but self-focusing or self-preoccupation. Sarason (1986) also stated that only worry

(not emotionality) related to performance decrements in evaluation situations because worrying, or self-preoccupation, about evaluation is a powerful component in test anxiety. Anxious individuals (i.e., personality trait) experience self-preoccupying worry, insecurity and self-doubt in evaluative situations. Sarason (1986) stated that worries are distressing preoccupations and concerns about anticipated future events. The self-preoccupied individual becomes absorbed in the implications and consequences of failure to meet situational challenges. Anxious individuals worry about their perceived personal incompetence and the possible difficulties that they may have to confront. These self-preoccupations, which are a demanding cognitive activity, are critical factors in performance as they can detract from task orientation and adversely affect performance. Finally, Covington (1986) stated that anxiety is the reaction to and an anticipation of failure. Thus, it is the threat of failure that induces anxiety. Failure-induced anxiety is caused largely by the individuals' recognition that the outcome of the evaluative situations is beyond their control and they can not influence events (self-helplessness), thereby, focusing on self-perceived limitations gives rise to achievement anxiety.

- ***Sport Anxiety Research and Fear of Failure***

Fear of failure has been described as a form of sport performance anxiety among young adults (Smith & Smoll, 1990; Smith, Smoll, & Schutz, 1990). Sport anxiety has been defined as the "tendency to experience cognitive and somatic anxiety reactions in sport situations" (Smith et al.; p. 265). Hackfort (1986) distinguished five dimensions of sport anxiety (according to their relationship to motives): fear of disgrace, fear of competition, fear of failure, fear of the unknown, and fear of injury. He suggested that sport-specific anxiety may be effective in different sport activities (e.g., fear of injury and/or fear of disgrace may be relevant in gymnastics). Smith (1989) has stated that fears of failure and fears of disapproval are the most common sources of maladaptive stress in athletes because for many of them athletic success is a major source of recognition and self-esteem, and perception of self-worth are closely linked to the adequacy with which they perform. Recently, researchers have reported a strong correlation between FF, high sport anxiety levels (e.g., Conroy, Coatsworth, & Kaye, 2007; Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002), and low levels of self-determined motivation and self-esteem (Conroy et al., 2007). Fear of failure has also been associated with shame, anxiety (Conroy, 2001b), high levels of cognitive disruption, worry, somatic anxiety, and with low levels of optimism (Conroy et al., 2002).

Fear of failure, fear of success, and sport anxiety are considered competitive (or performance) trait anxiety constructs (Conroy & Metzler, 2004; Covington, 1985; Herman, 1990; Schwartzer et al., 1982), which are relatively a stable disposition that reflects individuals' tendency to perceive performance or competitive situations as threatening (Martens, 1977). Fear of failure and fear of success relate to individuals' beliefs that aversive consequences will follow failure and success, respectively (Birney et al., 1969; Conroy, 2001a; Conroy, Poczwardowski, & Henschen, 2001; Zuckerman & Allison, 1976). All three of these competitive anxiety dispositions relate to threat appraisals and to elevated state anxiety in competitive situations. Thus, individuals high in sport anxiety are likely to appraise threat specifically in sport situations (and possibly in other evaluative encounters; e.g., school, work) and individuals high in FF and fear of success are likely to appraise threat most when they are failing or succeeding in evaluative situations, respectively (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). Failing in an evaluative situation will be perceived as threatening by individuals high in FF (similarly, succeeding will be perceived as threatening by individuals high in fear of success) and will stimulate state anxiety. Evaluative situations always carry the potential for failure and, as such, individuals high in FF may perceive some threat and experience some anxiety even if they are succeeding because failure is still a possibility. Conroy and Metzler reported that individuals high in FF were relatively hostile (negative self-talk) toward themselves even when succeeding. Thus, success may be somewhat distressful for such individuals, suggesting that the evaluative context in itself presents a threat (albeit substantially weaker) for such individuals because failure is an ever-present possibility.

Passer (1983) stated that FF and fear of evaluation were mediators of competitive trait anxiety. He reported that high competitive trait anxious (CTA) children (age 10- 15 years) worried more frequently than low CTA children about not playing well, losing, and being evaluated by coaches, parents, and teammates. They perceived the consequences of poor performance to be more aversive than did their counterparts, and that poor performance would be more upsetting, shameful, and likely to elicit criticism or disapproval from parents and coaches. Passer concluded that FF and fear of evaluation were significant sources of threat in competitive trait anxious children and served as mediators of children's competitive trait anxiety. Children high in competitive trait anxiety were more likely to feel that their performances were inadequate and, therefore, they were more preoccupied with thoughts about performing poorly than children who were low in competitive trait anxiety. Moreover, competitive trait anxiety can predict state anxiety post-competition (Scanlan,

1977). Scanlan, who studied the effects of success and failure on the perception of threat in competitive situation, stated that trait anxiety predicted changes in state anxiety following failure and success.

In summary, researchers have differentiated anxiety from fear and this section presented a number of viewpoints on the nature of anxiety and fear and their conceptual link. Worry and emotionality were conceptualised as two components of anxiety, where worry (which is cognitively oriented) being the most salient factor in performance decrements and failure. Sport anxiety was suggested to have five dimensions: fear of disgrace, fear of competition, fear of failure, fear of the unknown, and fear of injury. Fears of failure and of disapproval were found to be significant sources of threat and stress in competitive trait-anxious children. Fear of failure and sport anxiety are competitive (or performance) trait-anxiety constructs that relate to threat appraisals and to elevated state anxiety in competitive contexts.

2.3 Multidimensional Models of Fear of Failure

Models of FF have developed from the early conceptualisation of FF as a unidimensional construct (by the early achievement motivation theorists, as outlined above; e.g., Atkinson, 1957; McClelland et al., 1953; Murray, 1938), to hierarchical multidimensional models (e.g., Birney, et al., 1969; Conroy, 2001b; Conroy et al., 2002; Schmalt, 1982). Thus, indicating that FF has both a multidimensional and hierarchical structure. In this section I will outline the two predominant multidimensional models of FF, one that was conceptualised by Birney and colleagues (1969), and the other by Conroy and colleagues (2002).

2.3.1   Birney and Colleagues' Multidimensional Model of Fear of Failure

Birney and colleagues (1969) were the first behavioural scientists to link achievement behaviour with FF. Central to their conception of FF is the experience of "non-attainment of a prescribed standard" (p. 201). Fear, they suggested, is produced by the possibility of not attaining an achievement standard and by the unpleasantness of the non-attainment. Fear of non-attainment is an aversive reaction to cues that signal future failure. Non-attainment, they further argued, is only a source of information about the level of one's ability and, as such, in itself is not aversive and does not produce a fear reaction, but it can

develop a "secondary punishing characteristic of failure" (p. 201), which is something to be feared. In other words, people fear the consequences of failure, rather than failure itself. Accordingly, in order to understand why non-attainment (or failure) is aversive, we must understand the consequences that follow non-attainment. Three general consequences that follow non-attainment are: a reduction in one's self-estimate; the receipt of a non-ego punishment; and a reduction in one's social-value in any given achievement situation. These consequences express themselves differently in people's behaviour and, if perceived aversive, will provoke fear. One's perceptions of the likelihood of these consequences will be directly related to one's FF level. Thus, Birney et al. conceptualised FF as related to affiliative needs and as reflecting avoidance of either a lowered self-estimate or a lowered evaluation by others. This conception formulated Birney et al.'s model of FF (see Figure 2.2).
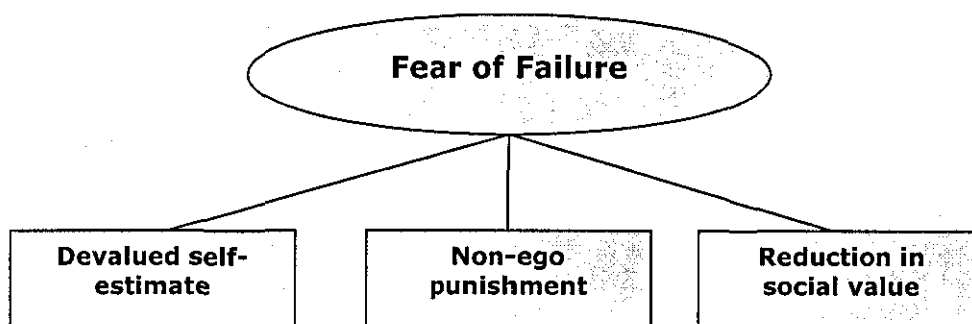
Figure 2.2: Birney et al.'s (1969) multidimensional model of FF; showing three aversive consequences of failure associated with FF.

Birney et al. (1969) contended that these consequences of failure can represent a threat (if perceived aversive by the individual) and will elicit three types of FF: fear of devalued self-estimate; fear of non-ego punishment; and fear of reduction in social value.
1) *Fear of a devalued self-estimate-* This fear involves the threat of having to change (typically to lower, but not necessarily) one's beliefs or views about oneself. Thus, perceiving that failure will lead to a reduction in self-estimate can provoke FF. Non-attainment is experienced as failure "When it is accepted as evidence that the self-estimate has been higher than it ought to be" (p. 202). This leads to lowering self-estimate and it is this process of lowering one's evaluation that is experienced as failure. The lower the self-estimate is, the greater the sense of failure will be. Any information that suggests a change in the self-estimate can be viewed as a threat because people like not only to raise self-

estimate but also to maintain a stable self-concept and because high self-estimate promises glory while low self-estimate promises deprivation.

Achievement situations allow individuals opportunities to discover their levels of ability. If they find out that they are better than they thought, they experience success, but if they find out that they are worst than they thought, they experience failure. The first meaning of success and failure is the raising or lowering of the self-estimate when a performance does not match a prediction made on the basis of the self-evaluation. Therefore, one consequence of failure is the lowering of self-evaluation. Individuals who fear failure have two choices that allow them to defend their self-evaluation: (1) to set their levels of aspiration (goals) considerably above their performance (i.e., ability), which exposes them to the risk of not performing at that level and, thereby, to be viewed as unrealistic aspirations. Therefore, when they fail to attain those high levels of aspiration it allows them to deny failure and to raise their self-value (in their own eyes and others'), implying that they are really much better than they seem to be and that their performance should be ignored when evaluating them; or (2) to set their levels of aspiration considerably below their performance, thus, avoiding failure, negative judgment, and the devaluation of self-estimate (however, the risk in choosing this strategy is interpersonal).

2) *Fear of non-ego punishment-* This fear also has threatening consequences. It ranges from the withdrawal of tangible rewards (that would have been received if successful) to the realisation that one wasted time and effort in the course of non-attainment.

3) *Fear of reduction in social value-* This fear involves the threat that others will not view the performer as valuable. Thus, this fear is based on people's belief that others will think less of them if they fail. One outcome of achievement experience is the knowledge obtained about one's ability level. Attainment of standard (or success) increases perceptions of ability and competence and brings social value and other rewards. Social value is an important reward in our achieving society where achievers are highly praised and losers are ignored. People's desire for others to recognise their achievements and ignore their defeats comes from their desire for social value. Therefore, people, especially those who fear failure, do not point out their non-attainment to others because of the ever-present possibility of losing social value. In our achieving society, success is a tool for gaining self-esteem and respect while failure is a way for losing it. Our society values high achievers and measures people's worth by their personal successes; success is determined by who and how many others have accomplished the same achievement. Thus, Birney et al. (1969) conceptualised the experiences of success and failure in an interpersonal context,

advocating that individuals who are fearful of failure may be simply fearful of losing value in the eyes of others.

These three types of FF can operate simultaneously in any given situation. By doing poorly in achievement situations individuals are faced with the possibility of self-devaluation, social devaluation, and non-ego punishment. People differ in the degree in which they fear these consequences of achievement outcomes. For example, for some, the primary fear may be of the lowering of their social value, while for others the primary fear may be of the loss of rewards that often accompanies non-attainment. Therefore, avoidance of the achievement situation would be characteristic behaviour of these fears. Each one of these fears has a different effect on individuals when faced with an achievement standard and, therefore, should not be conceived as a unified construct.

Birney et al. (1969) related to the consequences of failure in achievement situations as punishment ("secondary punishing characteristic of failure"; p. 201). They proposed that FF is a function of the magnitude of the punishment and of the degree to which one believes the punishment will actually occur. The magnitude of FF increases as the probability of non-attainment and punishment increases. Birney et al. proposed that the magnitude of FF increases when: (1) the probability on non-attainment increases and the degree of self-estimate decreases; (2) the probability of non-attainment increases and the likelihood of experiencing the punishment increases; and (3) the probability of reduction of social value increases and the number of people who know about the non-attainment increases.

Fears of failure affect individuals' behaviours differently. As the level of the fear increases, individuals will behave in a defensive manner in order to reduce the fear. Birney et al. (1969) proposed four behaviours that serve to reduce FF: avoidance, putting maximum effort, reducing the achievement standard, and not trying. Which particular defensive behaviour will be adopted will depend (partly) on the type of fear; although some defensive behaviour will serve to reduce all of the three types of fears.

- *Avoidance-* The avoidance of failure can take many forms. The most obvious strategy is to avoid achievement situations where the possibility of failure always exists. Such situations constitute a constraint for individuals who fear failure. Moreover, situations where non-attainment would result in some punishment, or leaving the situation would bring more unpleasantness than non-attainment, would be particularly difficult for individuals fearing punishment and will affect the nature of their achievement activity. Those who fear failure are also likely to avoid performing and achievement situations where others can observe their performance (unless they are totally confident of the

outcome). However, as they cannot always avoid such situations, they can be caught up in an "avoidance-avoidance conflict", where they can lose value if they do not participate and can lose value if they do. Under such conditions they will use excuses for not participating, such as being out of condition and/or practice, tired, or that the skill is unimportant to them. These defensive behaviours are used to protect their self-estimate and their social value.

- *Putting maximum effort-* Another way to avoid failure and the devaluation of self-estimate is to ensure the attainment of the standard. This can be achieved by putting maximum effort and increasing practice in order to improve the skill. This behaviour can serve each of the three types of fear. However, it does not guarantee that the skill will be improved and attainment will become more probable. Moreover, practice and effort carry dangers when the primary fear is devaluation of self-estimate. For example, if non-attainment follows maximum effort it becomes much more difficult to avoid the implications about the underlying skill. Therefore, it is doubtful whether fear of devaluation of self-estimate produces an increase in effort as it places the individual on the line to be evaluated when there is no guarantee of attainment of the standard.

- *Not trying-* Increasing practice and effort is a way to avoid failure and punishment only when the individual sees reasonable chances of attainment. However, if the task is difficult and chances of attainment are nil, the individual will resign him/herself to the punishment and will not try the relevant task. The individual will convince him/herself that the skill is not important and will demonstrate it through action by not trying the task. Thus, showing that the event is unimportant and, thereby, the skill is also unimportant. Consequently, the experience of non-attainment will not produce the experience of failure (e.g., hockey is not important to me, therefore, learning to play it is not important to me and, as a result, I do not view my poor hockey skills as a failure). These individuals are likely to seek out people who hold similar values to theirs (e.g., consider the skill unimportant).

Individuals who fear failure may also not try when the probability of attaining the standard is low. Hence, they will not take any chances of losing social value and being exposed to punishment. Not trying serves two functions: (1) it reduces the significance of the actual performance as an indicator of the underlying skill, thereby, avoiding any implications for a lowering of the self-estimate; and (2) it demonstrates that the task and the relevant skill are really unimportant and, thus, the loss of self-estimate is of little concern.

- *Reducing the achievement standard-* An alternative way of improving the chances of attaining the standard is to reduce the achievement standard. This, however, does not enhance self-estimate as it is an admission of a lower self-estimate. Those who fear devaluation of self-estimate are likely to avoid situations that are likely to increase the precision of the self-estimate. Thus, they would prefer to give up the opportunity of raising their self-estimate in order to ensure that there is no devaluation.

Finally, Birney et al. (1969) proposed that individuals who fear failure are cautious in their range of task choice. Whether FF motivation debilitates or facilitates performance depends on the task demands. In general, it appears that unfamiliar, complex, and threatening achievement settings are disadvantageous to individuals fearing failure as they do not master such situations rapidly and their aspiration levels fluctuate regardless of their actual performance. These conditions may serve to increase their avoidance motivation and competitions can produce their worst performance. However, they perform well in circumstances that involve their cooperation with others, but they are susceptible to group pressure; thus, their success with a task is contingent upon the appropriateness of the group suggestion. Moreover, such individuals are also more sensitive to failure cues and will notice them more than those who are less fearful of failure. They also have a better memory for past failures than for past successes because failures would have been more intense experiences for them. Accordingly, individuals who fear failure are likely to perform poorly under achievement stress and after experiencing failure. The quality of their performance (i.e., good or poor performance) is depended on and is affected by the degree to which they perceive failure a threat, the degree to which they believe the consequences of failure will occur, and the degree of their failure concerns.

In summary, Birney et al.'s (1969) model of FF suggests that the main characteristic of individuals who fear failure is to strive to avoid the aversive consequences of failure. The tendency to avoid failure motivates them to defend against the devaluation of self-estimate, non-ego punishment, and the reduction in social value. Four behaviours serve to reduce FF: avoidance, putting maximum effort, not trying, and reducing the achievement standard. Which particular defensive scheme will be adopted will depend partly on the type of FF. Although Birney et al.'s (1969) model provided a rich conceptual basis for studying the components of FF, it has been criticised as not providing psychometrically sound measures of the different types of FF and, therefore, the model waits demonstration of empirical value (Conroy, 2001a).

2.3.2   Conroy and Colleagues' Multidimensional Model of Fear of Failure

Conroy and colleagues (e.g., Conroy, 2001b; Conroy et al., 2002; Conroy, Metzler, & Hoffer, 2003) have recently developed a multidimensional, hierarchical model of aversive consequences of failure associated with dispositional FF. This model is consistent with and extends from previous unidimensional conceptualisations of the FF construct (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; McClelland et al., 1953), and it is generally consistent with Birney et al.'s (1969) multidimensional model of FF. The model is grounded in Lazarus' (1991) cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion that suggests that emotions occur when individual appraise encounters with the environment as having either a negative or a positive significance for well-being (relational meaning) in terms of accomplishing personally meaningful goals.

Lazarus' (1991) cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotions is a comprehensive theory that has gained acceptance and popularity in recent years. The theory places equal emphasis on three processes that operate simultaneously to contribute to the generation of any emotion. These processes are: (1) appraisal (the cognitive process); (2) the central role of the individual's strivings, intentions, and goals (the motivational process); and (3) the importance of external events to these strivings (the relational process). Thus, the theory encompasses cognition, motivation, and relationships between the individual and the environment. Emotions are associated with cognitive-motivational-relational appraisals that explain how perceived changes in one's relationship and the environment affect one's ability to accomplish one's goal(s). Lazarus posited that emotions occur when individuals appraise their encounter with the environment as having either a positive or negative (threat) implication for well-being (relational meaning). Such encounters activate cognitive beliefs or appraisals associated with threat to the individual's well-being (in term of accomplishing one's goal). Once individuals perceive relational changes indicating success or failure, they must appraise how these changes affect the likelihood for them to accomplish their goals before they experience an emotion. According to Lazarus (1991), for emotions most closely related to FF (i.e., fear and anxiety), only the primary appraisal process is necessary (as secondary appraisal is only relevant for certain emotions). In this primary appraisal process, individuals determine whether their goals are impacted by the perceived relational change, which goals are impacted, and how important it is to them to achieve those goals. Each emotion is represented by a core relational theme, which describes the transaction between the individual and environment. For example, the

core relational theme for fright is "facing an immediate, concrete, physical danger" and for anxiety it is "facing an uncertain, existential threat" (Lazarus, 1991; p. 122).

Lazarus (1991) believed that emotions were the result of cognitive appraisals of the personal meaning of events and experiences. Therefore, he suggested that any emotion occurs as the result of the person cognitive interpretation of a stimulus or event to determine if the event is positive, negative, or neutral. This is followed by a secondary appraisal that aims to assess the individual's thoughts and emotions and to determine if s/he is able to successfully cope with the event. Lazarus proposed four categories of emotions: (1) negative emotions that result from harm, loss or threats (i.e., fear, shame, anger, jealousy, sadness, and disgust); (2) positive emotions that result from reaching goals (i.e., joy, love, happiness, and pride); (3) borderline emotions (i.e., contentment, hope, compassion); and (4) non-emotions or cognitive evaluations that could lead to emotions (i.e., frustration, disappointment, tension, curiosity, grief, depression, nervousness, surprise and amazement).

From the perspective of cognitive-motivational-relational theory, FF involves appraising threat in evaluative situations with the possibility of failure (thereby not accomplishing one's desired goal) because such situations stimulate cognitive beliefs associated with the aversive consequences of failing (e.g., experiencing shame and embarrassment). The strength of one's belief in the aversive consequences of failure represents a way to measure individual differences in FF (Conroy et al., 2002), as individuals have learnt to associated failure with aversive consequences and, therefore, experience apprehension and anxiety in evaluative situations (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). Thus, FF represents a dispositional tendency.

Conroy et al. (2001) asserted that FF is a salient threat to performance in a variety of domains and suggested that FF may be explained by distinguishing the threatening or the aversive consequences associated with failure. Their study sought to explain the different dimensions of FF. They conducted interviews with adult elite athletes (n=8, male and females) and performing artists (n=8, male and female dancers and musicians) in order to ascertain the nature of the cognitive-motivational-relational appraisals associated with FF (i.e., the perceived aversive consequences of failing). Thus, they examined FF appraisals by identifying the aversive consequences of failure that may warrant a frightened or anxious response. Their findings revealed distinct criteria for evaluations of failure and success, as well as the perceived consequences of failure and success. They proposed that failing was perceived aversive because performers typically anticipate and invest in the idea of having

particular consequences of success, and when they fail they do not achieve these desired consequences. The results of this study yielded a model of ten FF appraisals. Three of these appraisals related to Birney et al.'s (1969) fear of devaluing self-estimate (these were: fears of personal diminishment, of having low abilities, and of lacking control in the performance), fear of non-ego punishment (these were: fears of hopes being crushed or losing an opportunity, of experiencing a tangible loss, of having an uncertain future, and of wasting effort), and fear of reduction in social value (these were: failure was an embarrassing self-presentational, failure involves letting others down, and failure means that others will lose interest in the performer). The FF appraisals that this study yielded formed Conroy et al.'s (2002) multidimensional model of FF.

The multidimensional model of FF proposed by Conroy et al. (2002; see Figure 2.3) shows five beliefs about the consequences of failure that are associated with threat appraisals. These are: experiencing shame and embarrassment; devaluing one's self-estimate; having an uncertain future; important others losing interest; and, upsetting important others. Conroy and his associates (Conroy et al., 2001, 2002) have contended that failure can be perceived aversive if performers anticipate and invest in the idea of having a particular consequence to success and do not achieve this desired consequence. Thus, if athletes invest in and anticipate certain consequences of success, they can perceive failure and not accomplishing their desired goal as aversive. For example, some athletes learn to anticipate that success pleases significant others and brings approval, therefore, when they fail and significant others do not express pleasure and approval, they might feel that something of value is withdrawn and, as a result, may perceive failure as aversive and fear it.
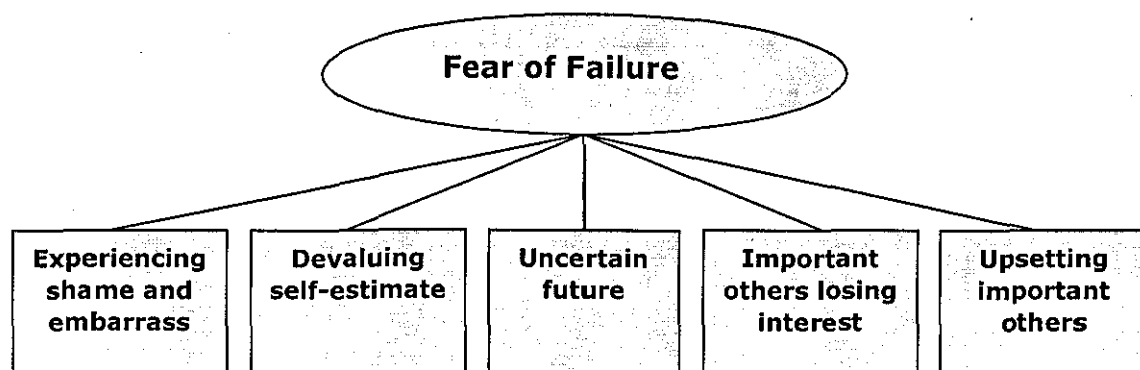
Figure 2.3: Conroy et al.'s (2002) multidimensional model of FF; showing five aversive consequences of failure associated with FF.

The *Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory* (PFAI; see appendix 2) was derived from Conroy et al.'s (2002) multidimensional model of FF. As such, it is a multidimensional measure of cognitive-motivational-relational appraisals associated with FF, measuring beliefs that failure is associated with five aversive consequences (as proposed by the multidimensional model of FF). In other words, the PFAI assesses five types of athletes' fears of failure and their levels. Fears of failure can be inferred from the strength of an individual's beliefs in the likelihood of aversive consequences of failing.

The PFAI contains twenty-five items that measure five aversive consequences of failure: experiencing shame and embarrassment (e.g., "when I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it"), devaluing one's self-estimate (e.g., "when I am failing, I blame my lack of talent"), having an uncertain future (e.g., "when I am failing, it upsets my "plan" for the future"), important others losing interest in me (e.g., "when I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me"), and upsetting important others (e.g., "when I am failing, people who are important to me are disappointed"). Each one of these subscales comprises five items. Participants' responses are on a scale from -2 ("do not believe at all") to +2 ("believe 100% of the time"). An emerging literature has supported the validity and reliability of FF scores from the PFAI (e.g., Conroy, 2001b & 2003; Conroy et al., 2002 & 2003; Conroy & Metzler, 2004). The PFAI can be used to assess FF in adult-athletes as well as in children and youth as young as 8 years (Conroy et al., 2007).

In summary, Conroy et al.'s (2001 & 2002) hierarchical, multidimensional model of FF is consistent with and extends from previous unidimensional conceptualisations of the FF construct (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953, Atkinson, 1957), and it is generally consistent with Birney et al.'s (1969) multidimensional model of FF. Conroy et al.'s model is based on the cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion, which indicates that FF will be

activated when individuals believe that they may fail and that failure has aversive consequences. The model proposes five aversive consequences of failure; i.e., experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one's self-estimate, having an uncertain future, important others losing interest, and upsetting important others. These aversive consequences form the basis for the multidimensionality of FF. Conroy et al. developed the PFAI to measure beliefs that failure is associated with these five aversive consequences. Thus, it assesses five types of athletes' fears of failure and their levels.

2.4 Summary

Within the achievement motivation literature, FF has been defined as the motive to avoid failure in achievement settings (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953) and, as such, to represent an avoidance-based achievement motive. Fear of failure presents a great emotional burden for children and adults and is associated with a prevalence of problems, making it an important social concern (Conroy, 2001a). Early achievement motivation theories (e.g., Atkinson 1957; McClelland et al., 1953, 1958) proposed two achievement orientations: one that orients individuals towards the attainment of success (i.e., need achievement motive), and another that orients individuals to seek the avoidance of failure in achievement settings (because one feels shame and humiliation upon failure; i.e., FF motive). They viewed FF as a dispositional tendency and proposed that the motive to avoid failure was socially learnt during childhood (Atkinson 1957; McClelland, 1958). Contemporary achievement theories (Elliot & Church, 1997) conceptualised need for achievement and FF as achievement motives that direct individuals toward positive and negative possibilities. Their hierarchal model of approach-avoidance achievement motivation suggests that performance-approach goals derive from people's need for achievement and the tendency to approach success, whereas performance-avoidance goals derive from people's FF and the tendency to avoid failure. Mastery goals were conceptualised as approach orientations.

Fear of failure was also investigated from the anxiety perspective, specifically by test anxiety researchers (e.g., Hagtvet, 1983; Schmalt, 1982, 2005). They viewed FF as a personality trait component of test anxiety, which manifested itself as a situational state component of test anxiety (emotionality and worry) under performance conditions (Herman, 1990). In sport, FF was described as a form of sport anxiety. Fear of failure and sport anxiety are competitive (or performance) trait-anxiety constructs that relate to threat

appraisals and to elevated state anxiety in competitive contexts. Fears of failure and of disapproval are sources of threat and stress for children in sport (Passer, 1983).

The two predominant multidimensional models of FF were conceptualised by Birney and colleagues (1969) and by Conroy and colleagues (2002). Birney et al. advocated that people fear the aversive consequences of failure (rather than failure itself) and strive to avoid them. Their model suggests three aversive consequences of failure that are associated with FF: devaluation of self-estimate, non-ego punishment, and reduction in social value. Four behaviours serve to reduce FF: avoidance, putting maximum effort, not trying, and reducing the achievement standard. Conroy et al.'s model proposes five aversive consequences of failure that are associated with FF: experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one's self-estimate, having an uncertain future, important others losing interest, and upsetting important others. Conroy et al. developed the PFAI to measure beliefs that failure is associated with these five aversive consequences.

At present, the existing models of FF (i.e., Birney et al.'s 1969, and Conroy et al.'s 2002) have not been subject to research evaluation within the context of youth elite sport. In addition, it is not known whether the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes are consistent with those reported in adult populations (e.g., non-sporting adult participants in Birney et al.; adult performing artists and athletes in Conroy et al., 2001). Therefore, examining young elite athletes' perceptions of the aversive consequences of failure can extend this knowledge and help develop a better conceptual understanding of FF.

2.5 Statement of The Problem

Based on the review of literature above, three issues led to the development of the research. First, research has documented the problems attributed to FF in achievement settings (e.g., Orlick, 1974; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003). Second, sport is a popular and significant achievement domain for children and adolescents (Treasure, 2001) where winning is the typical demand (Passer, 1988). Third, there is a lack of research on FF among this age group, and in particular, among young elite athletes. Therefore, the focus of this research was to investigate FF among young athletes and, specifically, among those performing at the elite level of competition (national and international) in the public arena, whose performances are regularly evaluated by selectors (or judges) and the public, and where failure can have adverse consequences for them. Elite level athletes invest

substantial time in their sport and the results of their performances can have potent outcome on their lives and future sporting careers (Conroy et al., 2001). Moreover, it is likely that young athletes competing at the elite level will fear failure since sport is a highly competitive domain where the increasing pressure to win and to achieve top performance brings with it an increase in FF among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Accordingly, the focus of my research was to investigate FF among young elite athletes.

As the existing models of FF (i.e., Birney et al.'s 1969, and Conroy et al.'s 2002) have not been subject to research evaluation within the context of elite youth sport, it is currently unknown whether the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes are consistent with those reported in adult populations. Therefore, my first study (presented in chapter 3 as Study 1a and 1b) sought to explore the perceived consequences of failure of young elite athletes. This study also sought to examine the effects that FF had on such athletes and to determine how they coped with the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences can induce prior to competition. Accordingly, my first study intended to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the FF phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Inquiry- Epistemology, Paradigms, and Methodology.

Chapter overview:

The present chapter begins with an introduction section that explains the rationale for employing a qualitative method of inquiry in my PhD research (section 3.1). This is followed by a section on epistemology, paradigms and methodology (section 3.2), and a section on constructionism, which encompasses subsections on interpretivism and symbolism interactionism; these theoretical frameworks guided my research (section 3.3). The next section, entitled 'quality in qualitative research', outlines issues on evaluative criteria in qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility of data, objectivity, and reflexivity in qualitative research (section 3.4). The following section discusses computer assisted qualitative data analysis, focusing on the use of QSR NUD*IST in my research (section 3.4). The final section is a summary of the chapter (section 3.5).

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative method of inquiry was deemed suitable for my research, which sought to examine young elite athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure (Study 1a), the effects of FF on them, and their coping responses to the effects of FF (Study 1b). A qualitative inquiry can help to explore the perceptions, emotions, and concerns associated with failure and to provide a holistic understanding of the athletes' experiences (Turner, 1994). The research also sought to investigate the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF, thereby focusing on the role of parental socialisation (attitudes, perceptions and values) in the development of FF among young athletes, specifically parent-child communications and interactions (Study 2). This focus also extended to the final study (Study 3), which sought to intervene in parent-child interactions in order to enhance those interactions and to reduce athletes' and parents' FF levels. A qualitative inquiry can provide flexibility and freedom to study family interaction before and after the intervention and to explore their experiences and perceptions, as well as the benefits of the intervention for the participants.

Interviews with young athletes and their parents can provide in-depth information on

their perceptions of the aversive consequences of failure, their experiences of fearing failure, and how they construct meaning and interpret experiences of success and failure. Interviews can also provide information on the process and role of parents in the development of FF in young athletes, the dynamics of the family, and the role of the family in the early years of an athlete's involvement in sport, and can capture the individual and collective experiences of family members. This can provide information on child-parent interaction and, thus, the mechanisms by which FF is transmitted. Accordingly, employing a qualitative method of inquiry, specifically adopting a social constructionist framework, was deemed suitable to achieve the aims of my research.

3.2 Epistemology, Paradigms, and Methodology

Researchers approach the world with a set of ideas and frameworks (ontology; beliefs about the nature of the social world) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology; beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired) that they examine in a particular way (methodology, analysis) and interpret accordingly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). This section outlines the epistemological stance of my research and the paradigm that informed its design and the methods I employed for data collection and analysis. This can enable the reader to evaluate the research within its perspective and its contribution to knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002).

Theorists have offered various definitions of a paradigm. For example, Kuhn (1970) referred to paradigms as the shared values and knowledge of a particular scientific community. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2002) viewed paradigms as the basic principles and values, or interpretive frameworks that guide actions. They stated that "all research is interpretive; guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 19). Thus, researchers' approach to research is influenced by their paradigm and the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that it encompasses. The basic paradigms listed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) are: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Finally, Crotty (1998) referred to paradigms as "theoretical perspectives" that he defined as "the philosophical stance lying behind a methodology that provide a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and its criteria" (p. 66). The assumptions that constitute one's theoretical perspective are underpinned by ways of viewing the world (ontology)

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and ways of researching it (epistemology), and these assumptions shape the different ways of researching the world. Thus, methodologies are underpinned by theoretical perspectives. Crotty's list of theoretical perspectives include: positivism; post-positivism; interpretivism; critical inquiry; feminism; and post-modernism.

Crotty (1998) proposed four elements of any research process: methods (the techniques used to collect and analyse data); methodology (the process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods); theoretical perspective (the philosophical stance informing the methodology); and epistemology (the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and, thereby, the methodology). The epistemology underpins the theoretical perspective, which guides the methodology, which, in turn, informs the choice of methods (see Figure 3.1). Thus, each informs the next phase. Crotty listed the theoretical perspective, methodology and methods associated with each of the three epistemologies, the objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. As the present study deemed constructionism the most appropriate for answering the research question, I will outline its core assumptions below.
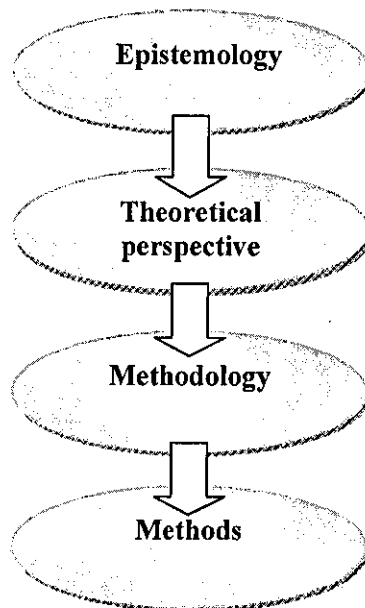
Figure 3.1: The four elements of research that inform one another (adapted from Crotty, 1998).

3.3 Constructionism

The constructionist framework guided my research. Constructionism assumes that all knowledge (and therefore meaningful realities) is contingent upon human practices. Knowledge is constructed through human interactions with their world and is developed and transmitted within a social context. Therefore, truth or meaning is not objective but it comes into existence through our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no objective meaning or truth waiting to be discovered, rather, it is constructed by humans. Accordingly, different people construct meanings in different ways even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998).

Constructionism advocates that people do not create meanings but construct meanings as they are engaging with and interpreting the natural and social world. They create concepts (e.g., femininity) and schemes to help them understand the world and to make sense of their experiences, and they continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experiences. These concepts are social products as they are constructed through social interactions. Hence, humans construct the social world thorough interactions (Schwandt, 2003). These constructions have historical and cultural dimensions and interpretation is constructed in an environment of shared understandings, practices, and language. Thus, cultures shape and influence the continuing state of construction and reconstruction in the process of being (Bryman, 2001). Accordingly, constructionists seek to examine the processes by which humans construct the social world.

The constructionist epistemology underpins my research as it meets its aims to explore how young athletes and their parents construct meaning and interpret their experiences of success and failure and of FF; the meanings or interpretations they make guide their actions. Finding out about such experiences from the perspectives of both parents and athletes allows exploring parental influence not just from the child's perception of parenting practices but also from the parents' own self-reports. This can provide information on child-parent interaction and, thus, the mechanisms by which FF are transmitted. This aim is consistent with one of the central belief of constructionism that "valid knowledge arises from the relationship between members of some stakeholding community" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; p. 177). Thus, knowledge and meaning are constructed and understood through interactions. The development of FF has been

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associated with parent-child relations and interactions, thus, it appears to be socially constructed within the family and, specifically, within the child-parent relations. It seems from the literature on FF (cited in chapter 2) that FF develops through a process of children learning and absorbing from their environment. The constructionist approach, therefore, is best suited for answering these research questions, and data analysis can facilitate evidenced-based practice in parents' education as well as help to guide future research on FF.   ,

There are several theoretical perspectives grounded within the epistemology of constructionism (see Figure 3.2). They include: interpretivism (which encompasses symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics), critical inquiry, and feminism. Thus, constructionism is embodied in each of these theoretical perspectives. Of these three theoretical perspectives, interpretivism is the one informing the methodology of my research and, therefore, will be outlined below.

▪ *Interpretivism*

Interpretivism emerged in contradiction to positivism in attempt to understand and explain human and social reality. It argued that studying the social world requires a different logic and procedure than the natural world (objects) and, thus, requires moving away from the scientific model. The core assumption of interpretivism is that humans interpret the social world through their minds and that their observation of the social world depends on schemes that filter through their minds. Thus, knowledge of the social world is derived from human's perceptions or interpretation of the world (Williams & May, 1996). Accordingly, interpretivism "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998; p. 67). Weber (1947) described interpretivism as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of the social action in order to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects" (p. 88). Interpretivists aim to understand peoples' experiences from their perspectives. Accordingly, my research examined FF experiences from the perspective of both the young athletes and their parents.

Epistemology

Constructionism

Theoretical Perspective

Interpretivism

- *Symbolic Interactionism*
- Phenomenology
- Hermeneutics

Critical Inquiry

Feminism

Methodology

Grounded Theory   Phenomenology   Ethnography   Discourse Analysis   Action Research

Methods

Questionnaire   **Interview**   Cognitive Mapping   Narrative

Participant Observation   Focus Group   **Interpretive Methods**   Visual Analysis

Data Reduction   Case Study   Content Analysis   **Theme Identification**

Life History   Comparative Analysis

Figure 3.2: Constructionism and its theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods (bold representing those used in the study) (Adapted from Bringer, 2002 & Crotty, 1998).

Interpretivism encompasses several theoretical perspectives, including: symbolic interactionism; phenomenology; and hermeneutics. I chose to ground my research in the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism as it meets the research aim; to examine FF from the perspectives of athletes and their parents and its development through their interactions. I will, therefore, outline this perspective below.

- *Symbolic Interactionism*

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that was originated in the early 1900's from the work of the philosopher and social psychologist George Herbert Mead (e.g., 1934). The epistemology generally embedded in symbolic interactionism is constructionist in nature. Symbolic interactionism assumes that self-concept is created through interpretation of symbolism (e.g., words, gestures, appearances exhibited by others during social interaction; Hewitt, 1994). The basic tenets of this perspective is that human experiences and behaviours are mediated by interpretation and are based on negotiated and flexible socially constructed meanings (e.g., symbolism) that are given to situations or objects. Meanings arise from and are derived out of social interactions, and human conducts depend upon the formation and maintenance of meanings. Humans handle and modify these meanings through an interpretive process that they use in dealing with the things they encounters. Thus, social interactions take place in such a way that people continually interpreting the symbolic meaning of their environment (which includes the actions of others) and act on the basis of this ascribed meaning (Bryman, 2001; Hewitt 1994).

The methodological assumptions of symbolic interactionism relate directly to its basic tenets. It states that the purpose of the scientific quest should be to understand and explain human conduct. It advocates that understanding humans must come from adopting the perspective of the culture or person(s) being studied. This can be achieved by taking the role of the person(s) being studied (e.g., ethnography, participant observation) or through interacting with those being studied (e.g., interviews; Crotty, 1998). It also states that researchers should embrace the entire scientific quest (and not just a selected aspect of it) and undertake a holistic inductive approach in which the method selected is based on the nature of the social phenomenon under investigation. Finally, exploration of the matter under investigation should be prolonged, reflexive, direct and interactive. Symbolic interactionists (as do constructionists) acknowledge that resechers cannot be fully detached from culture and past experience when giving meaning to what they are

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studying (i.e., human conduct) (Burr, 1995).

I chose to ground my research in symbolic interactionism as this theoretical perspective deals directly with issues such as language, communications, interrelations and community. It is about the basic social interactions whereby researchers enter into the attitude, perceptions, and values of the community that they are studying and become persons in the process (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, an underpinning value of symbolic interactionism is that research should have practical applications and, therefore, meaning and applicability within the context from which it was derived. This is in line with my intention that my research, as well as helping to guide future research on FF, should contribute to parental educational programmes in sport that seek to teach parents of young athletes how their interactions with their child-athlete are contributing to the development of FF in their child. By teaching parents how to improve their interactions with their children, psychologists can help to reduce and prevent the development of FF in young athletes.[1]

3.4 Quality in Qualitative Research

3.4.1 Trustworthiness and credibility of data

Quantitative studies are evaluated upon criteria such as reliability and validity. For such studies, the generalisability of a representative sample to a larger population is an important consideration of their design. In contrast, qualitative studies lean towards an ideographic understanding of individuals or specific experiences. It is, therefore, important to evaluate such studies with criteria for assessing qualitative research (Sparkes, 1998, 2001; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Sparkes recommended that evaluative criteria for qualitative research should be in line with the study's aims and epistemological assumptions. Accordingly, one of the key reasons for stating my epistemological stance is to enable the readers to accurately evaluate my research within its perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002).

Sparkes (2001) categorised the debate on what are acceptable criteria for qualitative research into four perspectives: replication, parallel, diversification, and letting go of validity. Replication is the idea that qualitative and quantitative research is inherently not different and should be judged by the same criteria (i.e., reliability and validity). The

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parallel perspective, although is less rigid than the replication perspective, also seeks to follow the quantitative criteria. This perspective is often used by researchers who use mixed methods (e.g., Caracelli & Green, 1997; Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996a; Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996). The diversification perspective is held by researchers who value validity but view it as being relative and socially constructed. The replication and parallel perspectives best fit within objective epistemologies (positivism), thus, rejecting any other form of knowledge and limiting what is a valid knowledge. The diversification perspective is also problematic in that by adding a prefix to the word validity (e.g., ironic validity, voluptuous validity) anything can appear to have methodological rigour (Sparkes, 2001). The final perspective presented by Sparkes was letting go of validity and using criteria that fit the epistemological and methodological assumptions of the research. Sparkes argued that different criteria can co-exist and that researchers should continue to debate the merits of each rather than blindly dismiss them.

In their discussion on establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (2000) highlighted the differences between positivistic and naturalistic paradigms. They, like Sparkes (1998, 2001), also asserted that criteria defined from one perspective were not appropriate for assessing research from another perspective. Thus, qualitative research should not be evaluated against the criteria employed to assess quantitative research. They offered key techniques for establishing credibility, plausibility, rigour, and trustworthiness in qualitative research, and for evaluating qualitative research. In my research, I utilised some of the techniques that they suggested, such as prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, provide thick description, demonstrate credibility, audit trail, and maintain a reflexive journal.

Glazer and Strauss (1967) also discussed credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research (they omitted reliability and external validity as these are not the aims of qualitative research) and argued that qualitative research should be assessed on the detailed description of the process of the theory generation and not its verification because social phenomena are constantly changing (unlike the fixed conditions of a laboratory research). More recently, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that the criteria for evaluation should be divided into two elements: the research process and the research product, and that issues of credibility and trustworthiness should be evident in both.

In my research, a collaborative approach (with my supervisory team) was taken in the process of data analysis in order to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of data

analysis and to reduce interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). I established credibility of the analysis process through an audit trail (e.g., journals, memos), which is a record of the development of the analysis process that allows to verify rigour and minimise interpretive bias. My supervisory team acted as peer debriefers by going through the audit trail and raising questions of bias when necessary, as well as challenging my theoretical and analytical approach to data collection and analysis. Moreover, using QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002) allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer, Johnson, & Brackenridge, 2004). For example, journals and memos containing questions used to interrogate the data, and decisions about conceptual development of coding, themes and categories were easily accessed (through active links that the programme offers) by members of the supervisory team and facilitated discussions. Following this collaborative effort in the process of interpretation and reconstructing participants' meanings (e.g., coding the data, establishing themes and categories and links between them), the data were verified and contextualised. Finally, writing memos, reflecting on the research process, and discussing my values and reflexivity in the research (all deemed important in constructionism epistemology) contributed to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data. My research also fulfils the criteria for evaluation recommended by Parker (2004), under which it is to be coherent in the argument of the study (accounting for the conceptual background, research process, and new perspective, which may include accounts and interpretations), grounded in existing research (or address the absence of literature in such cases), and accessible to those outside the research community.

3.4.2 Objectivity and reflexivity in qualitative research

Objectivity in data analysis describes being more open to emergent data (Ahern, 1999). It is, however, acknowledged that true objectivity in qualitative analysis can never be reached and that continued reflexivity should help researchers to recognise bias during the process of analysis (Ahern, 1999). In my research I adopted the basic tenets of grounded theory that coding should emerge from the data in an inductive manner. Thus, concepts in the analysis are supported from the data rather than from pre-conceived theory or hypothesis that come from prior knowledge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Nonetheless, it has been acknowledged within grounded theory that researchers' prior knowledge of the research area does not necessarily influence data analysis (and collection) negatively. Indeed, Strauss and Corbin encouraged the use of discipline-based knowledge as long as the knowledge fits the data and is not inappropriately applied to it.

They further suggested that conducting an exhaustive and wide literature review can inhibit data collection and analysis. As such, my review of the literature and prior knowledge of the area of FF and its developmental origins in the sport domain was limited as little research has been conducted on FF in this domain. Therefore, my prior knowledge did not unduly bias my data analysis and interpretation. In a related vein, Glazer (1992) stated that researchers' knowledge and assumptions "are helpful in developing alertness or sensitivity to what is going on in the interview data" (p. 49). Accordingly, I followed the interpretivists' perspective that it is not necessary for researchers to set aside their specific interests during the process of analysis, but it is important to be reflexive and self-aware.

The dynamic nature of the qualitative research process requires researchers to have a reflexive understanding of their own involvement in the research process (Kvale, 1996; Peshkin, 2000). Reflexivity is an important part of constructionism epistemology, which views the researcher as an integral part of the data. Researchers must attempt to recognise and acknowledge personal thoughts and feelings (e.g., prejudices, assumptions, myths, stereotypes) that may distort their perceptions of other people's experiences. This does not, however, mean that researchers lose their subjectivity as human perception, by nature and definition, is subjective (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991). Ely et al. (1991) advocated that a greater self-awareness can help researchers to be less judgmental, to separate their thoughts and feelings from those of the participants, and to appreciate experiences that are different from their own. Thus, researchers' reflexivity aims "to move us outwards to achieve an expansion of understanding" (King, 1996; p. 176). Accordingly, I employed reflexivity throughout my research (e.g., writing memos, reflecting on the research process, and discussing my values and reflexivity in the research), which contributed to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data.

3.5 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis- Using QSR NUD*IST

There are several Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) available for qualitative researchers (e.g., ATLAS-Ti, WinMax, Ethnograph). I elected to use QSR NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising) for data analysis and, therefore, I will describe only this programme here and

the reasons for my using it.

The first version of NUD*IST was developed in the early 1980's by Qualitative Research Solutions International (QSR) for thematic types of qualitative analysis (e.g., grounded theory). This computer programme enabled researchers to store, organise and code data, make links between data, write memos and annotations (to be added to the documents or coding), and conduct complex searching of text and coding. Thus, its organisational power allows for hyperlinks and searching text and coded data, making it much easier (and time saving) to explore the data than the manual methods of analysis (i.e., looking through cut up papers, files, and boxes).

NUD*IST operates on two complementary systems: the document system that holds all documentary data (e.g., interview transcripts) and memos about the documents, and the node system that facilitates coding the data and, thus, the development of categories as the analysis evolves. These categories, or 'nodes' can be browsed and the researcher can re-read the text, re-assess the appropriateness of the coding, and make amendments accordingly (thus, indexing). A feature in NUD*IST called 'Coding Stripes' reveals the coding of the entire interview transcript, thus, facilitating the task of comparing categories. A great advantage of NUD*IST is that it allows to 'jump' back and forth between the coded segment of texts and the original document (i.e., the interview transcript) and, thus, to read the segment within its context. Finally, the programme facilitates memo writing in relation to a specific document or a node. For example, every time I created a node, a corresponding memo was generated to include the node's definition and my thoughts about it and about its content. Moreover, memos provided a valuable space where I could begin to identify connections between themes and categories, and between the data and the wider literature and, subsequently, to expand the analysis process by exploring the codes. Writing memos was also valuable for recording my thoughts, ideas, explanations and theories as they were emerging during the analytical process in an effort to move the analysis beyond description (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The programme allowed me to begin the analysis process by creating open coding (referred to as 'free nodes', which are not part of any hierarchical structure) that can be later clustered into categories (concepts representing the phenomena; referred to as 'nodes', which contain notes and quotes relating to the category) with divisions ('parent nodes', representing higher order category) and sub-divisions ('child nodes', representing a sub-category of its parent node). I could then generate a mapping display ('tree node')

of the themes and categories ('nodes') that I have constructed in a hierarchical structure with the relations between them displayed more visibly. This is a useful way of making sense of the data as it allows for further analysis of the connections between the themes and categories. NUD*IST, like other computer analysis programmes (e.g., SPSS, ATLAS.Ti), is designed to assist researchers with data analysis, and not to do it for them. Thus, NUD*IST requires researchers to ask questions, to conceptualise, to interpret the data, and to decide what to code in the transcripts and how. The programme merely maximises the efficiency of these processes, much in the same way that using a word processor makes writing this thesis more efficient, but by no means automated.

There is evidence that computer assisted qualitative data analysis software is becoming accepted as a beneficial tool in qualitative data analysis. For example, Miles and Huberman's (1994) stated that "a researcher who does not use software beyond word processor will be hampered in comparison to those who do" (pp. 43-44). Cote (1999) declared that using NUD*IST in data analysis, as oppose to manual analysis, "reduced the chance of error in the analysis and decreased the chance of losing the source of relevant pieces of information" (p. 401). Finally, the United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council has recently recommended in their revised guidelines for training of graduate students, that students should have skills in the use of qualitative data analysis software packages (ESRC, 2001). The guidelines were aimed at a number of disciplines, including psychology. Thus, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software is gaining recognition as being valuable in qualitative data analysis.

3.6 Summary

Constructionism is the epistemological basis of my research, informing its design and choice of methods employed for data collection and analysis. I grounded the research in interpretivism, specifically in symbolic interactionism, as this theoretical perspective suits the research questions and aims; which are to examine FF from the perspectives of parents and athletes and its development through their interactions. Furthermore, the underpinning value of symbolic interactionism, that research should have practical applications and applicability within the context from which it was derived, is consistent with mine. That is, in addition to helping guide future research on FF, my research sought to contribute to parental educational programmes in sport and, thereby, to reduce the

development of FF in young elite athletes.

To insure trustworthiness and credibility of the research I employed rigour in data collection and analysis (e.g., thick description, audit trail, triangulation, an ongoing peer debriefing), examination of the credibility of the researcher (e.g., an ongoing reflection on my own bias and values, maintaining a reflexive journal), and making my epistemological and theoretical stance transparent. Using QSR NUD*IST offered me an efficient way of managing (storing, organising) and coding the data, and of conducting complex searches of text. It also enabled me to generate a mapping display of the categories that I had constructed in hierarchical structures with the connections between them. Finally, QSR NUD*IST allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer, et al., 2004) and facilitated the task of reflection on the research process as it evolves in memos, which constructionism epistemology deems important.

Chapter 4: Study 1

Fear of Failure Among Young Elite Athletes: An Exploratory Study

Chapter overview:

Study 1 aimed to examine fear of failure (FF) among young elite athletes. As the study represented the first endeavour to examine FF in the sport domain among such a population, an exploratory study was deemed appropriate. The study examined a group of young athletes and yielded information for two articles. The articles were entitled:

- Study 1a- Why Young Elite Athletes Fear Failure: Consequences of Failure
- Study 1b- Coping With the Effects of Fear of Failure: An Examination of Young Elite athletes

Study 1a is currently in press in Journal of Sports Sciences and Study 1b is currently under peer review in Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology. This chapter takes a different format from the other chapters in this thesis in order to present each article in its entirety.

Study 1a: Why Young Elite Athletes Fear Failure: Consequences of Failure

Introduction

Conroy (2001a) has asserted that the prevalence of problems attributed to high fear of failure among children in achievement settings (e.g., Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) makes it an important issue of social concern. Many aspects of children's lives are vulnerable to, and affected by, fear of failure. Therefore, understanding the fear of failure phenomenon can contribute both to the quality of children's lives and to their social development. Fear of failure can present an emotional burden for children since they learn, through verbal and non-verbal communication, that successful performance brings added affection and approval, whereas failure can lead to their withdrawal (Conroy, 2001a). As a result, they

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often place a high priority on not failing. In the short-term, this perspective can lead to performance decrements, frustration (over the discrepancy between potential and actual performance), and can detract from the quality of experiences. In the long-term, it can serve as a barrier to future participation in achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a).

To date, the concept of fear of failure has been studied primarily in academic settings, but has been greatly neglected in the sport domain. The effects of fear of failure reported in the academic domain include greater levels of cheating in academic tasks (Monte & Fish, 1987) and greater levels of anxiety, perceptions of low control, unstable self-esteem, pessimism and self-handicapping (Martin & Marsh, 2003). They also include adopting avoidance achievement goals (Elliot & Church, 1997), decreased subjective well-being, decreased grades (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997), decreased intrinsic motivation, and decreased quality of engagement in achievement situations/pursuits (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997). In sport, limited research has shown fear of failure to be associated with burnout among umpires (e.g., Rainey, 1995), youth dropout, barriers to sport participation (Orlick, 1974), drug abuse by athletes (Anshel, 1991), and athletic stress (Gould et al., 1983).

Sport represents a significant achievement domain for children and adolescents (Treasure, 2001) and the increasing pressure to achieve top sporting performances can bring with it an increase in fear of failure among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Consequently, further research into fear of failure in sport, among youth in particular, is needed.

Defining fear

Fear is usually thought of as a subjective emotion that is a state of mind or feeling that has antecedents in the environment that lead to certain causal consequences in behaviour (Gray, 1987). Fear is described as a state of being apprehensive or scared (Gullone & King, 1993) and as an emotional reaction to the threat of punishment, where punishment is defined as "any stimulus, which one will work to terminate, escape or avoid" (Gray, 1987, p. 3). Therefore, many conditions can give rise to fear. Fear is considered to be "a normal reaction to a real or imagined threat" (Gullone & King, 1993, p. 137) that occurs and is displayed over the course of normal child development (as differentiated from clinical fear or phobia). These reactions are referred to as normative fears or worries/concerns (Gullone & King, 1993). During development in secondary school years (i.e., children aged 11-14) fears relating to failure and criticism can emerge, and during adolescent years (i.e., children

aged 15-18 years), when the future and academic achievement become important, fears of social evaluation and criticism become more evident (Gullone & King, 1993).

Perceptions of failure

Victory and defeat are aspects of competitive sport and most youth sport participants view winning as important (Passer, 1984). Therefore, it is not surprising that win-loss outcomes influence children's emotional state post-competition (e.g., experiencing greater levels of anxiety and dissatisfaction with one's performance, and less enjoyment after losing; Passer, 1988) and that losing is the most potent situational source of post-competitive stress (Scanlan, 1984). It appears that many children interpret a win as a standard for success, and thus, losing becomes a threat and accordingly is defined as failure (Scanlan, 1984). If success and failure are defined as such, the experience of failure will be pervasive since at least half of the competitors in any given competition incur defeat.

Some researchers, however, contend that success and failure relate to one's perceptions of the quality of the performance. For example, Maehr and Nicholls (1980) conceptualised success and failure as psychological states rather than objective levels of performance, and thus suggest that feelings of success and failure are based on perceptions of whether one's goals are achieved or not. Passer (1984) proposed that children perceive success to represent not only a performance outcome (i.e., winning or losing), but also the quality of the performance. Similarly, McAuley (1985) suggested that athletes view success and failure not just in terms of win-loss but also in terms of personal accomplishment and standard of excellence (either self- or sport-imposed). Finally, Conroy et al. (2001) suggested that perceptions of failure are determined by how well athletes' needs are met (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) rather than by the level of performance alone or the way competence is defined. The satisfaction of these innate psychological needs promotes individuals' growth, optimal functioning and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Concerns about performance failure and negative social evaluation are the most prevalent sources of worry for athletes (e.g., Passer, 1983; Martens et al., 1990). Both worries about process (e.g., not playing well, making mistakes) and outcome (e.g., losing, criticism from parents and coaches) contribute to fear of failure among children participating in sport (Passer, 1983). Researchers have reported that junior elite wrestlers (aged 13-19 years, Gould et al., 1983; aged 9-14 years, Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984) and runners (aged 9-15 years, Feltz & Albrecht, 1986) worried most frequently about making

mistakes, not performing to their ability, not improving on their performance, not participating in championship events, not performing well, and losing. All these studies concluded that fear of failure and fear of social evaluation are predominant sources of worry to most young athletes.

Conceptualisation of fear of failure

Early achievement motivation theorists conceptualised fear of failure as a personality disposition (in terms of a capacity to anticipate negative affect in achievement or evaluative situations) and defined it as a tendency that orients individuals to seek the avoidance of failure in achievement settings because one feels shame and humiliation upon failure (McClelland et al., 1953). Later, Atkinson and Litwin (1973) stated that fear of failure was "the disposition to become anxious about failure under achievement stress" (p. 146), thus, associating anticipatory shame with failure and viewing failure as a threat. The motive to avoid failure was suggested to be socially learnt between ages 5 to 9 years (McClelland, 1958).

Recently, Conroy and colleagues (Conroy et al., 2002) have developed a multidimensional, hierarchical model of aversive consequences of failing associated with dispositional fear of failure, which is grounded in the cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion (Lazarus, 1991). According to this theory, emotions occur when an individual appraises encounters with the environment as having either a positive or negative significance for well-being (relational meaning) in terms of a person's individual goals. From this perspective, fear of failure involves appraising threat in evaluative situations with the potential for failure because those situations activate cognitive beliefs associated with the aversive consequences of failing (e.g., experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one's self-estimate; Conroy et al., 2002). The strength of one's belief about the likelihood of aversive consequences of failure represents a way to measure individual differences in fear of failure (Conroy et al., 2002) since individuals have learnt that failure is associated with aversive consequences and therefore experience apprehension and anxiety in evaluative situations (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). Thus, fear of failure represents a dispositional tendency.

Once individuals perceive relational changes indicating failure or success, they must appraise how those changes affect their ability to accomplish their goals before experiencing an emotion. In this appraisal, which involves the primary appraisal process for

the emotions most closely related to fear of failure (i.e., fear and anxiety; Conroy et al., 2001), individuals determine whether their goals are impacted by the perceived relational changes, which goals are impacted, and how important achieving those goals is to them. Each emotion is then defined by a core relational theme, which describes the transaction between the individual and environment. Lazarus (1991, p. 122) states that for fright, the core relational theme is "facing an immediate, concrete, physical danger" and for anxiety it is "facing an uncertain, existential threat". Conroy et al. (2001) suggest that these core relational themes are consistent with the worry that Liebert and Morris (1967) have proposed as a characteristic of anxiety (Conroy et al., 2001). Similarly, fear of failure may be clarified by distinguishing the threatening or aversive consequences associated with failure.

The fear of failure model by Conroy and associates (Conroy et al., 2002), based on research within the sport domain, has identified five beliefs about the consequences of failing that are associated with threat appraisals: experiencing shame and embarrassment; devaluing one's self-estimate; having an uncertain future; important others losing interest; and upsetting important others. Failure can be aversive if performers anticipate and invest in the idea of having a particular consequence to success and do not achieve that desired consequence (Conroy, 2001a). Thus, if athletes invest in and anticipate certain consequences to success, they can perceive failure and not accomplishing their desired goal as aversive. For example, some athletes learn to anticipate that success pleases significant others and brings approval, and therefore, when they fail and significant others do not express pleasure and approval, they might feel that something of value is withdrawn, and as a result may feel threatened.

Birney, Burdick, and Teevan (1969) considered the experiences of success and failure in an interpersonal context and posited that the possibility of non-attainment of a goal can produce fear. They asserted that society values high achievers and measures people's worth by their personal successes. Therefore, people fear the aversive (i.e., threatening) consequences of failure (a "secondary punishing characteristic of failure", p. 201), and those who are described as fearful of failure may be simply fearful of losing value in the eyes of others. Birney et al. advocated that failure, if defined as the non-attainment of a goal, is not aversive by itself and does not produce a fearful reaction, but the consequences of non-attainment are something that can be feared. In other words, people fear the consequences of failure (if they perceive them as aversive) rather than failure itself. This

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conception formulated Birney et al.'s (1969) multidimensional hierarchical model of fear of failure.

Birney et al.'s (1969) model describes the following general types of fears that are associated with the consequences of failure: fear of devaluating self-estimate (i.e., the threat to having to change one's belief about one's self, typically in a downward direction); fear of non-ego punishment (i.e., punishment that is not to one's self-estimate, such as withdrawal of tangible rewards, wasting time and effort in the course of non-attainment of a goal); and fear of reduction in social value (i.e., the belief that others will think less of the performer after failure). Thus, by failing in achievement situations individuals are faced with the possibility of self-devaluation, social devaluation and punishment. The degree to which individuals will fear these possible consequences can differ. Furthermore, each fear will be expressed differently in individuals' behaviours. For some, the primary fear may be of the lowering of self-worth in the eyes of others, while for others, it may be the loss of rewards that often accompanies failure. Therefore, according to this model, the avoidance of achievement situations would be a characteristic behaviour of individuals who fear the consequences of failure. The tendency to avoid failure motivates individuals to defend against the loss of self-esteem, the loss of social respect, and the fear of embarrassment (Birney et al., 1969). This assertion is in accordance with the conceptualisation of fear of failure by other achievement motivation theorists (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953), and has recently been reinforced through research in education (e.g., McGregor & Elliot, 2005) and sport (e.g., Conroy, 2004).

Recently, Conroy et al. (2001), in their qualitative examination to ascertain the perceived consequences of failure among adult elite athletes and performing artists, reported similar consequences to those suggested by Birney et al. (1969). For example, fears of personal diminishment, fears of having low ability, and fears of lacking control in performance were similar to Birney et al.'s fear of devaluing self-estimate. Fears of having hopes crushed or losing opportunities, fears of experiencing a tangible loss, fears of having an uncertain future, and fears of wasting efforts related to Birney et al.'s fear of non-ego punishment. Finally, similar to Birney et al.'s fear of reduction in social value, were the appraisals that failure is embarrassing, involves letting down others, and leads to others losing interest in you.

At present, the existing models of fear of failure have not been subject to research evaluation within the context of youth elite sport. In addition, it is not known whether the

perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes are consistent with those reported in other populations (e.g., adult elite athletes; Conroy et al., 2001). Therefore, examining the perceived aversive consequences associated with failure of young elite athletes can extend this knowledge and help develop a better conceptual understanding of fear of failure. Elite athletes invest considerable time in their sporting domain, and the results of their performances can have powerful consequences on their lives and future sporting careers (Conroy et al., 2001). Moreover, it is likely that elite young athletes would fear failure since there are high expectations and pressure on them to win and to achieve top performances in sporting events that are in the public arena and socially evaluated.

Based on the review of literature above, three issues led to the development of the current investigation. First, research has documented the problems attributed to fear of failure in achievement settings (e.g., Orlick, 1974; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003). Second, sport is a popular and significant achievement domain for children and adolescents (Treasure, 2001) where winning is the typical demand (Passer, 1988). Third, there is a lack of research on fear of failure among this age group, and in particular, among young elite athletes. Therefore, our purpose was to determine the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes, since beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure provide the basis for fear of failure (e.g., Conroy et al., 2002), and to ascertain similarities and differences with those reported by adult athletes (Conroy et al., 2001). A qualitative method of inquiry was deemed suitable in order to determine the perceptions, emotions, and concerns associated with failure and to provide a holistic understanding of the athletes' experiences (Turner, 1994).

Method

Participants

Eleven male and female British (of Caucasian origin) elite athletes aged between 14-17 years volunteered to participate. Athletes were drawn from a specialist sports college in the East Midlands of England. Two of these athletes were interviewed for a pilot study and subsequently were excluded from the main investigation. The remaining nine athletes (5 males, 4 females) were involved in a range of sports [tennis (n=3 males), kickboxing (n=1 male), triathlon (n=1 female), basketball (n=1 male), field hockey (n=1 female), and football (soccer) (n=2 females)]. At the time of the interviews, the athletes reported 1.5 - 5 years competitive experience at international level.

Procedures

The procedure involved three stages:

Stage 1- Seeking consent. Access to the athletes was obtained through a specialist sport school in the United Kingdom. Letters and consent forms were sent to the athletes and their parents (or guardians in the cases of athletes who reside at the school and were away from home) via the school's coordinator. The letters explained the requirements, aims, and procedures of the study and assured the volunteers complete anonymity and that all information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and would not be passed on to the teaching and coaching staff or others. The consent forms required the signatures of both the athletes and their parents (or guardians) prior to participation.

Stage 2- Building rapport. After receiving the consent forms from the athletes, an initial 20-minute pre-interview meeting was arranged (via the school coordinator) with each athlete (individually). The aims of these meetings were to meet the athletes for the first time and to build a rapport with them (Arskey & Knight, 1999). They also served to explain the aims of the study, to answer participants' questions regarding the study and any concerns that they might have about participating in it, to ensure that the athletes agreed to participate in the study of their own free will, and to arrange a convenient interview time for both parties.

Stage 3- The interview. An interview was conducted with each athlete individually at the school in a quiet room where only the athlete and the primary researcher were present. Interviews ranged between 55 and 90 minutes and were audio-recorded. Participants' non-verbal cues were also observed, especially during conversations about their past experiences of failure, and were discreetly noted by the researcher on a notepad. This would later serve to provide additional meaning to the verbal data.

Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted (and audio-recorded) individually with two female runners (age 16 years) prior to interviews in order to test and refine the interview guide. They were used to test the order in which the interview questions were asked and the links between them (allowing for a flow and orderly sequence), to test for appropriateness and comprehension of questions and terms, and to make amendments accordingly. Based on the athlete's feedback after the pilot interview, the researchers' evaluations of the interview and

the critique of a colleague who specialises in qualitative research and interviewing techniques, modifications were made to simplify the wording of the questions and their order in the interview guide. The final guide was used to interview the nine athletes who participated in the present study.

The interview design and structure

A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted with each athlete individually in order to allow them to relate to their own experiences in a more free and open manner, and to disclose more information than perhaps they would have in a focus group interview. We assumed that experiences of failure and fear of failure may be sensitive topics for some athletes to talk about and therefore the privacy of an individual interview was expected to facilitate a more in depth disclosure than a group interview. A pre-designed interview guide was used as a flexible framework for the interview and was based on key questions most relevant to the study (Arksey & Knight, 1999). It contained open-ended questions, elaboration, and clarification probes to be used during the interview to clarify, expand and deepen the athletes' responses and, thereby, to increase the richness of these responses. Although all the athletes were asked the same questions in the same way, the order of topics and the order of questioning were free to vary within the natural flow of the conversation and related issues that were thought to be important by the athletes were allowed to surface.

The interview guide was divided into three sections, along with pre- and post-interview sections. The pre-interview section aimed to establish rapport and orient the athletes to the interview process. It sought to reiterate the aims of the study, the reasons for audio-taping the interview and the use of data and the structure of the interview, and to assure the athletes again about the confidentiality and anonymity practice. It also intended to encourage them to give honest and accurate responses to the questions asked, and to remind them that they could decline answering anything that they wished to and that they could terminate the interview at any point, should they wish.

The first section of the interview was an introductory section that began with general background questions about the athlete's sporting career (e.g., "when did you begin playing your sport?", "how did you get into elite level?" "what age did you move into elite level?", "who inspired, supported and encouraged you during your career?"), demands of the sport and how they managed to juggle the demands of their sport with those of the school. The aim of this section was to further build rapport and trust with the athletes so that they feel at

ease and conformable disclosing what may be private information (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

The second section of the interview aimed to ascertain the athletes' perceptions of consequences of failure. All the athletes perceived failure as losing a competition. The questions were retrospective in nature where the athletes were asked to describe a past experience of what they considered to be their worst sporting failure and how they felt and behaved afterwards [(e.g., "describe how you felt (emotions, mood) after that failure", "tell me how you behaved after that failure", "what did you think immediately after that failure and in the following days?")], what they perceived they lost (i.e., disadvantage) from that experience of failure, what was the worst thing about failure for them, and what they disliked about that experience of failure. Losses of failure and dislikes about failure were taken as an indication of consequences of failure that the athletes perceived to be aversive. These questions allowed us to establish how the athletes perceived the consequences of failure that they have experienced in the past. Finally, they were asked to summarise in a few words their experience of the failure that they had just discussed. These words would later serve in the analysis of the data as interpretive validity and cross-referencing.

The third section of the interview aimed to establish consequences of future failure that the athletes perceived as aversive. The questions were prospective in nature where the researcher created a picture in the athletes' minds about the forthcoming events in which they were expected to compete (by asking them questions such as, "what is your next competition? where? when?", "tell me what you know about your opponent", "describe how are you preparing for it") so that they could relate to it easily and disclose their fears about it. The athletes were then asked, "tell me how you feel about going to this competition", "tell me what concerns and worries you have about performing in this competition", "tell me what are your and others' (i.e., parents, coaches, team mates) expectations from this competition", "tell me what you think the consequences will be for you if you achieve and if you don't achieve your desired goals in this competition", and "tell me what consequences of failure do you want to avoid most". These questions aimed to access the athletes' perceived consequences of failing in their next competition. We assumed that a prospective approach could elicit worthwhile data to supplement data drawn from the athletes' actual experiences. Thus, the use of prospective and retrospective styles of questioning offered us different but complementary approaches to accessing the athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure.

At the end of each section the athletes were asked whether there was anything else they could add concerning what had been discussed and whether they were comfortable to carry on with the interview. In addition, post-interview debriefing offered both parties an opportunity to clarify or refine aspects of the interview and for the athlete to reflect on the interview process and experience. It also allowed the athletes the opportunity to talk about some of the issues that were raised in the interview and to "let go" of any emotions that in-depth interviews can evoke (King, 1996), hence, providing a closure on the experience. This ensured that the participants left the interview in a positive frame of mind. Moreover, none of the athletes were scheduled to compete for at least a month following their interview. This section was also designed to thank the athletes for their valuable contributions to the study and to unwind the interview by changing the focus to less personally directed issues. All interviews were conducted by the first author, who is trained in qualitative research methods and is experienced in conducting interviews, and has training in counselling skills.[2]

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim (yielding 300 pages of 1.5-spaced text) and were inductively analysed using the principles of thematic analysis (Smith, 1995) and some principles of grounded theory analysis (e.g., coding, constant comparison, memo writing; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) in order to identify common themes and categories that represented perceived consequences of failure. A computer software package, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002), was used to facilitate data analysis (e.g., organising, coding, categorising).

The basic units of analysis were the raw-data quotes that were extracted from the interview transcripts. These were quotes that captured a distinct concept and were "a segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information" (Tesch, 1990, p. 116). These quotes were organised into a hierarchical structure of themes and categories. The inductive process, which moves through a number of stages, reveals essential themes (by determining which parts of the descriptions are essential and which are not) and determines the relation between the themes and how they reflect the phenomena studied, therefore, allowing for meaning of social phenomena to be explained (Sullivan, 2003). Following several discussions between the researchers of the present study and after reaching a mutual consensus the final higher- and lower-order themes and categories were established.

Trustworthiness of data

A collaborative approach was taken in the process of data analysis in order to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of data analysis and to reduce interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Following a collaborative effort of all the researchers in the process of interpretation and reconstructing participants' meanings (e.g., coding the data, establishing themes and categories), the data were verified and contextualised.

Credibility of the analysis process was also established through an audit trail (e.g., journals, memos), which is a record of the development of the analysis process and thus, allows to verify rigor and to minimise interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Team members acted as peer debriefers by going through the audit trail and raising questions of bias when necessary. Furthermore, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002) allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer et al., 2004). For example, journals and memos containing questions used to interrogate the data, and decisions about conceptual development of coding, categories and themes were easily accessed (through active links that the software offers) by each member of the research team and facilitated discussions.

Results

Consequences of Failure

The results showed no clear differentiation between the data generated from the prospective and the retrospective styles of questioning, therefore, we will report the results across both contexts without a separation. Ten higher-order themes and 32 lower-order themes (with 24 sub-themes) emerged for perceived consequences of failure (see Table 4.1). These are presented below in the ordering cited by most participants.

Table 4.1

Consequences of failure: higher- and lower-order themes, and sub-themes

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Diminished perception of self (n=9)
• Lose self-confidence and self-belief
   - Lose self-confidence and self-belief (A1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
   - Lose self-esteem (A1, 2, 3, 6)
   - Realising you're beatable (A4)
• Failure reduces performance confidence
   - Not take risks in a game (A)
   - Be more nervous on court (A6)
   - Scared to hit the ball (A2)
• Punitive actions against self
   - Hostile towards self (A2,5)
   - Blame self (A2,5)

No Sense of achievement (n=9)
• No sense of achievement (A1, 2)
• No sense of fulfilment and satisfaction (A2, 5, 7)
• Losing (A1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
• Getting beaten (A1, 9)
• Not winning (A1, 2,8)

Emotional cost of failure (n=9)
• Negative emotions (A1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9)
• Negative mood (All)
• Feeling guilty (A2, 5, 9)
• Getting told off and criticised (A7, 9)

Letting down significant others (n=8)
• Not meeting expectations and letting down others
   - Coach (A1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9)
   - Parents (A1, 2, 3, 5)
   - Self (A1)
   -Friends (A3, 7)
• Upsetting significant others
   - Coach (A2, 4, 9)
   - Parents (A9)
   - Teammates (A4)

Negative social evaluation (n=6)
• Negative judgment and low regard from others
   - People (A4, 5,9)
   - Coach (A4)
   - Teammates (A5,9)
• Loss of others respect
   - Friends (A7)
   - People (A5, 6, 9)
   - Coach (A9)
• Loss of others interest (A1)

Lose motivation and drop out (n=5)
• Lose motivation (A1, 6, 8, 9)
• Lose motivation and drop out (A1, 2, 9)
• Have thoughts of quitting (A2)

Tangible losses (n=5)
• Financial loss (A1, 4, 8, 9)
• Get out of the tournament (A4)

Have an uncertain future (n=4)
• Not get selected and lose opportunities for future participation
   - Not get selected and lose opportunities (A1, 5, 7, 8)
   - Get dropped out of the team (A1)
   - Not know what events I can participate in (A1)
• Hard to get coaching (A1)
• Failure has adverse effects on performance and life beyond sport (A2)

Having thoughts of failure re-occurring (n=4)
• Failure puts doubt in your mind that it might happen again (A4)
• Scared it [failure] might happen again (A7)
• I worry about losing again (A8)
• I fear failing again (A4, 6)

Intangible losses (n=3)
• Lose enjoyment (A7)
• Wasted my chances (A9)
• Your failure raises your opponents' confidence (A1)

Note. Higher-order themes are in bold, lower-order themes are indicated with '•', and sub-themes of lower-order themes are indicated with '-'. The numbers in parentheses refer to the athlete who reported the data (A1=triathlon; A2=field hockey; A3=kickboxing; A4=basketball; A5, 8=football; A6, 7, 9=tennis)

Diminished perception of self was perceived as a consequence of failure by all the athletes, and was a consequence that they all stated that they disliked. This higher order theme comprised three lower order themes: lose self-confidence and self-belief (which included sub-themes, lose self-confidence and self-belief, lose self-esteem, and realising you're beatable), failure reduces performance confidence (which included sub-themes, not take risks in a game, be more nervous on court, and scared to hit the ball), and punitive actions against self (which included sub-themes, hostile towards self, and blame self).

Examples of lose self-confidence and self-belief include: "my confidence stayed low after that failure and I felt scared to hit the ball for weeks after that.... I didn't think highly of myself.... I thought I was useless" [(Athlete 2 (A2)], "I disliked that it *[failure]* knocked everyone's *[teammates]* confidence for the next week" (A8), "my confidence and my self-belief went down" (A7), "you have a sense of being a failure" (A1), "you don't think positively about yourself after failure" (A5).

Failure reduces performance confidence was evident from the statements of three athletes who indicated that previous failure reduced their confidence during the following performance. For example, "you are more nervous on court and you don't play well" (A6), "you play more cautiously and you don't take risks in a game" (A4), and, "failure makes

you play badly. After that *[failure]* I played terribly... I was scared to hit the ball and I was very unhappy with myself and it went on for months" *(sigh;* A2)

Punitive actions against self was reported by two athletes and related to athletes becoming hostile towards themselves. For example, "you become negative towards yourself and you think 'I'm useless, I'm so stupid, why, why, why?" *(asking in a angry raised voice)....* You just criticise and blame yourself and you're cross with yourself for not playing well" (A2), and "you blame yourself that it's your fault that the team lost" (A5).

No sense of achievement was also perceived as a consequence of failure by all the athletes, and was a consequence that they all stated that they disliked. It related to losing in a competition, getting beaten, or not winning, and not achieving one's goals, and therefore, not having a sense of achievement, fulfilment and satisfaction. For example, "not achieving my goal.... not being successful where I wanted to be.... You don't think that you've achieved something.... I had no sense of fulfilment" (A2), "the disadvantage of failure is not having success.... You lose fulfilment and satisfaction" (A5).

Emotional cost of failure emerged as a consequence of failure that all of the athletes mentioned and disliked. This higher-order theme comprised four lower-order themes: negative emotions (i.e., upset, depressed, despondent, irritated, angry, unhappy, annoyed, sad, and embarrassed), negative mood (i.e., feeling awful, down, disappointed, low, horrible, not good, bad, sorry, unfriendly towards others, and distraught), feeling guilty, and getting told off and criticised by coaches and parents. The following quotes illustrate some of the athletes' emotions and moods experienced after failure, "failure makes you despondent and irritated with yourself and it affects your play badly.... failure makes you feel depressed and you have negative attitude about everything.... you feel down for few days after failure and you're not at your heights.... it's a horrible feeling after failure" *(shaking her head;* A2), "you go down the dumps and get emotional when you lose an important fight that you want to win.... you feel bad" *(looking down;* A3), "The feeling of failing is terrible, disappointed and sadness... I felt embarrassed, really upset and just sorry" (A9).

Three athletes felt guilty about their failures. For example, "you feel guilty when you're failing your team, like missing a goal that could have made the team win (A2)", "you feel you played really badly and the team lost 'cos you played badly" (A4), and, "I felt guilty that I put my coach's work in question.... He gets judged about what I do by those above him.... My loss probably humiliated my coach 'cos he's the one getting looked at as well as

me" (A9).

Getting criticised and being told off after failure was mentioned by two athletes: "you also get attention after failure, but for the bad reasons... you get more criticism when you fail" (A7), "my coach told me off... he was really upset and was screaming and shouting at me a lot after the match.... my parents gave me another telling off" (*shaking his head; A9*).

Letting down significant others was perceived as a consequence of failure by eight athletes, who stated that they disliked. This higher-order theme comprised two lower-order themes: not meeting expectations and letting down others, and upsetting significant others. The former theme related to perceptions that not meeting expectations leads to letting down significant others. For example, "I worry about letting down my friends and my coach and my parents if I fail 'cos they've come to watch me" (A3), and "I feel that I'm disappointing my parents when I'm failing 'cos they've helped me so much" (A5). Athlete 2 captured these fears when she disclosed, "I fear that I won't live up to their *[mother and coach]* expectations.... I feel that I disappoint them if I don't reach it.... That's the major part of my worry that I'm afraid that I'm going to disappoint *[them]*.... If you don't like your coach then you don't fear what they think and feel.... She *[coach]* might say she's happy with me but I feel like being a disappointment if I don't get there *[meet the expectations]*" *(sigh)*.

Upsetting significant others related to athletes perceiving that their failure upsets and displeases coaches and parents [(e.g., "Failure makes the coach unhappy and it makes me want to put it right to make him happy and respect me.... He goes quiet on us when we lose and you know he's angry" (A4), "My coach was just distraught and so angry.... My parents were also disappointed and really upset" (A9), "I worry about what other people might feel if I fail, like if I don't get to *(meet)* the expectations" (A2)], and teammates, and contributes to team disharmony [e.g., "I disliked the way how teammates got a bit angry about losing and about how we played and they were unfriendly toward each other at the end" (A4)].

Negative social evaluation emerged as a consequence of failure that six athletes cited. This higher-order theme comprised three lower-order themes: negative judgment and low regard from others, loss of others' respect, and loss of others' interest.

Negative judgment and low regard from others related to perceptions of being judged negatively after failure by coaches [(e.g., "coach judges you negatively when you don't meet his expectations" (A4)], other people [(e.g., "when I know I'm on the line and that people are going to judge me by it, then I'm fearful of it, it makes me fear failure.... Just

people looking at me as a failure, looking at me in a bad mind.... People viewing me as a failure makes me feel like a failure" (A5); "I fear that failure might show me up... and people who don't know me take away the judgment that I'm not a good player, and I want them to think that I am" (A4); "If you've failed to reach the expectations people start to look down at you and treat you in different way" (A9)], and teammates [(e.g., "When you're losing you can't concentrate on the match and you concentrate on how people, like teammates, will say 'you lost to him so you're no good'" (A9); "some teammates can think 'she isn't a good goal-keeper 'cos the coach didn't pick her for the tournament" (A5)].

Loss of others' respect related to athletes' perceptions of losing the respect of friends, coaches, and other people when they fail. For example, "It just goes through your mind a little bit that you might lose... you feel nervous 'cos you're expected to win, and there are friends and you want to win for their respect" (A7), "I lost the respect of the LTA *[Lawn Tennis Association]* people *[managers, top coaches]* after that *[failure]* and I didn't like it" (A6), "you lose people's admiration and some respect for you, like friends, coaches, teammates, family, overall" (A5), and, "after that failure I knew I wasn't going to get the same respect, and my coach lost his confidence and belief in me.... Him telling me off makes me fear failure 'cos I know I lost some of his respect.... I lost the respect, commitment and enthusiasm of my parents and my coach" (*sighing and looking down;* A9).

Loss of others' interest was perceived as a consequence of failure only by athlete 1. She stated, "you get less attention from the team managers if you keep failing.... They want winning athletes in their team...so you get forgotten by them".

Lose motivation and dropout was cited by five athletes and was perceived as an aversive consequence of failure. It related to feeling de-motivated after failure and having thoughts of quitting, and dropping out of the sport. For example, athlete 2 revealed that she dropped out of competitive swimming after not achieving "good timing in competitions". Following that, she took up tennis, reaching a county level. However, after successive losses in tournaments she decided to drop out of competitive tennis, explaining, "I stopped playing in tournaments... I was thinking I'm useless, I'm wasting my time, I should quit" (A2). After quitting tennis she took up field hockey, and it was during this time that she participated in our study. Some months later she informed us that she had dropped out of sport entirely. Similarly, athlete 1 also dropped out of competitive swimming because she "wasn't getting good results.... Eventually I just got fed up with it", after which she took up triathlon. She explained, "If you keep failing at elite level it makes people quit... you lose motivation".

Athlete 9 revealed, "I felt not motivated.... I lost my commitment.... You think of those who are being successful and you think of you failing and so your motivation would be none at all". Some months later we found out that he also dropped out of sport.

Tangible losses were perceived as a consequence of failure by five athletes. These included financial loss and getting out of the tournament when one fails [(e.g., "when we lost we got out of the tournament"; A4)]. The former was the most common tangible loss mentioned by the athletes. For example, "not get lottery funding" (A1), "not get sponsorship" (A1, 4, 8), and "I lost my racket sponsorship" (A9).

Have an uncertain future was perceived as a consequence of failure by four athletes. This higher-order theme comprised three lower-order themes: (a) not get selected and lose opportunities for future participation (this had three further sub-themes: not get selected and lose opportunities, get dropped out of the team, and not know what events I can participate in). For example, "failure causes you to worry about the consequences of your failure, like you worry about what events you're likely to be able to do in the future.... Failure means you can't participate in the next race... you don't qualify to enter certain future events or follow up events....You don't get selected to represent your country" (A1), and "I wasn't selected to go to the world cup tournament with the England squad and so I didn't share that experience with the rest of the team and didn't feel being part of the team the next time I played with them"(A5); (b) hard to get coaching [e.g., "if you keep failing coaches don't want to coach you", (A1)]; and (c), failure has adverse effects on performance and life beyond sport [e.g., "After that *(failure)* I played terribly and was unhappy with myself....That negativeness, the negative attitude didn't just affect my sport but also me and my social life" (A2)].

Having thoughts of failure re-occurring was reported by four athletes. It related to athletes thinking about the possibility of failing again following an experience of failure. For example, "failure puts a little doubt in your mind that it might happen again.... Losing can make you fear of failure" (A4), "I fear failing again" (A4, 6), "you're scared that it *[losing]* might happen again" (A7), and, "I worry about losing again" (A8).

Intangible losses of failure were perceived as a consequence of failure by three athletes. These related to losing enjoyment when one fails (e.g., "you don't enjoy it when you fail"; A7), wasting one's chances (e.g., "after that failure I thought it was gonna be sort of the beginning of the end.... I knew that I sort of wasted my chances"; A9), and your failure raises your opponents' confidence (e.g., "my failure raised my opponents' confidence";A1).

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Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify what young elite athletes perceived as the aversive consequences of failure in sport in order to further our conceptual understanding of fear of failure. These findings represent one of the first endeavours to document the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes. The most common perceived consequences of failure cited by the athletes were diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, and emotional cost of failure, followed by letting down significant others, and negative social evaluation. According to Conroy et al. (2002) and Birney et al. (1969), beliefs in aversive consequences of failure provide the basis for fear of failure, and according to Lazarus (1991, 2000), anticipation of a threatening outcome elicits fear. Accordingly, we suggest that the athletes in the present study described consequences of failure that they disliked and wanted to avoid, and thus, appraised them as threats that they anticipated and feared. The present study did not determine the magnitude of fear that such beliefs can elicit in these athletes, however, we encourage researchers in future to investigate such a research question by administering a fear of failure questionnaire (e.g., Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory; Conroy et al., 2002) to a larger sample size.

Threat, according to Lazarus (1991), is the condition of the person when confronted with a stimulus that s/he appraises as endangering important values and goals. Thus, when individuals perceive that important goals are endangered they appraise the situation as a threat. Accordingly, when the demands of sport (e.g., winning, performing well) are not met, athletes can appraise it as threatening to their goals. In other words, they may perceive that failure (e.g., not winning, not performing well) will endanger their chances of achieving their desired goals, and thus, perceive failure as a threat.

It is not surprising that the athletes perceived failure as diminishing their perception of self since self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are linked to the adequacy with which athletes perform (Smith, 1989). Self-worth depends on one's accomplishments since ability is perceived as the major component of success while inability is perceived as the major cause of failure (Covington, 1986). Therefore, failure could be perceived as an indication of one's inability to succeed and would be perceived as having aversive consequences for perceptions of self, and as a threat to one's feelings of self-worth. The basic assumption of self-worth theory of achievement motivation (Covington & Beery, 1976) is that achievement behaviour is largely the result of people's efforts to protect their sense of personal esteem since in our society self-worth depends largely on one's accomplishments

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and on one's ability to achieve in competitive environments. People generally perceive the ability to achieve competitively as an indication of their worth. Ability is seen as a major contributor to feelings of self-regard, especially, when ability is perceived as instrumental to ensuing achievement. Variations in self-perceived ability account for the differences in pride reactions in success and in humiliation reactions to failure. Therefore, a threat (such as failure) to the sense of worth that depends greatly on maintenance of accomplishments and ability, will elicit fear.

Some athletes reported a loss of motivation after failure and having thoughts of quitting, and some reported dropping out of their sport, thus, perceiving failure to have aversive consequences for motivation level. This finding is consistent with that reported by Conroy et al. (2001) that some adult athletes and performing artists perceived failure to decrease their motivation. Hence, failure can prevent performers attaining high levels of performance and reaching their potential (Conroy et al., 2001). Threat of failure promotes irrational strategies for defensive purposes and achievement behaviour, particularly its motivational aspects, is largely mediated by perceptions of ability (Covington, 1986). Moreover, Birney et al. (1969) posited that individuals fearful of failure can decrease their effort in the task in order to defend against losses of self-esteem and social respect, and experiencing embarrassment upon failure by attributing failure to lack of effort. Accordingly, we propose that loss of motivation post-failure and having thoughts of quitting, and indeed dropping out of the sport, are behaviours that serve to defend athletes' perceptions of their ability and competence, their social value and, hence, their sense of worth.

Some athletes perceived that failure made their coaches "unhappy", "angry", and "distraught", thus, perceiving failure to have aversive consequences for their relationship with their coaches. The coach-athlete relationship has been recognised as important in the achievement of successful performance and interpersonal satisfaction (e.g., Smith and Smoll, 1996), and as one of the primary psychosocial factors influencing the experiences of both parties (Poczwardowski et al., 2002). Successful coach-athlete relationships are associated with athlete's satisfaction, self-esteem, success, performance accomplishments, and with team cohesion (e.g., Gardner et al., 1996), while less successful or relationships characterised by conflict have been suggested to be sources of stress and distraction (especially for the athlete), and associated with lack of trust, communication and respect between coaches and athletes (e.g., Gould et al., 1999). Therefore, based on this body of research and on the proposition that individuals fear the consequences of failure if they

perceive them to be aversive (e.g., Birney et al., 1969; Conroy et al., 2002), we propose that the athletes that perceived failure to have aversive consequences for their relationship with their coaches, might perceive failure as a threat to such relationships and, thus, fear it. It appears that relationships between team members can also be adversely affected by failure. Team members can become angry toward each other after losing a game. Thus, failure can have an adverse impact on team harmony.

One athlete perceived that athletes receive less attention after failure from team managers and "get forgotten" by them since they want "winning athletes" in their teams. Thus, perceiving failure to have aversive consequences for the amount of attention athletes receive after failure. Others, however, stated that they received more attention after failure from coaches and parents, but that the nature of this attention was of criticism, which explains why they perceived failure to have aversive consequences for them. Criticism, or being "told off" as some of the athletes referred to, can be perceived by some as punishment of failure, and therefore, can be anticipated and feared and, thus, may contribute to fear of failure (Birney et al., 1969). Criticism typically leads to experiencing shame and embarrassment, which are at the core of fear of failure (e.g., Conroy, 2004; McGregor & Elliot, 2005).

Achievement situations typically involve social evaluation that can be threatening if a child anticipates failing and receiving negative appraisals from others (Scanlan, 1984). Lazarus (1991) stated that appraisal that one has failed to meet one's ego-ideal (and others' ideals) elicits emotions of shame, humiliation, and embarrassment. Thus, shame is associated with the perception of personal failure. McGregor and Elliot (2005) posited that shame is a highly aversive emotional experience that is grounded in global self-devaluation and that shame leads to fearing failure. They suggested that individuals high in fear of failure (in comparison to those low in fear of failure) experience greater levels of shame upon failure, are more likely to generalise specific failure experience to the global self, and are more likely to have relational concerns upon failure. Furthermore, these individuals orient to and seek to avoid failure and making mistakes in achievement settings and, as such, this avoidance of failure is likely to be a self-perpetuating process that serves in maintaining and exacerbating the tendency to avoid failure, leading to more mistakes and failures (McGregor & Elliot, 2005). In the sport context, fear of experiencing shame has been found to be associated with increased self-blame and reduced affirmation while failing (Conroy & Metzler, 2004).

Most of the athletes perceived negative social evaluation to be an aversive consequence of failure. This reinforces previous research of adult populations that classified it as loss of social value (Birney et al., 1969) and as important others losing interest (Conroy et al., 2002), and contended that people fear these consequences of failure if they perceive them as aversive (Birney et al., 1969; Conroy et al., 2002). Smith (1989) reported that fears of failure and of disapproval are the most common sources of stress for athletes because for many of them athletic success is a major source of recognition and self-esteem. Passer (1983) also asserted that fears of failure and of negative evaluations may result from children's threatening expectations about the sport environment. These expectations may stem from developmental factors such as the child's history of competitive outcomes and the attributions made for that performance. Fearing negative evaluation relates to one's expectations of being negatively evaluated by others, which typically elicits apprehension in evaluative situations (Watson & Friend, 1969) and being concerned with not making good impressions on others (Leary, 1983).

Other similarities were found between the perceived aversive consequences of failure identified in the present study and those in Birney et al.'s (1969) and Conroy et al.'s (2002) models. For example, diminished perception of self, punitive actions against self, and no sense of achievement correspond to Birney et al.'s and Conroy et al.'s fear of devaluing one's self-estimate. Have an uncertain future corresponds to Conroy et al.'s fear of uncertain future and Birney et al.'s fear of non-ego punishment. Tangible and intangible losses correspond to Birney et al.'s fear of non-ego punishment. Emotional cost of failure corresponds to Conroy et al.'s fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment and to Birney et al.'s fear of reduction in social value. Letting down significant others corresponds to Conroy et al.'s fear of upsetting important others and to Birney et al.'s fear of reduction of social value. Finally, loss of others' interest corresponds to Birney et al.'s fear of reduction of social value and to Conroy et al.'s fear of important others losing interest.

There are also similarities between the perceived consequences of failure reported by the young elite athletes in the present study and those perceived by adult elite athletes and performing artists reported by Conroy et al. (2001). These include, diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, punitive actions against self, emotional cost of failure, lose motivation, have an uncertain future, tangible and intangible losses, failure displeases significant others, reduced recognitions, and thoughts of failure re-occurs.

The only unique perceived aversive consequence of failure identified in the present

study is that failure contributes to losing motivation and dropping out of sport. Although Conroy et al. (2001) identified loss of motivation among adult elite athletes and performing artists, they did not identify dropping out and having thoughts of dropping out of the achievement situation. Thus, this may be an exclusive aversive consequence of failure perceived by young elite athletes. These differences may be attributed to contextual and age differences of the populations studied in the present study and in previous studies (e.g., Birney et al., 1969, adult non-sport population; Conroy et al., 2001, 2002, adults). It may also be that this consequence of failure is perceived differently by adults and children and in different contexts (i.e., performing artists, athletes, non-sport population). However, given the nature of the present research design and data analysis, this conclusion may be premature.

Summary and Conclusions

Conducting in-depth interviews with young elite athletes provided an insight into their subjective experiences and allowed us to examine their perceptions of the consequences of failure. This study extends our knowledge and understanding of fear of failure among young elite athletes and helps us develop a better theoretical and conceptual understanding of it.

Consequences of failure may be perceived differently by athletes, and accordingly, will affect them differently. Athletes who perceive consequences of failure as aversive will view failure as a threat and will fear it. Therefore, if we are to fully understand why athletes fear failure we need to understand how they perceive the threat of failure.

Achievement environments where successful individuals are rewarded and where success leads to gains (e.g., gaining respect, self-esteem, approval, acknowledgment, praise) and failure to losses (of the above), and where only a few can achieve success, can contribute to individuals to perceive failure a threat and to fear it (Rothblum, 1990). It is not surprising, therefore, that young elite athletes may fear failure in a highly competitive domain such as sport where their performances are regularly evaluated by judges, coaches, parents, peers, and the public, where there is often pressure to win and achieve top performance in order to be successful, and where failure has adverse consequences. Furthermore, considering the prevalence of problems attributed to high fear of failure (e.g., Elliot & Sheldon, 1997), it is logical to assume that fear of failure can potentially be harmful to athletes' performances, as fear of failure might be in itself a threat to their

achieving the desired goal. Thus, in competitions and other evaluative situations (e.g., selection events) fear of failure can potentially contribute to failure. We encourage future research to investigate this assumption.

Overall, there seems to be a consistency between the present findings and those reported by Conroy and colleagues (2001) in the sport domain among adult population. Therefore, the novel aspect of this study is not as much in its results as it is in the potential for generalising existing results to young elite athletes. Fears of failure may be instilled at a young age and can continue into adulthood.

Children can drop-out of sport if they find athletic competition to be too aversive and threatening rather than enjoyable and challenging (Smith & Smoll, 1990). Therefore, echoing Conroy's (2001a) view, we advise that understanding fear of failure among young elite athletes is important for enhancing their well being, quality of engagement, sporting performance, and social development, and that psychologists working with young elite athletes are in a good position to make contributions to such endeavours. In the light of our finding that 'diminished perception of self' is a central perceived aversive consequence of failure, we recommend that practitioners should endeavour to modify such perceptions and their emotional consequences and, thus, reduce young athletes' fears of failure. It is worth noting, however, that some young elite athletes might be reluctant to reveal their fears of failure since they could, as did athletes participating in the present study, associate fear of failure with weakness of character, lack of confidence, and with non-successful athletes. Such perceptions can make it challenging for psychologists to access the fears of young athletes.

We recommend that future research examines how the people who play important roles in the lives and in the development of young elite athletes (e.g., parents, coaches), contribute to the development of fear of failure among young athletes. It should design intervention strategies that not only focus on helping young elite athletes cope with and overcome fear of failure, but also contribute to the reduction of the causes and contributors to it. Such research can enhance our understanding of the fear of failure phenomenon among young elite athletes and in the sport domain where research on fear of failure has been greatly neglected.

Study 1b: Coping With the Effects of Fear of Failure: An Examination of Young Elite Athletes

Introduction

Effective coping responses to fear of failure (FF), which is a source of stress and anxiety for athletes (Conroy, Willow & Metzler, 2002; Gould, Horn & Spreemann, 1983; Passer, 1983), are important at elite level sports. Coping with stress and the demands of sport is an essential element in effective functioning at the elite level where many potential sources of stress are involved (Gould, Eklund & Jackson, 1993; Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1991). Sport presents many situations that athletes can perceive as threatening, challenging, or harmful (e.g., playing crucial competition, coach-athlete conflicts, injuries, performance slumps, poor refereeing) and if they do not posses effective coping skills to deal with them they are likely to experience poor performance, negative affect, and may eventually drop out of sport (Madden, 1995). Therefore, elite athletes need to develop and use a variety of cognitive and behavioural coping skills to manage these demands (Crocker & Graham, 1995). Failure to cope effectively has been described as a problem in elite performance (Crocker & Isaak, 1997) and has been classified as maladaptive coping (Jackson, Mayocchi & Dover, 1998). Currently, due to limited research on FF in the sport domain, we have little knowledge on how FF impacts elite athletes and how they respond to its effects.

Coping is a dynamic process defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific and/ or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984; p. 141). Coping responses vary among individuals since they are dependent on the individuals' evaluation of their personal control and resources to reduce the stressor (Lazarus, 2000). Problem-focused coping (PFC) and emotion-focused coping (EFC) are coping responses that aim to regulate stressful emotions (through EFC) and alter or remove the source of the stress (through PFC), and thereby to improve the emotional state (i.e., to experience more positive emotions) (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Avoidance-focused coping (AFC) aims to neutralise distressful emotions by attempting to avoid dealing with the problem or to reduce tension through escapist behaviours (Endler & Parker, 1990).

Fear is a state of being apprehensive or scared, and is "a normal reaction to a real or imagined threat" (Gullone & King, 1993; p. 137). Gray (1987) described fear as a

subjective emotion that is a state of feeling or of mind that has antecedents in the environment and that lead to certain causal consequences in behaviour. Fear is an emotional reaction to the threat of punishment, where punishment is "any stimulus, which one will work to terminate, escape or avoid" (Gray, 1987; p. 3). Gray (1987) proposed two kinds of fear-motivated behaviours: "active avoidance", where individuals learn new ways (or behaviours) that enable them to avoid punishment, and "passive avoidance", where individuals abandon the desired activity as it is followed by a punishment. In passive avoidance situations individuals have to choose between approaching and avoiding a particular activity; this is referred to as "approach-avoidance conflict". Approach is stimulated by incentive motivation whereas passive avoidance is stimulated by fear (Gray, 1987). Similarly, Lazarus and Averill (1972) suggested that fear-related emotions might be expressed openly in avoidance behaviour or involve other ways of coping such as, denial, repression and intellectualisation. Lazarus (1991) further stated that anxiety is an emotion associated with "an action tendency to withdraw from or avoid threats" (p. 238). Thus, he conceptualised avoidance orientations as characteristic of anxiety and suggested that fears are parallel with avoidance (and approach) motivational orientations since they represent undesired (and desired) situations for individuals.

Conceptualisation of Fear of Failure

Achievement motivation theories (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Heckhauasen, 1977; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark & Lowell, 1953) viewed FF as an important influence on achievement behaviour. They viewed the tendency to react with anxiety to FF as reducing motivation to engage in achievement activities. A central theme of a number of achievement motivation theories is concerns, or anxiety about evaluation. These researchers conceptualised FF as a personality trait (in terms of a capacity to anticipate negative affects in achievement, or evaluative situations) and viewed it as a dispositional tendency. They proposed two achievement orientations, one that orients individuals to seek the avoidance of failure in achievement setting (because one feels shame upon failure) and another that orients towards the achievement of success. Thus, they conceptualised FF and need for achievement as separate motive dispositions, and therefore, proposed approach and avoidance motivation as independent tendencies (or components) of achievement motivation. The motive to avoid failure is said to be socially leant around ages 5 and 9 years (McClelland et al., 1953).

Birney et al. (1969) proposed four behaviours that serve to reduce FF: avoidance,

putting maximum effort, reducing the achievement standard, and not trying. Atkinson and Feather (1966) suggested that individuals high in FF (when FF exceeds hope of success) would choose easy tasks so that they can succeed in them or difficult tasks so that no one could succeed in them and, thus, minimise anxiety about failure. More recently, Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996) posited that FF can underpin the adoption of performance-avoidance, approach, and mastery goals and that performance-avoidance goals can elicits anxiety, debilitates performance, and leads individuals to lose interest in the activity and eventually to drop out.

Test anxiety researchers also provided insight into FF. For example, Covington (1986) stated that test anxiety is "the reaction to and an anticipation of failure" (p. 248). Thus, it is the threat of failure that induces anxiety. Failure-induced anxiety, he suggested, is caused largely by the individuals' recognition that the outcome of evaluative situations is beyond their control and they cannot influence events (self-helplessness). Others have suggested that the testing procedure activates FF, emotionality and worry, and that FF is primarily concerned with the individual tendency to perceive testing situations (and other evaluative situations) as threatening (e.g., Hagtvet, 1983). The cognitively-oriented worry (or self-preoccupation) is the most salient factor in performance decrements in evaluation situations (Hagtvet, 1983; Sarason, 1986) as the worry component of anxiety represents cognitive reactions (e.g., self-criticism, concern about consequences of failure, worry about personal incompetence and the difficulty that follows) that are a demanding cognitive activity that undermines performance by diverting attention from the task demands and, thus, adversely affect performance (Deffenbacher, 1980; Sarason, 1986).

In sport, limited research has also shown FF to have no direct effect on sporting performance but primarily an indirect influence on cognitive performance via worry cognitions (Hosek & Man, 1989). The researchers, therefore, contended that only worry cognitions can hinder best performance since athletes high in FF would engage primarily in irrelevant self-perception worries about the possible social consequences of failure and this gives rise to emotions, thereby, increasing mental stress that can lead to a decline of sporting performance or even to failure. Similarly, others proposed that individuals fear the consequences of failure if they perceive them aversive (e.g., Birney et al., 1969; Conroy, Poczwardowski, & Henschen, 2001) and that the anticipation of a threatening outcome elicits fear (Lazarus, 1991, 2000). Threat is the condition when people are confronted with a stimulus that they appraise as endangering important values and goals (Lazarus, 1991).

Thus, when people perceive that important goals are endangered they appraise the situation as a threat. Accordingly, athletes can appraise not meeting the demands of sport (e.g., winning, performing well) as threatening to their goals. They may perceive that failure to meet such demands will endanger their chances of achieving their desired goals and, thus, perceive failure as a threat.

Cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion (Lazarus, 1991) posits that once individuals perceive relational changes indicating failure or success, they must appraise (primary appraisal process) how those changes affect their ability to accomplish their goals. In this appraisal, individuals determine whether their goals are impacted by the perceived relational changes, which goals are impacted, and how important achieving those goals is to them. Emotions will occur when the person appraises encounters with the environment as having either a positive or negative impact for well-being (relational meaning) in terms of the person's individual goals. From this perspective, FF involves appraising threat in evaluative situations with the potential for failure because these situations activate cognitive beliefs (schemas) associated with the aversive consequences of failing (Lazarus, 1991). In short, fear is an emotional reaction to a perceived threat that is stimulated by the belief that failure is a threat to achieving one's goals, and that aversive consequences will follow failure. Researchers have identified five beliefs about the consequences of failure that are associated with threat appraisal: experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one's self-estimate, important others lose interest, uncertain future, and upsetting significant others (Conroy et al., 2002). All can elicit FF.

Fear of failure has been associated with feeling shame, high levels of cognitive disruption, somatic anxiety, worry and overall sport anxiety, and low levels of optimism (Conroy et al., 2002). Fears of failure and fears of disapproval (or of negative social evaluation) were reported to be the most prevalent sources of worry and maladaptive stress among athletes (Smith, 1989; Martens, Vealey, Burton, Bump, & Smith, 1990) because for many athletes athletic success is a major source of recognition and self-esteem, and where self-worth is linked to one's accomplishment since ability is perceived as the main ingredient required for success whereas inability as the main cause of failure (Covington & Omelich, 1984).

Research among youth participating in sport has shown that both worries about process (e.g., not playing well, making mistakes) and outcome (e.g., losing, criticism from parents and coaches) contributed to FF. Research among young elite athletes has shown that their

worries related to FF or feelings of inadequacy, feelings of external control or guilt, and fear of evaluations (Gould, Horn & Spreemann, 1983). Junior elite wrestlers (aged 13-19 years, Gould et al., 1983; aged 9-14 years, Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984) and runners (aged 9-15 years, Feltz & Albercht, 1986) reported to worry most frequently about making mistakes, performing to their ability, improving on their performance, participating in championship events, not performing well, and losing. All these studies concluded that FF and fear of social evaluation are predominant sources of worry to most young athletes.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

To date, the concept of FF has been studied primarily in academic settings (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003) but has been greatly neglected in sport despite the prevalence of problems attributed to high FF in achievement settings (e.g., Conroy, 2001a; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) and despite sport being a popular and significant achievement domain for children and adolescents (Treasure, 2001). Consequently, further research into FF in sport, among youth in particular, is greatly needed. Therefore, the focus of the present study was to investigate FF among young athletes, and specifically among those performing at the elite level of competition (national and international) in the public arena, whose performances are regularly evaluated by selectors (or judges) and the public, and where failure can have adverse consequences for them. Elite level athletes invest substantial time in their sport and the results of their performances can have potent outcome on their lives and future sporting careers (Conroy et al., 2001). Moreover, it is likely that young athletes competing at the elite level will fear failure since sport is a highly competitive domain where the increasing pressure to win and achieve top performance brings with it an increase in FF among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Thus, the objectives of the present study were two-fold: first, to examine the effects that FF had on such athletes and, second, to find out how they coped with the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences induced prior to competition. A qualitative method of inquiry was deemed suitable for this study in order to account for the phenomenological complexity of coping behaviour and provide a holistic understanding of the athletes' experiences (Turner, 1994).

Method

Participants

Eleven British male and female elite athletes aged between 14-17 years volunteered to participate in the study. Athletes were drawn from a specialist sports school in the East Midlands of England. Two of these athletes were interviewed for a pilot study and subsequently were excluded from the main study. The remaining nine athletes (5 males, 4 females) were involved in a range of sports [tennis (n=3 males), kickboxing (n=1 male), triathlon (n=1 female), basketball (n=1 male), field hockey (n=1 female), and football (soccer) (n=2 females)]. At the time of the interviews, all the athletes were performing at national level and each reported 1.5 - 5 years competitive experience at the international level.

Procedures

The procedure involved the following stages:

Stage 1- Seeking consent- Access to the athletes was obtained through a specialist sport school in the United Kingdom. Letters and consent forms were sent to the athletes and their parents (or carers in the cases of athletes who lived at the school and were away from home) via the school's coordinator. The letters explained the requirements, aims, and procedures of the study and assured the volunteers complete anonymity and that all information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and would not be passed on to the teaching and coaching staff or others. The consent forms required the signatures of both the athletes and their parents (or carers) prior to participation in the study.

Stage 2- Building rapport. After receiving the consent forms from the athletes, an initial 15-minute pre-interview meeting was arranged (via the school coordinator) with each athlete (individually). The aims of these initial meetings were to meet the athletes for the first time and to build rapport with them (Arskey & Knight, 1999). They also served to explain the aims of the study, to answer the athletes' questions regarding the study and any concerns that they might have about participating in it, to ensure that they agreed to participate in the study of their own free will, and to arrange a convenient interview time for both parties.

Stage 3- The interview. An interview was conducted with each athlete individually at the school in a quiet room where only the athlete and the primary researcher were present.

Interviews lasted between 55 and 90 minutes and were audio-recorded.

Pilot interviews

Two pilot interviews were conducted (and audio-recorded) individually with two female runners (both 16 years of age) prior to interviews in order to test and refine the interview guide. These aimed to test the order in which the interview questions were asked and the links between them (allowing for a flow and orderly sequence), to test for appropriateness and comprehension of questions and terms, and to make amendments accordingly. Based on the athletes' feedback after the pilot interviews, the researchers' evaluations of these interviews and the critique of a colleague who specialises in qualitative research and interviewing techniques, modifications were made to simplify the wording of the questions and their order in the interview guide. The final guide was used to interview the nine athletes who participated in the present study.

The interview design and structure

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each athlete individually in order to allow them to relate to their own experiences in a more free and open manner, and to disclose more information than perhaps they would have in a focus group interview. We assumed that experiences of failure and FF may be sensitive topics for some athletes to discuss and, therefore, the privacy of an individual interview can possibly facilitate a better disclosure than a group interview. A pre-designed interview guide was used as a flexible framework for the interview and was based on key questions most relevant to the study (Arksey & Knight, 1999). It contained open-ended questions, elaboration, and clarification probes to be used during the interview to clarify, expand and deepen the athletes' responses and, thereby, to increase the richness of these responses. Although all the athletes were asked the same questions and in the same way, the order of topics and the order of questioning were free to vary within the natural flow of the conversation and related issues that were thought to be important by the athletes were allowed to surface.

The interview guide was divided into four sections, along with pre- and post-interview sections. The pre-interview section aimed to establish rapport and orient the athletes to the interview process, to reiterate to the athletes the aims of the study, the reasons for audio-taping the interview and the use of data, to explain the structure of the interview, to assure them again about the confidentiality and anonymity practice, to encourage them to give honest and accurate responses to the questions asked, and to remind them that they can decline answering anything that they wish to and that they could terminate the interview at

any point should they wish.

The first section of the interview was an introductory section that began with general background questions about the athletes' sporting career (e.g., "tell me how you got into your sport and at what age", "when did you begin playing at elite level?", "tell me who inspired, supported and encouraged you during your career"), demands of the sport and how they managed to juggle the demands of their sport with those of the school. This section aimed to build further rapport and trust with the athletes so that they would not feel threatened to disclose what may be private information and to ease them into the interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

The second section of the interview aimed to ascertain the athletes' perceptions of failure in sport. They were asked, "how do you define failure in sport?", and "what does failure in sport mean to you?"

The third section aimed to establish past effects of FF on the athletes and their coping responses. Questions were retrospective in nature where the athletes were asked to describe their emotions, behaviours and coping responses to FF prior to a competition that they considered important and that took place in the last month (e.g., "tell me how you felt before going to this competition", "tell me what concerns and fears you had before this competition about losing/ getting beaten/ not winning", "tell me how these concerns and fears affected you", "tell me what you did or said to yourself to help you deal with and get over these concerns and fears"). The athletes described important competitions as selection events, international events, and important games in the season. The use of the terms 'losing/ getting beaten/ not winning' in the questions echoed the specific athlete's perception of failure in sport that had been established earlier in the second section of the interview.

The fourth section aimed to ascertain current experiences of FF, their impact on the athletes, and the athletes' coping responses. Questions were prospective in nature where the athletes were asked about competitions that were approaching in the coming month that they considered important and in which they were expected to compete (e.g., "what is your next important competition? where? when?", "tell me what you know about your opponent", "describe how are you preparing for it"), about their fears of failing in this competition (e.g., "tell me how you feel about going to this competition", "tell me what concerns and fears you have about losing/ getting beaten/ not winning in this competition"), how these fears are currently impacting their behaviour (e.g., "tell me how these concerns

and fears are affecting you"), and how they are coping with them (e.g., "tell me what you do or say to yourself to help you deal with these concerns and fears").

At the end of each section the athletes were asked whether there was anything else they could add concerning what had been discussed and whether they were comfortable to carry on with the interview. Finally, the post-interview debriefing offered both parties an opportunity to clarify and refine aspects of the interview and to unwind the interview by changing the focus to less personally directed issues. Furthermore, it offered the athletes the opportunity to reflect on the interview process and experience, to talk about some of the issues that were raised in the interview, and to "let go" of any emotions that an interview can evoke (King, 1996), hence, providing a closure on the experience and serving an ethical purpose. All interviews were conducted by the first author, who is trained in qualitative research methods and is experienced in conducting interviews, and has training in counselling skills.

Data Analysis

All interviews (a total of 13 hours) were transcribed verbatim and were inductively analysed using the principles of thematic analysis (Smith, 1995) and some principles of grounded theory analysis (e.g., coding, constant comparison, memo writing; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to identify common themes and categories that represented effects of and coping responses to FF. A computer software package, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002), was used to facilitate data analysis (e.g., organising data, coding, categorising).

The basic units of analysis were the raw-data quotes that were extracted from their interview transcripts. These were quotes that capture a distinct concept and were defined as "segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information" (Tesch, 1990; p. 116). Through the process of inductive analysis these quotes were organised into a hierarchical structure of themes and categories. The inductive process, which moves through a number of stages, reveals essential themes (by determining which parts of the descriptions are essential and which are not) and determines the relation between the themes and how they reflect the phenomena studied, therefore, allowing for meaning of social phenomena to be explained (Sullivan, 2003). All the researchers involved in the present study read the interview transcripts carefully, coded the data, and conducted code-checks to assure coding reliability and to minimise interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Following several discussions between the researchers and after reaching a mutual consensus, the final higher-order themes and categories were established. Lower-order

themes were assigned names that were as close as possible to the athletes' words and higher-order themes and categories were names using the language of social science.

Trustworthiness of data

A collaborative approach was taken in the process of data analysis in order to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of data analysis and to reduce interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Following a collaborative effort of all the researchers in the process of interpretation and reconstructing participants' meanings (e.g., coding the data, establishing themes and categories), the data were verified and contextualised.

Credibility of the analysis process was also established through an audit trail (e.g., journals, memos), which is a record of the development of the analysis process and thus, allows to verify vigour and to minimise interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Team members acted as peer debriefers by going through the audit trail and raising questions of bias when necessary. Furthermore, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002) allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer, Johnson, & Brackenridge, 2004). For example, journals and memos containing questions used to interrogate the data, and decisions about conceptual development of coding, categories and themes were easily accessed (through active links that the software offers) by each member of the research team and facilitated discussions.

Results

All the athletes perceived failure in sport as outcome oriented, such as, "losing", "not winning", and "getting beaten". Some also perceived failure as performance oriented, such as, "not doing your best" and "not performing well" (A2,3,4,5,7), "not meeting the goals and expectations" (A1, 2, 5, 8, 9), and "having people view me as a failure" (A5). The most common fears expressed by the athletes were fears of losing/ not winning/ getting beaten (n=9). For example, "I worry about losing before important games.... I'm scared of losing and I get nervous" (A2), "Before tournaments it goes through your mind that you might get beaten, that you're there and the match is going wrong for you" (A7), "It (FF) just makes you feel before a big game like we're not capable of taking on this team.... I feel 'oh God I don't want to play this game I might lose'" (A5), "When you play a team that you are really supposed to beat... then there's a bit of fear that you might just lose, it could happen, you may fail" (A4), "Before the first race of the year I'm always thinking...I may not win...I may come third or fourth. I'm worried just in case they're (opponents) going to

beat me" (A1), and "You're comparing yourself to other players.... It just makes you worry and have doubts that you can win" (A8).

Six athletes revealed that the conditions under which they feared failure most were prior to selections events, crucial games in the season, and international tournaments. This was captured eloquently in athlete 5's statement, "The bigger the tournament, the bigger the game, the bigger the event, it just makes your fear of failure grow and grow and grow".

The main results of the present study focused on the effects of FF on the athletes and on their coping responses to the effects of FF. Each will be presented here separately.

Effects of FF

The results revealed that FF affected the athletes in four ways. It affected their well-being, their interpersonal relationships, their sporting performance, and their schoolwork (see Table 4.2). Each one of these effects will be presented separately.

Table 4.2

Effects of fear of failure: higher- and lower-order themes, and sub-themes

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EFFECTS ON WELL-BEING

Emotional state (n=8)
• Nervous
   - Nervous (A2,5,7,9)
   - Jittery (A4)
   - Not sleep well (A5)
   - Anxious (A4,9)
• Worried (A1,2,3,5)
• Stressed
   - stressed (A2,5)
   - tense (A2)
• Scared (A2)
• Upset (A2)

Low self-perception and motivation (n=3)
• Lose self-confidence (A2,4,5)
• Lose motivation (A5)
• Have negative outlook (A2,4)

EFFECTS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Become less sociable and tolerant to people (n=2)
• Not nice to other people (A5)
• Snappy and nasty with other people (A9)
• Less capable of dealing with world around me (A5)

Communicate less with people (n=4)
• Becoming quieter (A3,6,7,8)
• Talk less with people (A3,7)

EFFECTS ON SPORTING PERFORMANCE

Sporting performance (n=3)
• Not take risks in a match (A6)
• Play more cautiously (A4)
• Swam slower in competitions (A2)

EFFECTS ON SCHOOLWORK

Neglect schoolwork (n=2)
• Not concentrate on schoolwork (A5)
• Not think about schoolwork (A8)

Note. High-order themes are in bold, lower-order themes are indicated with '•', and sub-themes of lower-order themes are indicated with '-'. The numbers in parentheses refer to the athlete who reported the data (A1=triathlon; A2=field hockey; A3=kickboxing; A4=basketball; A5,8=football; A6,7,9=tennis)

Effects of FF on Well-being

Effects of FF on Well-being (n=8) included effects on the athletes' emotional states and on their self-perception and motivation. The effects on their emotional state encompassed feeling nervous (n=5) [e.g., "It (FF) makes me a bit jittery in the game" (Athlete 4; A4); "I feared failure a couple of days of the build up... I felt nervous... I wouldn't say that I slept very well" (A5); "A day probably before the match... I just become a lot more nervous and anxious about the match and about how well I want to do and people try to calm me down but I still stay nervous" (A9)], feeling worried (n=5) [e.g., "I worry about it (the race) a lot... probably about two hours before or the night before" (A1); "I worry about failure about a week before the tournament" (A3)], feeling stressed (n=2) [" I tense up and get stressed" (A2); "It's (FF) stressful" (A5)], feeling scared (n=1) ["It (FF) breaks down your confidence and then you don't do as well because you're scared" (A2)], and feeling upset (n=1) ["It takes me a long time to sort myself out... I'll be upset for quite a while" (A2)].

The effects on self-perception and motivation encompassed losing self-confidence (n=3) [e.g., "FF just eats you away really, if you're constantly thinking you're going to fail then it makes you less confident and not feel so good about yourself and your capabilities.... you just feel like maybe you're not capable of doing it, you just have doubts in your mind about being able to take on the challenge" (A5)], losing motivation (n=1) ["It (FF) affects your motivation. It can make me feel 'oh god I don't want to play this game I might lose'.... It just makes you feel before a big game like we're not capable of taking this team on and you're just not motivated to go do it" (A5)], and having negative outlook (n=2) ["I become very negative toward myself, it's always yourself" (A2); "It (FF) just makes you negative about things and you're just not feeling positive about things....You're thinking 'I'm not

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very good, I'm not playing well at the moment'… and you're thinking you're going to fail" (A4)].

Effects of FF on Interpersonal Relationships

Effects of FF on Interpersonal Relationship (n=4) related to effects on the athletes' social interactions. The athletes reported becoming irritable, less sociable and less tolerant of the people around them [e.g., "You're not very nice to people, you just don't want people to be around and bugging you, you are just less capable of dealing with the world around you" (A5); "I get a little bit snappy and a bit nasty to people" (A9)] and communicating less with them [e.g., "I end up going quiet on everybody" (A3); "I become a bit quieter around people" (A8, 6); "I become quiet and don't talk" (A7)].

Effects of FF on Sporting Performance

Effects of FF on Sporting Performance (n=3) related to FF adversely affecting athletes' performance. For example, "you don't take risks in the match" (A6), and "you play more cautiously…. You don't do what you normally do 'cos you're afraid" (A4). The effect of FF on sporting performance is also illustrated in athlete 2's statement, who revealed that "my biggest fear is that I will disappoint my mom…. I never want to let my mom down or my coach". She stated that due to her inability to cope effectively with her fears of failure ["I just couldn't handle the stress before (competitions) of 'this is important (competitions) you can't mess up'" (A2)] she had dropped out of high level swimming and later on out of high level tennis:

> "I did good times in training, but in competitions I swam slower, so FF affects you and your performance…. With tennis it (FF) made my playing go down, my confidence went down, and I would play a game terribly because I just wouldn't hit the ball…. I was too scared and I had no confidence and I'd be cross with myself for not having the confidence to hit the ball. I'll go week after week to play a match and not be happy with it and at the end of the day it just made me depressed" *[sigh]* (A2).

Effects of FF on Schoolwork

Effects of FF on Schoolwork (n=2) related to athletes neglecting their schoolwork, as they explained: "It (FF) affected my schoolwork because I wasn't concentrating enough on schoolwork and other things" (A5), and "I'd be just thinking about the game instead of thinking about my schoolwork or what I did last night, or something" (A8).

Coping Responses to Effects of Fear of Failure

Coping responses to the effects of FF were divided into three categories: avoidance-focused coping strategies (which were grouped into cognitive or behavioural strategies), emotion-focused coping strategies, and problem-focused coping strategies (see Table 4.3). Each will be presented separately.

Table 4.3

Coping with fear of failure: higher- and lower-order themes, and sub-themes

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AVOIDANCE-FOCUSED COPING (n=9)

Cognitive Strategies

Mental disengagement (n=9)

• Pushing thoughts of failure away
  - Push thoughts of failure away (A6,8)
  - Push thoughts of failure away and keep a positive mind (A2,3,6,8)
  - Push thoughts of failure away because thinking about failure leads to failure (A1,3,5,6,7,8)
  - Try not to think about failure (A1,4,6)
  - Not think about failure (A1,2,8)
  - Not think about the consequences of failure (1,8)
  - Thought control (A1,5,6)
  - Think about other things (A8,9)

• Chill out (A5)

Try not to let FF affect me (n=2)

• Try not to let FF affect me (A1)
• Not let FF affect me (A2)

Behavioural Strategies

Become quiet and seek isolation (n=4)

• Become quieter (A3,6,7,8)
• Stay focused and not talk about other things (A3)
• Go to a quiet place (A3,6)

Not talk about FF (n=2)

• Not discuss FF with coaches (A5,7)
• Not discuss FF with significant others (A7)

Humour (n=2)
• Stick my tongue out and laugh (A1)
• Try to joke (A2)

EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING (n=9)

Positive self-talk (n=5)

• Positive self-talk (A4,6,8)
• Self-affirmation (A1;4,7)
• Self-pep talk (A8)

Positive reinterpretation (n=7)

• Perceiving FF as facilitative
  - Perceiving FF as a positive (A1,8)
  - Turning FF into a motivational source (A1,2,4,8)
  - Believing anything after failure is positive (A1)

• Adopting realistic view about failure
  - Failure is just having a bad day (A1,2)
  - Hope (A1)
  - There is another chance in the future (A8)
  - Failure is part of sport and life (A1,3,4,5,6)

• Accepting FF
  - You got a job to do and can't get stressed (A1)
  - Accept FF and live with it (A2)

• Turning to religion (A2)

Lowering goals (n=1)

• Bring your goals down (A4)

Seek emotional social support (n=1)

• Talk to friends and family about FF (A2)

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING (n=7)

Increase effort to prevent failure (n=6)

• Increase training (A2,3,4,6)
• Preparation more exact (A4)
• Concentrate harder (A4,9)
• Learn about the opponent (A1)

Confronting your fears (n=4)

• Face your fears (A5,9)
• Disregard your fears (A4, 6)

Note. High-order themes are in bold, lower-order themes are indicated with '•', and sub-themes of lower-order themes are indicated with '-'. The numbers in parentheses refer to the athlete who reported the data (A1=triathlon; A2=field hockey; A3=kickboxing; A4=basketball; A5,8=football; A6,7,9=tennis)

Avoidance-Focused Coping Strategies

Cognitive avoidance-focused coping strategies were described by all the athletes interviewed (n=9). Two higher-order themes were identified in this group: mental disengagement (n=9) and try not to let FF affect me (n=2). *Mental disengagement* comprised two sub-themes: pushing negative thoughts of failure away (n=9) and chill out (n=1). *Pushing thoughts of failure away* was described by the athletes as: pushing thoughts of failure away and keeping a positive mind [e.g., "you have that little worry but you try to put it to the back of your mind.... I try not to think about failure and just try to think about trying to do my best" (A8); "I try to think more positively than negatively like 'oh what if I don't make it'" (A2)], push thoughts of failure away because thinking about failure leads to

failure [e.g., "you push it (thoughts of failure) 'cos if you think you're going to fail you're already one down on yourself, you already like lost before you get there" (A1); "I try not to think of failure 'cos I feel that I'm likely to end up failing" (A3); "thinking of yourself as being a failure contributes to your failure" (A5)], try not to think about failure [e.g., "I know I can fail but I try not to think about it" (A6)], not think about failure [e.g., "I just didn't think of the possibility of failing so therefore I just gone on the field and played" (A2)], not think about the consequences of failure [e.g., "I try not think about the outcome"(A8); "I don't think of the consequences... I just think I got to prove that I can do it" (A1)], thought control [e.g., "you just put the thought aside and it sorts itself out, you just relax about it" (A5); "you just not let the thoughts [of failure] come to your head because it's always going to be there but you can't let it come" (A6)], and think about other things [e.g., "I concentrate on the good games that I've played and things like that" (A8); "I try not to think about it [failure] and try to concentrate on other things that are happening.... When they (thoughts of failure) come back I just try to forget about them even more" (A9)]. *Chill out* was described only by athlete 5, "I chill out, like take a bath, read, not think about it (failure), go out, put things out of your mind, not focus on it. It helps me".

Try not to let FF affect me was the second higher-order theme of cognitive avoidance-focused coping strategies and was described by 2 athletes, as follows: "I try not to let it (FF) affect me, I don't know how *(laugh)*" (A1), and "I did think about failure before (the match) but I didn't let it affect me too much when I was playing, I just thought 'I'm in a hockey match so just let me play'.... You understand it (FF) and know that it's there but you don't let it affect you, so it works... you learn to cope with it" (A2).

Behavioural avoidance-focused coping strategies were described by seven athletes. Three higher-order themes were identified in this group: *become quiet and seek isolation* (n=4) [e.g., "I end up going quiet on everybody and try to stay focused instead of talking about different things...I just keep myself to myself" (A3); "you become a bit quieter and go to a quiet place and think about it" (A6);"I feel nervous and act different, like I become quiet and don't talk" (A7)], *not talk about FF* (n=2) [e.g., "I wouldn't tell my coaches about it (FF)...'cos they might think I can't cope with things... and I'm not going to be a strong enough performer" (A5); "we (players and academy coaches) don't talk about failure 'cos you don't want it to be part of your life" (A7)], and *humour* (n=2) [e.g., "you get more nervous when they're (team managers) watching the race... I just stick my tongue out at them and laugh" (A1); "you try to joke" (A2)].

Emotion-Focused Coping Strategies

Emotion-focused coping strategies were described by all the athletes (n=9) interviewed. This category comprised four higher-order themes:

Positive self-talk (n=5) related to encouraging motivational statements and comprised three lower-order themes: positive self-talk [e.g., "you tell yourself just go there and give it your best" (A6); "I reassure myself how good I am.... It's like the opposite to fear" (A4)], self-affirmation [e.g., "I focus on 'I can do it, I've got to show them" (A1); "I say to myself 'you can win this match'" (A7)], and self-pep talk [e.g., "you'll be thinking 'maybe I can't do it' and then you think 'no c'mon prove to yourself that you can do it, that you're suppose to and that you're meant to be here'... I think 'c'mon [own name] be strong'" (A8)].

Positive reinterpretation (n=7) was a coping strategy that related to reframing perceptions. It comprised four lower-order themes: perceiving FF as facilitative (n=4), adopting a realistic view about failure (n=7), accepting FF (n=2), and turning to religion (n=1). Perceiving FF as facilitative comprised three sub-themes: perceiving FF as a positive [e.g., "worrying about failure is a good thing 'cos it gives me an advantage in the game 'cos I'm thinking about my game.... If you don't have worries then you're not going to be successful 'cos you're not going to play to your best. The more you worry the more it will make you do better" (A8)], turning FF into a motivational source [e.g., "there's a bit of fear that you may fail... but it also motivates you" (A4); "It's the FF that keeps you going... that's what pushes you"(A8)], and believing that anything after failure is positive [e.g., "I just think that anything that happens after failure is positive... it can't get any worse, can it? *(laugh)*. So everything can be a plus after that" (A1)].

Adopting a realistic view about failure comprised four sub-themes: failure is just having a bad day [e.g., "everyone has bad days.... I will have just had a bad day and a bad race" (A1)], hope ["I'm not worried about failure 'cos it happens, you just have to hope that it doesn't happen to you" (A1)], there is another chance in the future ["I don't worry 'cos if I don't do well I've got another chance some day.... If I don't get selected it's just unlucky... my time will come" (A8)], and failure is part of life and sport [e.g., "failing is part of sport" (A3); I don't like failing but everyone has to fail, its part of life and the way things happen" (A4)].

Accepting FF related to accepting FF as part of sport and learning to deal with it. For example, "You can't think 'oh there is lots of pressure on me to win' and collapse.... You got a job and certain tasks to complete. Yes it's stressful... but if you get stressed about it

you're not going to get it done"(A1), and "You can let the FF affect you or you can accept what it means and learn to live with it, and if it (failure) happens it happens, but it doesn't mean that it's your life, and you move on.... I think I just learnt to deal with the pressure of 'this is an important thing you must play well', and I learnt to enjoy it more than getting worried about it.... I think you might understand it (FF) and know that it's still there but you don't let it affect you" (A2).

Turning to religion was a strategy that only athlete 2 (who came from a religious family background) employed to cope with her FF. She stated:

> "I'll be upset for quite a long while and then I'll think 'sort yourself out!'.... The only thing that ever helped me to sort myself out... was turning to God and trusting in him.... When I'm scared of failing I just think 'try your best and what happens is part of God's plan', and with this line of thought it just gets me through".

Problem-Focused Coping Strategies

Problem-focused coping strategies were described by seven athletes. This category comprised two higher-order themes: increase effort to prevent failure and confronting your fears.

Increase effort to prevent failure (n=6) comprised four lower-order themes: increased training [e.g., "I got over FF by telling myself to do more training and then I'll be able to become better.... Sometimes I behaved strange like I would end up doing more training than I should do, so I'm pushing myself just because I feel like I could fail" (A3), "When you have this fear you just want to be even better... you train harder.... You don't want to fail so you increase your training" (A6)], preparation is more exact [e.g., "It (FF) makes you think harder about how you're going to play. Preparation will be more exact.... I'd make sure that I stretched properly and eaten at the right time... I'd make more effort... I'll try hard... I just put that extra" (A4)], concentrate harder [e.g., You concentrate harder 'cos if there's a chance of you failing you have to try and do things right and make sure that it doesn't happen. So FF makes you want to be more thorough in your actions in the game and do better to prevent failure" (A4), "FF makes me make sure more that I don't do daft things in the game, I'll make sure everything is more precise. I try and play better... I concentrate harder... you'd be a lot more conscious in what you doing" (A9)], and learn about the opponent [e.g.," you're never confident at the first race of the season, it's the nastiest.... I like to find out before (the race) what people (opponents) have done and where they've been training... just in case they beat me" (A1)].

Two athletes perceived their increased effort as increased motivation, stating: "FF makes you more motivated…you don't want it to happen but you know it can, so you do more to try and prevent it. So you put more effort into it" (A4), and "The nice thing about fearing failure is that it keeps me going and training and trying. Fear of failure motivates me to carry on trying 'cos you don't want to fail (laugh)" (A2).

Confronting your fears (n=4) related to challenging the fears of failure [e.g., "If FF is bothering you then if you deal with things head on, like confronting your fear is a better way" (A5); "you can't sort of turn away, run away from your fears, you have to face them" (A9)], and to disregarding them and going ahead with the performance [e.g., "You do fear failure but then you just have to do it, to play the next time you go on the tennis court and play a match" (A6), "Even if I feel fear I'd still play and do my best, and I'd try and I just wouldn't not play" (A4), "I just think 'just get it (the match) over with and see whatever happens" (A5)].

Discussion

The aims of the present study were to examine the effects that FF had on young elite athletes and to find out how they coped with the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences induced prior to competition. Our findings represent one of the first endeavours to document the effects of FF and the coping behaviours of young elite athletes. Fear of failure affected the athletes in four ways of which the greatest effects were on their well-being, which encompassed effects on both their emotional states and on their self-perception and motivation. Fear of failure lowered the confidence of some athletes, made them have a negative outlook, and lowered their motivation to perform as they feared the possibility of losing. Fearing failure can diminish individuals' perceptions of competence of involvement in the task and motivate avoidance behaviour so that they go out of their way to escape from challenging tasks (Reeve, 2001). This is referred to by motivation theorists (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Atkinson & Feather, 1966; McClelland et al., 1953) as the motivation to seek the avoidance of failure. They suggested that the tendency to avoid failure was the product of one's motive to avoid failure (or experiencing shame upon failure), the probability of failure, and the incentive value of failure. Birney et al. (1969) suggested that FF motivates individuals to avoid engagement in achievement situations and that the main characteristic of individuals who fear failure is their effort to avoid the consequences or experiences of failure. The tendency to avoid failure motivates them to

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defend against the loss of self-esteem and social respect, and experiencing embarrassment. It also serves a way to reducing FF since non-attainment of a goal can result in consequences that are feared by those who fear failure. Avoiding achievement situations, where the possibility of failure exists and where others can observe their performance, is an option (that may not always be available) for those who fear failure unless they are totally confident of the outcome (Birney et al., 1969).

Elliot and Church (1997) proposed that in both challenging and threatening achievement settings (i.e., where success or failure is possible) FF can orient individuals to adopt two types of achievement goals, performance approach-goals or performance-avoidance goals, and that both are maladaptive in this case since both are underpinned by FF. Thus, individuals who seek to avoid failure might do so by striving to demonstrate their normative competence or striving to avoid displaying their normative incompetence (i.e., adopt performance approach- or avoidance goals, respectively). They suggested that adopting approach goals under these conditions, can promote vigorous action that can result in successful accomplishments, but over time can damage the quantitative (e.g., effort, performance) and qualitative (e.g., satisfaction, intrinsic motivation) aspects of achievement motivation and can elicit anxiety, low self-determination, and other negative processes that make the experience of engaging in the activity aversive.

The findings also revealed that FF affected the athletes' emotional states. Most of the athletes reported that it made them feel nervous and worried, followed by feeling stressed, scared, and upset. Achievement situations typically evaluate individuals' personal competence and, thus, can produce emotional reactions that vary in individuals (Reeve, 2001). Emotions will occur when a person appraises encounters with the environment as having either a positive or negative impact for well-being in terms of the person's individual goals (Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1991) proposed that fear is provoked when individuals believe that failure is a threat as it will prevent them from achieving their goals. The appraisal of potential failure stimulates fear as it activates beliefs (schemas) associated with aversive consequences of failure. It is, therefore, the belief in the aversive consequences of failure that provides the basis for FF in evaluative situations. The stronger the belief in the aversiveness of the consequences of failure, the greater the FF will be. The strength of this belief is related to trait anxiety. Thus, FF represents a dispositional tendency to experience apprehension and anxiety in evaluative situations since individuals have learnt that failure is associated with aversive consequences (Conroy & Elliot, 2004).

Some athletes reported that in order to avoid failure they increased the amount of their training and efforts and pushed themselves to train harder. Birney et al. (1969) proposed that putting maximum effort is a behaviour that serves to reduce FF. They suggested that one way to avoid failure is to insure the attainment of a goal and that this can be achieved by improving the skill through practice and by giving maximum effort. This, however, does not guarantee that the skill will be improved and goal attainment will become more probable. Furthermore, if non-attainment follows maximum effort it becomes much more difficult to avoid the implications about the underlying skill and it places the individual on the line to be evaluated, which is difficult for someone who fears failure, especially, when there is no guarantee of attainment (Birney et al., 1969). Moreover, increased training by athletes can lead to overtraining, which is a potential source of burnout that can consequently lead to athletes' withdrawal from the sport both at junior and at senior elite levels (Gould, Udry, Tuffey, & Loehr, 1996b; Smith, 1989). Therefore, increased training is not an effective response to FF, which is contrary to the belief of some of the participating athletes who viewed this behaviour as an increase in motivation and perceived it as a positive outcome of FF.

Data analysis identified three types of coping strategies that the athletes employed, AFC strategies (cognitive and behavioural strategies), EFC strategies, and PFC strategies. All the athletes employed AFC strategies and EFC strategies, and eight of them also employed PFC strategies. Thus, it appears that the majority of the athletes employed all three strategies in combination. This finding is consistent with that of other sport-related studies (e.g., Gould, Udry, Bridges & Beck, 1997; Grove, Eklund & Heard, 1997; Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997; Poczwardowski & Conroy, 2002) that have examined athletes' coping behaviour to a variety of variables (e.g., performance and competition, injuries, retirement from sport, performance slumps, success and failure) and have shown that athletes coped differently across a number of situations and employed a variety of PFC, EFC and AFC strategies in combination. However, in contrast with the consistent findings reported by this body of sport-related research that athletes preferred PFC strategies (e.g., planning, task focus, suppression of other activities, seek instrumental social support) rather than EFC or AFC strategies (e.g., distancing, venting of emotions, behavioural or mental disengagement), our study found that the athletes employed mostly AFC, followed by EFC, and PFC strategies. Thus, PFC strategies were least employed by the participating athletes to cope with their fears of failure. This difference in findings may be due to the different contexts investigated in the present study and in the previous sport-related studies, and to

differences in participants' ages (i.e., children might employ different coping strategies to adults). This difference in findings may also be attributed to methodological differences and to labelling (or coding) differences between researchers in qualitative research.

There is a situational link between emotions and coping in performance, and coping responses are related to the individual's appraisal of the stressor (Lazarus, 2000). Problem-focused coping and EFC strategies are used in combination to gain control over stressful encounters and the relative proportions of each strategy will vary according to how the encounter is appraised (i.e., as potentially controlled or not). Problem-focused coping is closely related to the concepts of power and control of the situation while EFC is closely related concept of emotional adjustment (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggested that PFC strategies are more likely to be used when managing situations where individuals perceive personal control over the stressors, whereas EFC strategies may be more likely to be used when managing stressful encounters where individuals perceive to have little or no control over the stressors (unchangeable stressors) and, therefore, would focus on managing their emotional reaction. Similarly, Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989) suggested that although most stressors elicit both PFC and EFC, PFC tends to be mostly employed when individuals feel that something constructive can be done about the stressor, while EFC tend to occur when individuals feel that the stressors are uncontrollable and must be endured. Accordingly, we suggest that FF maybe a stressor that the athletes perceived to be beyond their control and, therefore, they employed more AFC and EFC than PFC. After all, athletes typically have no control over the outcome of their performances or over the consequences of their failures.

Problem focused coping has been associated with positive emotional and motivational outcomes as it can alter unfavourable situations (e.g., Crocker & Graham, 1995; Folkman, 1984). Although EFC strategies are useful in helping people feel better and maintain a sense of well-being, integration, or hope (Monat & Lazarus, 1991), they can be less effective than PFC since they do not alter the threatening situation and prevent direct action (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Researchers have suggested that EFC is less effective and is more likely to be associated with psychological distress than PFC (Billings & Moos, 1981). Nevertheless, both EFC and PFC strategies can lead to more positive outcomes during stressful times and can promote a constructive engagement with the stressors or with one's reactions to them (Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood, 2003). In contrast, AFC, although effective for managing short-term threats, can be maladaptive as it diverts people's

attention from addressing the problem (Endler & Parker, 1990) and has been associated with negative emotional and motivational outcomes (since AFC indicate loss of situational control) (Folkman, 1984). Carver et al. (1989) described AFC as a "less useful" behaviour and mental disengagement strategies (e.g., sleep, daydreaming, self-distraction) as "dysfunctional" in most situations. Thus, the athletes in the present study employed predominantly ineffective coping strategies to dealing with their fears of failure.

Athletes who responded to FF with 'pushing thoughts of failure away' perceived that thinking about failure leads to failure. This has been referred to by researchers as thought-action fusion (Abramowitz, Whiteside, Lynam, & Kalsy, 2003). It refers to the beliefs that unwanted thoughts about distressing actions are equivalent to the actions themselves and that thinking about these distressing events makes them more likely to happen in the future. It is the catastrophic beliefs about the meaning of the consequences of such thoughts that elicit anxiety, and in order to neutralise the thoughts or to prevent the occurrence of disastrous consequences, individuals might engage in avoidance behaviours (Abramowitz, et al., 1996).

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Practice

Fear of failure affected the athletes' well-being, interpersonal relationships, schoolwork, and sporting performance. The athletes employed primarily AFC followed by EFC strategies to cope with the effects of FF. Both of these forms of coping are considered less effective than PFC and are associated with negative emotional states and motivational outcomes. Furthermore, AFC strategies are considered dysfunctional strategies in most situations. We propose that FF, unlike other stressors in sport, may be perceived by young elite athletes as a stressor beyond their control and, therefore, they respond to it with AFC and EFC strategies rather than PFC.

Coping with the effects of FF is an important factor in effective functioning at elite level sports. Athletes who do not posses effective coping skills to deal with their fears of failure are likely to experience poor performance, negative affect, and may eventually drop out of sport. Individuals with more personal and environmental resources might employ more PFC and less AFC strategies (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Therefore, it is important to teach young elite athletes to employ effective coping strategies, such as PFC, to deal with their fears of failure as they can help them attain a positive emotional state, positive level of motivation, and can help with their sporting performance and social development since they

can generalise these coping skills to other areas of their lives (Smith, 1999). Problem-focused coping includes strategies such as seeking instrumental social support, visualisation, planning, and re-framing.

Through cognitive-behavioural techniques, psychologists can teach young elite athletes how to confront their fears, how to put into perspective sporting demands, expectations, and experiences of failure, and how to challenge their perceptions of the meaning of failure in sport (i.e., develop process and performance orientation rather than outcome orientation). Techniques can include: challenging irrational beliefs, reframing, rehearsing the use of different self-statement, using different self-statements in real situations, scaling feelings (e.g., scaling anxiety level on 0-100 scale), thought stopping, systematic desensitisation (replacing anxiety response by a learnt relaxation response), and homework assignments (tasks to practice new behaviour and cognitive strategies between therapeutic sessions) (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Head & Gross, 2003; Newman, 2003). Such techniques can also help reduce the strength of athletes' beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure that provide the basis for FF. Furthermore, psychologists can use these techniques to help enhance the self-perceptions and motivation of young athletes post-failure.

Psychologists can also indirectly teach young elite athletes effective coping strategies to dealing with their fears of failure by delivering psychosocial intervention programs to coaches and parents, who work closely with the athletes and who play important roles in their lives, their sporting careers, and their social development. Parents and coaches can be taught how to recognise signs of FF among young athletes and how to apply various techniques (e.g., putting things in perspective, challenging perceptions of failure in sport) to help the athletes. Both direct and indirect approaches can help teach young elite athletes effective coping responses to the effects of FF. We echo Poczwardowski and Conroy's (2002) statement that "excellence in coping precedes excellence in performance" (p.313), and Lazarus' (2000) advise that "the right kind of coping in an important competition could lead athletes to become re-motivated and, thereby, capable of attending and concentrating effectively to display their typically high standard of excellence" (p.237).

A strength of the present study is in the nature of data collection and analysis. Rich details in the data provided a deep understanding of the coping behaviours of young elite athletes with regard to FF that went beyond pre-conceived categories. Additionally, this study represents one of the first endeavours to examine coping behaviours related to FF among young elite athletes, thus, extending our knowledge. Moreover, the results of the

present study can be used to inform assessments, diagnosis, and treatments of FF and other performance anxiety problems in sport. Finally, another strength of the present study was the narrow age range (ages 14-17 years) of the participating athletes; this allows focusing on a specific age group for a greater depth. We hope that researchers will continue to explore and classify coping behaviours with regard to the effects of FF among elite athletes at different age groups and enhance our understanding of the FF phenomenon in the sport domain where research on FF is much needed.

Finally, FF is an important construct to investigate for a number of reasons: (a) it allows us to explore the development of adaptive-maladaptive behaviours that have social implications; (b) many aspects of young people's lives are vulnerable to and are affected by FF, and FF has been associated with prevalence of problems (e.g., drug abuse, anxiety, eating disorders, drop out, depression); and (c) FF contributes to performance decrement and frustration and can detract from the quality of the experience of sport participation, which in the long term can serve as a barrier for participation in achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a). Given the important role of sport in the lives of children and adolescents, sport psychologists are a good position to contribute not only to young people's sporting performance but also to the quality of their lives and their social development. Thus, the FF construct is an area that can complement the customary performance enhancement efforts of sport psychologists and has great potential for intervention that can also contribute to the social development of children and youth in sport.

Study 1a recommended that future research examines how parents, who play important roles in the lives and in the development of young athletes, contribute to the development of fear of failure in their child-athlete. It also recommended designing intervention programmes that contribute to the reduction of the causes and contributors to fear of failure. Study 1b also referred to parents, recommending that psychologists teach parents how to recognise signs of fear of failure in their child-athlete and how to apply various techniques (e.g., putting things into perspective, challenging perceptions of failure in sport) to help the athletes. Accordingly, my two follow up studies sought to examine the developmental origins of fear of failure in young elite athletes (specifically focusing on parent-child interactions; Study 2) and to design intervention programmes to educate parents about fear of failure and about their contribution to its development in their child-athlete, thereby reducing FF levels among the young elite athletes and its development (Study 3).

Chapter 5: Study 2

The Developmental Origins of Fear of Failure in Young Elite Athletes: Examining Intergenerational Transmission of Fear of Failure.

Chapter overview:

Following from studies 1a and 1b, study 2 aimed to investigate the developmental origins of fear of failure (FF) in young elite athletes. Exploring the mechanisms of FF transmission from parents to child allowed me to ascertain the developmental origins of FF in young athletes. The study's central research question was: is FF transmitted to young athletes from their parents and, if so, how? The study represents the first endeavour to examine the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF within the sport domain.

The present chapter begins with an introduction section (section 5.1), followed by a section on intergenerational transmission (section 5.2), socialisation (section 5.3), parental expectations (section 5.4), paternal involvement and controlling behaviour (section 5.5), and the study aims and rationale (section 5.6). After the method section (section 5.7), the results section (section 5.8) presents and discusses the findings for each of the three families separately. The chapter ends with a general discussion and conclusions (section 5.9).

5.1 Introduction

Many individuals are motivated by the desire to avoid failure in achievement settings (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). This motive to avoid failure is more commonly known as fear of failure (FF), which may be implicated in reference to cognitive, perceptual, or motor tasks in achievement settings (e.g., sport, school; Elliot & McGregor, 1999). Early and contemporary theorists (e.g., Atkinson & Letwin, 1973; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; McClelland et al., 1953) have posited individual differences in this avoidance motivational tendency, that typically prompts the adoption of avoidance based-goals and strategies (e.g., performance-avoidance goals, self-handicapping) that in turn exert adverse effects (Elliot & Church, 1997). Fear of failure (and other related forms of avoidance motivation in achievement situations, e.g., avoidance goals, self-protective cognitive strategies; Elliot & Church, 2003) is prominent in both sexes and across levels of

actual and perceived ability (Covington, 1992; Elliot, 1999). High FF has been associated
with prevalence of negative outcomes (e.g., high levels of worry, somatic anxiety, cognitive
disruptions; Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002; see Study 1a for a comprehensive list).

Surprisingly, despite the conceptual and applied importance of the FF construct,
relatively little research has been conducted on its developmental origins. Achievement
motivation theorists have long asserted that the motive to avoid failure is socially learnt
(most likely between ages 5 to 9 years) and that motive dispositions are grounded in
emotional experiences; "a motive is the learned result of pairing cues with affect or the
conditions which produce affect" (McClelland et al., 1953, p. 75). Parents have been
implicated in the development of FF because of their primary caregiver role and attachment
(e.g., Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). As such, researchers have examined
socialisation and early childhood experiences, learning experiences, and children's
instructional environments. Their research focused on three factors that they claimed
contributed to the development of FF: parent-child communications and interactions;
family climate; and parental expectations and demands. These will be outline below with a
specific focus on performance.

- *Parent-child communications and interactions*

Children learn through patterns of communications (verbal and non-verbal) with
significant others that successful performance brings added affection and approval, whereas
failure can lead to its withdrawal. Children, therefore, can perceive the consequences of
failing as harmful and the possibility of failure as threatening to them and, as a result, place
a high priority on not failing. As such, FF may be primarily a defensive adaptation made by
children who learn that affection is unlikely to follow or may be withdrawn following an
unsuccessful performance. This adaptation may not be adaptive and can present a great
emotional burden for children, making performance distressful and leading to performance
decrements, frustration and, eventually, can serve as a barrier to their future participation in
achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a, 2003).

Researchers have linked children's FF with parental responses to their achievement
outcomes. For example, an association was reported between children's FF and maternal
tendency to express irritation or punish failure, and to withhold reinforcements and respond
neutrally (as oppose to reward) to success (Herman, Laak, & Maes, 1972; Teevan, 1983;
Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Teevan reported that high FF students (high school) perceived

that they received neutral responses from their parents for satisfactory behaviour and punishment from for unsatisfactory behaviour. Parental criticism (Hill, 1972; Teevan & McGhee, 1972), negative feedback in achievement situations, and restriction (Krohne, 1992) were also associated with high FF among school children. Hill (1972) reported that criticism-avoidance was the dominant motive in elementary school children's achievement behaviour, surpassing appraisal seeking motive. High anxious children had stronger motives to avoid criticism than to approach praise, and both motives were stronger for high anxious children than for their counterparts. Hill stated that children's desire to avoid criticism leads them to conform and submit to parental wishes and, consequently, they remain reliant and submissive to their parents. In contrast, children who are not motivated by criticism-avoidance become progressively more independent.

Parental punishment has also been linked to children's FF. An early psychodynamic study associated high parental expectations for achievement with children's fear of parental retaliation (i.e., physical/ verbal punishment and/ or withdrawal of affection) and with feeling guilt and conflict toward their parents; consequently becoming inhibited and submissive to parental demands and wishes (Sarason, Davidson, Lighthall, Waite, & Ruebush, 1960). More recently, Elliot and Thrash (2004), in addition to examining the role of parental socialisation in the development of FF, examined the intergenerational transmission of FF with undergraduate students and their parents. Their findings revealed that maternal love withdrawal (but not paternal) following failure mediated students' FF. The practice of parental love withdrawal (which is a form of punishment) and other punishments following failure has been associated with the development of shame, which is at the core of FF (Atkinson, 1957; Conroy et al., 2002; Thrash & Elliot, 2004).

- *Family climate*

The contribution of family structure to the development of children's FF is the least explored. Research has shown that children growing up in environments where approval, love, and affection are sparse can become fearful of failure. Singh (1992) reported that children growing up in families with high levels of marital conflicts, avoidance of communications, and negative maternal characteristics (e.g., dependency, irritability) had high levels of FF. Furthermore, fathers' (but not mothers') absence (due to death or divorce) during childhood was associated with high levels of FF in male college students; the relationship between mothers' absence and males' FF was statistically insignificant. A stronger effect was found when fathers' absence was due to death than due to divorce/

separation (Singh, 1992). It appears, therefore, that same-sex relationship has a role in the developmental origins of FF in children. Research, however, has not examined the effects of mothers' absence on daughter's development of FF.

- *Parental expectations and demands*

Researchers have reported a positive association between high parental expectations for achievement and children's FF; particularly for children who strongly identify with their parents (Argyle & Robinson, 1962). The timing of parental demands for children's achievement and independent behaviour was also investigated. Parents of high FF children reported demanding high levels of performance from their children at a young age (Schmalt, 1982; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Teevan and McGhee reported a positive association between children's FF and maternal early demands for mastery and independent behaviours. High school students of mothers who expected them to demonstrate early independent behaviours during childhood showed lower achievement motivation levels. Schmalt also associated children's FF with parental early demands for independence and mastery, but not with FF due to belief that one possesses low ability. He proposed that children feared failure due to anticipation of failure and its consequences.

In education, Sarason, Davidson, Lighthall, Waite and Ruebush (1960) suggested that test-anxiety (which is related to FF) has its origins in pre-school years when parents express unrealistic expectations of their children, and later when the children become independent they experience feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, heightened somatic reaction, anticipation of punishment or loss of status and esteem. Similarly, Campbell (1986) concluded that "child rearing practices, parental expectations and negative experiences in evaluative contexts contribute to the development of test anxiety" (p. 49). More recently, Krohne (1992), Zeidner (1998), and Elliot and McGregor (1999) have also associated test anxiety in children with parental high expectations and rearing practices (e.g., responses to performance deficient; Krohne, 1992).

Based on the findings outlined above, there is evidence to support an interpersonal pathway for FF transmission. Patterns of intergenerational transmission have been studied in areas such as attachment (Van Ijzendoorn, 1995), substance abuse (Kandel & Wu, 1995), depression (McCarty & McMahon, 2003), and perfectionism (Soenens & Elliot, 2005). All have found evidence to suggest that parenting styles and practices (in addition to factors such as role modelling and genetics inheritance) are important mechanisms in the

transmission of behaviours, beliefs, and affect from parents to their children. First, however, I will delineate the conceptualisation of the FF construct, followed by intergenerational transmission of FF, socialisation processes (that relate to intergenerational transmission), and parental expectations, involvement, and controlling behaviour.

5.1.1 Conceptualisation of the Fear of Failure Construct

Achievement motivation theorists conceptualised FF as a personality disposition (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; McClelland et al., 1953). They viewed FF as an avoidance-based motive disposition, hence, a dispositional tendency to orient toward and to seek to avoid failure in achievement settings. Accordingly, they defined FF as the motive to avoid failure in achievement settings since one feels shame and humiliation upon failure. Atkinson (1957) offered a link between the two basic achievement motives, need for achievement and FF, and specific emotions. He viewed need for achievement as "the capacity to feel pride in accomplishment", and FF as "the capacity or propensity to experience shame upon failure" (p. 360). Thus, associating pride with need for achievement and shame with FF. Birney, Burdick and Teevan (1969) stated that it is not failure per se that people fear and seek to avoid, but it is the adverse consequences that accompany failure. They posited that individuals fear the consequences of their failure if they perceive them aversive, and that the anticipation of failure and of its threatening consequences elicits fear.

Contemporary theorists have also positioned shame at the core of FF (e.g., McGregor & Elliot, 2005). Shame is described as a painful experience in which individuals feel that their entire self is a failure, bad, or stupid (Lewis, 1992). Shame involves an awareness that one is exposed to an audience (real or imagined), is judged unworthy of love, and is in danger of being abandoned (Andrews, 1995). Furthermore, it involves a focus on the global self and initiates avoidance tendencies (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) such as avoidance, withdrawal, and a desire to escape the presence of others (Mascolo & Fisher, 1995). Thus, the nature of shame is grounded in a relational disruption. Recently, McGregor and Elliot (2005), who examined the nature of shame as an emotion grounded in general self-devaluation and concern about relational disruption, have provided the first empirical support that shame is at the core of FF.

5.2 Intergenerational Transmission

Transmission of any disposition or behaviour can occur in a number of ways. According to Simonton (1983), individual differences may be transferred across

generations through genetic inheritance or social learning process (e.g., cohort effects, socio-cultural influences, identification process with role models). The present study, however, focused only on transmission through social learning processes, specifically through parent-child interactions. Therefore, in this section I outline intergenerational transmission of FF and of values, beliefs and attitudes, as well as uni-directional and bi-directional transmissions.

- *Intergenerational Transmission of Fear of Failure*

The mediation of intergenerational transmission effects is often complex and multi determined (Putallaz, Constanzo, Grimes, & Sherman, 1998). Nonetheless, social scientists have long been interested in the cross-generational continuity of social behaviour, and have obtained evidence for different variables. Little research, however, has examined motivational variables, until the recent research by Elliot and his colleagues in the education domain. For example, Elliot and Thrash (2004) examined the intergenerational transmission of FF with undergraduate students and their parents, focusing on parenting love withdrawal as the mechanism contributing to the development of FF in children. These researchers viewed FF as emerging from recurrent patterns of parent-child interactions. They contended that parents' FF leads them to display certain patterns of affect, cognition, and behaviour when their child makes mistakes and fails and, in turn, this teaches the child that mistakes and failures should be avoided. Additionally, parents' FF influences the way they view failure and the way they interpret and respond to their own and to their child's failure. Parents high in FF deem themselves as devalued and as less worthy of love and acceptance when they fail and, accordingly, when their child fails they are likely to appraise the child similarly and to withdraw emotionally or physically from the child. Furthermore, children's mistakes and misbehaviours in general reflect negatively on their parents' competence and, therefore, they are likely to provoke shame in the parents and shaming response, including love withdrawal toward their child (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

Elliot and Thrash's (2004) findings showed that mothers' and fathers' FF positively predicted their student-child's FF. Love withdrawal was found to be a mediator of parent-student concordance for mothers, but not for fathers. Mothers' FF was linked to their use of love withdrawal (as reported by the students), while fathers' FF was found to be unrelated to love withdrawal. Thus, mothers pass their FF along to their children through the use of love withdrawal in socialisation. Both mothers' and fathers' FF were found to be a positive predictors of their child-student's adoption of performance avoidance goals in the

classroom. The mediational analysis showed that parental love withdrawal during childhood is a mediator of children's FF. These findings demonstrate a passing of an aversive disposition from one generation to the next and that FF is self-perpetuating intergenerationally. Thus, FF in one generation is likely to replicate itself in the next generation (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

Elliot and Thrash (2004) concluded that children of parents high in FF are likely to experience at an early age, and often, love withdrawal and other negative parental responses to failure. Consequently, these children can develop a dispositional tendency to experience shame when failing and gradually become motivated to seek to avoid failure. This dispositional tendency gives FF its "self-perpetuating" quality (Heckhausen, 1984). Thus, the roots of FF are laid down early in childhood development. Elliot and Thrash's research reinforced the assertion of achievement motivation theorists that motive dispositions develop when an event becomes associated with a particular affective experience (McClelland, 1985).

In another study, McGregor and Elliot (2005) found a positive relationship between the tendency to experience shame and FF and between parental shaming and FF. Students high in FF, relative to those low in FF, reported greater shame upon failure experience, generalised a specific failure experience to the global self, and had more relational concerns upon failure. Those high in FF reported feeling less close to their mother after failure and being less likely to tell their mother and father about their failure experiences, but being more likely to tell them about their success experiences. The connection between FF and relational issues were clearly displayed with regard to maternal relations. Students high in FF reported greater shame and closeness to their mother than those low in FF. The researchers concluded that shame leads to FF, global devaluation, and avoidance processes. Moreover, for those high in FF, achievement events are threatening and are judgment-oriented experiences that are a threat to their sense of relational security. Thus, for them, achievement events are potentially shameful events rather than opportunities to learn, improve one's competence, or compete against others.

In summary, Elliot and his colleagues' findings have shown that FF is not merely a competence-based motive disposition but it involves relational considerations. They have demonstrated that FF is transmitted from parent to child through parental use of love withdrawal during childhood. Furthermore, they associated parental love withdrawal following failure with the development of shame upon failure, which is at the core of FF.

Thus, FF is self-perpetuating intergenerationally; passing an aversive disposition from one generation to the next.

Mistakes and failures are common and are integral part of an achievement activity such as sport. Therefore, in line with Elliot and colleagues' research, it is likely that high FF parents of young athletes will respond negatively to their child's failure. It is also plausible that other processes beside love withdrawal are responsible in the development of young athletes' FF. To date, however, researchers have not examined parenting styles and practices in relation to intergenerational transmission of FF in the sport context. Thus, the present investigation represents the first endeavour to do so.

- *Intergenerational Transmission of Values, Beliefs and Attitudes*

Parents can transmit to their children their beliefs, values (including expectations) and attitudes towards various issues such as success, failure, achievement, mastery, and making mistakes (Cote, 1999). Parental values and behaviours (including role modelling, feedback and encouragement) are a source of important and valuable information for children (Eccels, 1993). Concurrently, however, parents can reinforce negative factors that in turn contribute to ways of feeling and behaving that can impact performance. For example, children in environments where parents focus on imperfections can develop an exaggerated awareness of possible failure rather than possible success (Ogilvie, 1968).

Ogilvie (1968) contended that parents create social conditioning consistent with their values and attitudes. Accordingly, environments where parental rewards and recognitions (e.g., praise, encouragement) for partial success or moderate improvement are absent (e.g., where parents are outcome oriented), and where parents focus on imperfections, exaggerate losses, and demand excellence can emphasise the pain of failure at the expense of the pleasure of success. Moreover, parents who believe that anything less than winning and showing excellence is a failure will communicate this attitude to their children by punishing or by not responding to any performance that does not reach their standard of achievement. Children growing up in such environments can gradually develop the motive to avoid failure since failure has aversive consequences for them. The effect of such social conditioning is "a personality structure with an inordinate FF. The individual unconsciously internalises an unrealistic standard for human performance, and he studiously avoids the conscious experience of failure" (Ogilvie, 1968; p. 37).

Parents can also transmit to their children their beliefs regarding the child's

competence. Phillips (1987) proposed that parents' key socialisation role is in interpreting and providing competence feedback to their children. As such, parental perceptions of their children's abilities "may mediate associations between actual ability, children's perceptions, and their task orientations" (p. 1309). Thus, parents communicate their competence related beliefs and orientation to children, which explains the developmental origins of children's perceived self-competence. Research in education has reported a strong relationship between parental judgement of their children's abilities in academics and athletics and the children's self-appraisal in these areas (Felson & Reed, 1986). It appears, therefore, that parents shape their children's achievement orientation and beliefs about personal competence and these, in turn, influence their future achievement levels.

Parents can transmit their own achievement orientation (perspectives) to their children through various patterns of interactions and reward systems. Parents may communicate to their children their attitudes regarding the relative importance of effort versus outcome, may convey beliefs about the importance of selecting an appropriate level of challenge, and may express their beliefs on the importance of personal improvement as opposed to performing well in relation to others. Moreover, parents reinforce their children's behaviours in a manner that is consistent with their own achievement orientation, and it is likely that their children will internalise a similar perspective on achievement (Brustad, 1992). Ames and Archer (1987) reported a strong relationship between mothers' achievement orientation and their appraisal style of their children's academic performance. Their finding showed that mastery orientated mothers viewed "working hard" as the most important indicator of school success, preferred their children to pursue challenging tasks (even if they might not master them), and rewarded them for seeking high level challenges, for trying hard irrespective of outcome, and for improving personal performance. In contrast, outcome oriented mothers viewed success as "getting good grades" and "doing better than others", and preferred their children to pursue easier tasks that ensured success. Therefore, such mothers are likely to reward their children only when performing well in relation to others, and are also likely to discourage them from pursing very challenging tasks (Ames & Archer, 1987).

Finally, researchers also contended that parents transmit to their children their aspirations for their children's achievement. Spera (2005) defined parental aspirations as "internal representations of desired states or outcomes that parents hold for their children" (p. 131); these direct their behaviours towards their children. Spera proposed that parental

values toward education represent the importance parents place on their children's educational achievement. It is logical to assume that this assertion can also be applied with regard to sport; that is, parental values toward sport reflect the importance they will place on their child's sporting achievement. Parents typically set goals and hold certain aspirations for their children that they communicate to them, intending for the child to adopt these goals and aspirations. Parents also shape their children's occupational aspirations (e.g., Eccles, 1993; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). For example, Jodl et al. investigated the link between adolescents' (boys and girls, seventh grade) occupational aspirations and parental practices (beliefs, values, and behaviours), specifically focusing on parental role on two achievement-related domains, academic and sports. Their findings showed that parents' values predicted adolescents' occupational aspirations, thus, demonstrating parental role as socialisers of achievement-related values, and ultimately adolescents' occupational aspiration.

Transmission of Values, Beliefs and Attitudes Through Parental Expectancies

Parental beliefs, attitudes and values can also be transmitted intergenerationally through parental expectations. Parents often form specific expectancies regarding their children's performance and convey these expectations in the messages they give their children regarding their beliefs about the child's ability, the difficulty of various achievement tasks, and about the importance of various achievement activities (Eccles-Parson, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982). Thus, parental beliefs, attitudes and values (e.g., the importance of various achievements, the value of trying hard) can also be transmitted to children through parental expectations ("expectancy socialisation"; Eccles-Parsons et al., 1982). Research has further demonstrated that parents play a role in shaping their children's own expectancies (Eccles-Parson et al., 1982; Phillips, 1987). Expectancies influence how individuals perform when faced with an achievement task and they are partly based on attributions for past successes and failures (Woolger & Thomas, 1993). However, some findings suggest that parents exert a strong, and perhaps causal, influence on their children' achievement attitudes and behaviour, often influencing children's achievement attitudes more than the child's own past history of successes and failures (Eccles-Parson et al., 1982; Phillips, 1987). Thus, children's attitudes are influenced more by their parents' attitudes about their abilities than their own past experiences. Furthermore, children's self-concepts, self-beliefs and expectations were found to be more consistent with their parents' expectations than with their own previous performances. Finally, Fredrick and Eccles (2002) have recently

reported that elementary school children showed less dramatic declines in their self-concept over time (regardless of actual ability) when their parents had high expectations for their sport ability.

Parents also influence their children's motivation through their expectancies. Parents who have high expectations for their children's success in a particular achievement influence their children's motivation to succeed by providing them with messages of their expectations and of the value of achievements and participation (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). In short, parental expectations are the mediators in children's achievement attitude, motivation to succeed, and own expectations.

Transmission of Values, Beliefs and Attitudes Through Parental Role Modelling

Individual differences can also be transferred across generations through identification with role models influences, and parents are important models for children to imitate (Simonton, 1983). Children's values, attitudes and ways of behaving are often learnt from the people who are most important to them. Children emulate the behaviours of the people they admire or depend on, and parents are the most significant models of behaviour during the child's early years. Children often learn their parents' behaviour and reproduce it. Thus, parents' attitudes and values (e.g., sportsmanship, cooperation, winning at all cost) can be communicated through both direct (verbal communication) and indirect means (i.e., behaviour or non-verbal).

Eccles' (1993) expectancy-value model emphasises parents as role models, sources of reinforcement, and as providers of resources, information, and opportunities for their off springs. Parents can instil achievement-orient attitudes, behaviour, and values through role modelling for the child (Woolger & Thomas 1993) and play an important role in how children come to view the world and respond to a wide range of situations and activities (Power & Manire, 1992). For example, the transfer of morality and leadership are governed by role modelling processes; parents are more influential role model than the grandparents since the child is more exposed to the parents (Simonton, 1983). Parental modelling behaviour may be more influential during childhood (ages 5-12 years) than during adolescence (Power & Manire, 1992). Finally, adolescents are more likely to internalise parental values and beliefs if they experience warm, supportive parent-child relationships and view their parents as positive role models (Mortimer, Lorence, & Kumka, 1986).

- *Uni-Directional Transmission and Bi-Directional Transmission*

Much of the existing intergenerational transmission research examined the transmission from parents to child (uni-directional), and have reported that children internalise their parents' attitudes, values and expectations. Research, however, on the transmission from child to parent(s) (bi-directional) is much less common, despite researchers advocating that socialisation processes can be bi-directional (e.g., Grusec, 2002; Peters, 1985). Pinquart and Silbereisen (2004) defined the transmission of values as a bi-directional process that involves both parental influence on their children and children influence on their parents. They studied the transmission of values from adolescents (aged 11-17 years) to (authoritative; supportive and receptive) parents over one year. Their findings revealed a transmission of values regarding the importance of belief in God, the traditional way of life, and the usefulness of new technologies. They did not, however, assess the salience of the values and the motivation of adolescents and parents to influence each other, and whether the strength of the intergenerational transmission of values changed over time. Similarly, Peters argued, that since socialisation is generally viewed as a reciprocal process, it suggests that adolescents are both socialisers and socialisees. Peters' findings showed some attitude changes in 81% of parents of undergraduate college students due to the influence of their children; such as their attitude toward youth (63%), sexuality (43%), and ethnic minorities (33%). Finally, research in sport also contended that not only parents influence children's perceptions of ability and motivation, but children's achievement behaviours also elicit in parents certain beliefs, attitudes, and expectations that serve to either reinforce or disconfirm children's current beliefs achievement goals (Duda & Horn, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1991). In light of this research, intergenerational transmission can be also a bi-directional process.

In summary, it appears from the research cited above that through various patterns of interaction and behaviour, parents transmit to their children their achievement orientation, their beliefs and values, and their aspirations for their child's achievement. This, in turn, shapes children's and adolescents' achievement orientation, beliefs about personal competence, and achievement aspirations, including future occupational aspirations. Some researchers have also suggested that intergenerational transmission can be bi-directional.

5.3 Socialisation- Parenting Styles and Practices

Intergenerational transmission of a behavioural tendency (or disposition) can occur through social learning processes (e.g., identification with role models, sociocultural influences; Simonton, 1983). In this section I will focus on intergenerational transmission through parent-child interactions, specifically exploring transmission through socialisation and parenting styles and practices that are associated with FF transmission.

- *Socialisation*

Parents are viewed as the primary socialising agents of their children. Achievement theories from a variety of perspectives have advocated that parents play an important role in the socialisation of their children's achievement attitudes, motivation and behaviour. Parents socialise their children through daily interactions and involvement in their lives. Thus, socialisation is an interactive process whereby parents transmit their values, goals, skills, traits, and attitudes to their children (Spera, 2005), and children, through education, observation, and experience, gradually acquire skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviours that are required for successful functioning in the family and society (Parke & Buriel, 1998). The family has the most profound context of social influence. It is regarded as the basis for social stability and as the building-block group within which identity is formulated and around which relations to the social structure are negotiated (Durkin, 1995). Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood, which is a highly dependent and controlled period, into a period of "gaining emotional and psychological independence from the family" (Wentzel & Battle, 2001; p. 95). Thus, adolescence is a period of increasing self-exploration, autonomy striving, and identity formation (Erikson, 1977).

- *Parenting Styles and Practices*

Different parental values and needs are associated with variations in child rearing styles, which in turn are linked with variations in children social behaviour (Durkin, 1995). Parenting style is defined as the emotional climate in which parents raise their children and is characterised by dimensions of parental responsiveness (e.g., warmth) and demandingness (authority) (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Three patterns of parenting style have been identified: authoritarian (i.e., strict, controlling, assert power on the child), authoritative (i.e., supportive), and permissive (i.e., remote, lack interest in the child) (Durkin, 1995). Authoritative parenting style has been associated with children's positive school outcomes because authoritative parents provide their children with high level of

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emotional security and with explanations for their actions that provide the children with a sense of awareness and understanding of their parents' values, morals and goals. The transmission of these goals and values equips children with the tools needed to perform well in school (Durkin, 1995). Parenting styles were found to moderate the relationship between parenting practices and adolescents' school achievement outcomes (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Parenting practice is defined as specific behaviours that parents use to socialise their children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). For example, in socialising for success, parents perform practices such as doing homework at home with their child, providing their child reading time, and attending their child's school functions. Parenting style is a context (i.e., emotional climate) in which parental socialisation goals are highlighted and parenting practices are exhibited. Therefore, parenting styles moderate the relationship between parenting practices and adolescents' achievement outcomes (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Thus, parents exhibiting a warm versus critical style while doing homework with their child would yield different outcomes. Parental practices, such as punishment, reward, and threat, have been associated with the transmission of parental values, beliefs and FF to children. These will be outlined below.

Punishment, Threat, and Reward

Parents employ a variety of disciplinary practices (or techniques), including punishment, threat, and reward (Spera, 2005). Practices such as punishment and threat have been implicated in the transmission of FF (Putallaz et al., 1998). Examples of parental punishment and threat include, withholding certain privileges or affection from the child, imposing restrictions on the child's other activities (e.g., social life), and giving conditional reward (i.e., only if successful). Reward includes both social (e.g., expressing warm, approval, admiration, affection, praise) and non-social (material goods, money, special privileges) consequences. Punishment, threat, and reward are specific practices that parents use to promote and encourage achievement in their children. Parents use these practices to increase or decrease the possibility of their child engaging in a particular behaviour by providing negative (punishment) or positive (reward) consequences that are conditional upon the child's behaviour (Woolger & Thomas, 1993).

Researchers have demonstrated that punishments have adverse effect on children's self-esteem and self-confidence, and have reported a negative relationship between parental

punishment and children's achievement behaviour (Clarke-Stewart, 1977). Parental use of punitive techniques, such as deprivation of privileges or material objects, physical punishment, or explicit expression of anger of disapproval, can lead children to feel guilty and become self-punishing (Benjamin, 1974), to lack belief in their ability to control the environment (Clarke-Stewart, 1977), to feel anxious (Bandura, 1986), and to feel resentment and fear (Mussen, Conger, Kagan, & Huston, 1984). Parents' tendency to frequently punish undesired behaviour can lead to children's increased anticipation of punishment and, in turn, this expectancy is a determinant of children's heightened trait anxiety (Krohne, 1980). Finally, research in sport has revealed that boys who reported that their mothers often responded negatively to their performance also reported lowest levels of sport enjoyment (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986). Reward and punishment were also associated with children's sport achievement (Woolger & Thomas, 1993).

Love withdrawal is a form of a socialisation practice whereby parents withdraw their affection or create a physical separation from their child when the child behaves in an undesirable manner (Hoffman, 1970). Thus, it is a form of a disciplinary practice that includes parental behaviours, such as verbally expressing dislike of the child, sending the child to another room, or threatening to remove the child from the home. Love withdrawal, however, can also be subtle; for example, refusing to speak or look at the child, looking coldly at the child, or moving or turning away from the child. Hence, love withdrawal can be communicated to the child with a distinct gesture, facial expression, or tone of voice that carries a particular message within the specific context. Such parental techniques communicate to children that undesirable behaviour results in their parents' emotional or physical withdrawal (Hoffman, 1970).

Love withdrawal signifies an interruption to the highly valued parent-child affective attachment relation (Chapman & Sahn-Waxler, 1982). Attachment theory postulates that human infants develop a close emotional bond with their caregivers (especially their parents) and seek a close proximity and form attachment to them as a basis for protection (i.e., when feeling anxious or fearful they are comforted) and exploration of the environment. The caregiver's warmth, availability, and responsiveness to the infant's cues facilitate the development of the attachment relationship. In adulthood, attachment involves the tendency to seek emotionally supportive relationships. Different patterns of attachment formed in infancy and in early childhood have been shown to affect individuals' later emotional development and stability (Bowlby, 1988). Accordingly, it is not surprising that

children interpret their parents' love withdrawal very negatively (more negatively than physical punishment; Siegel & Barclay, 1985). In the short-term, love withdrawal may be effective in gaining compliance from children and may have a desired effect (Chapman & Sahn-Waxler, 1982). In the long- term, however, it can contribute to the development of FF (Elliot & Thrash, 2004) and other maladaptive motivational constructs in children (e.g., helplessness; Burhans & Dweck, 1995), to the development of hostility in children and avoidance of people (adults and peers) (Putallaz et al., 1998), and to adults' (male and female) attachment anxiety and avoidance (Swanson & Mallinckrodt, 2001).

Parents teach their children the meaning of different outcomes by their responses and their actions (Eccles-Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982). For example, when parents withdraw their love from their child after failure, it can communicate to the child that failure is shameful and that s/he is no longer worthy of love and affection (Lewis, 1992), which are two important ingredients in the parent-child bond (attachment). Elliot and Thrash's (2004) findings, that mothers' love withdrawal were linked to their own FF, suggest that it is likely that mothers' love withdrawal in response to their children's mistakes and failures contribute to their children's FF. Thus, mothers can transfer their own FF to their children via love withdrawal. In other words, love withdrawal is the mediating variable in the transmission of FF from parents to child (Elliot & Thrash, 2004). Love withdrawal was also reported to impact children's internalisation of their parent's values (Sears, Macoby, & Levin, 1957). Hence, children of parents who practised love withdrawal adopted their parents' values as their own. In summary, love withdrawal is a mechanism by which parents transmit both their values and FF to their children.

- *Parental Evaluation Style- Approval and Disapproval Responses*

Developmental theories have long postulated that children's sense of self-worth emerges from an internalisation of significant others' views (e.g., Mead, 1934; Harter, 1998). Individual differences are likely to occur in relation to the extent children's self-worth is contingent upon others' approval (Harter, 1998). Rudolph, Caldwell, and Conley (2005) conceptualised need for approval as a two dimensional construct, emotional and social. They proposed that need for social approval may be driven by the motivation to obtain positive judgment or to avoid negative judgements. The motivation to obtain positive judgment is reflected in enhanced self-worth (e.g., feeling proud of self, feeling one is a good person) when receiving social approval, while the motivation to avoid negative judgements is reflected in low self-worth (e.g., feeling ashamed of self, feeling one

is a bad person) when receiving social disapproval. Individual differences in the extent to which children's self-worth is contingent on others' approval can have critical implications for children's well-being. High need for social approval has a trade off for children's well-being. Children who believe that they did not attain their goal of avoiding disapproval may experience disappointment in the self, shame, and sadness. Furthermore, children whose goal is to avoid disapproval may place others' needs over their own in an effort to please others, which can lead to them experiencing further distress. Seeking social approval, thus, may act as a buffer against such negative emotions (Rudolph et al., 2005). Rudolph et al.'s (2005) findings demonstrate that children (ages 9-14 years) with positive self-appraisals experience less emotional distress and demonstrated more social competent behaviours than children with negative self-appraisals. Girls were found to be more vulnerable to emotional costs of negative self-appraisals than boys. Harter (1998) also asserted that children whose self-worth is threatened by other's disapproval may be vulnerable to daily fluctuations in their perceptions of self and, consequently, to experiencing negative emotions, lower global self-worth, and high level of worry about other's perceptions.

Through the feedback parents provide their children they also shape their children's orientation style and perception of self-competence. The nature of parental response to the result and the process of children's mastery efforts convey a wealth of information to them about their aptitude in that achievement domain (Harter, 1978, 1981). Through the feedback they provide for children's mastery efforts in academic, social and physical domains, parents are the primary influences upon children's emerging self-related perceptions. Harter (1978, 1981) advocated that children who perceive disapproval from parents for their efforts at mastery will have diminished sense of competence and control and will display even greater reliance upon external source of information. Consequently, they will adopt a more extrinsic motivational orientation and will experience negative affect, in the form of anxiety, when confronting future achievement tasks in that particular domain. Conversely, children whose parents supported and encouraged their sport related efforts displayed greater intrinsic motivation (e.g., greater preference for challenge) than their counterparts who received less favourable parental support (Brustad, 1992).

Children's perceptions and concerns about parental evaluations and judgments can be considerable contributors to children's anxiety response. Researchers have asserted that children experience anxiety both in educational (Wigfield & Eccles, 1990) and sport settings (Brustad, 1988; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Passer, 1983) partly because they are

concerned about incurring negative parental evaluations should they not perform well. Research in sport has shown that both worries about process (e.g., not playing well, making mistakes) and outcome (e.g., losing, criticism from parents and coaches) contribute to FF among children participating in sport (Passer, 1983). Lee and MacLean (1997) reported that competitive young swimmers perceived pressure from parental insufficient praise and understanding and excessive directive behaviour (e.g., giving the child instructions, pointing out mistakes, negative evaluation and criticism, telling the child how to improve).

In summary, parental feedback shapes children's orientation style and perception of self-competence. Moreover, children's self-worth is wrapped up in their perception of how adults, especially their parents, view them and is contingent upon others' approval. Thus, parental negative feedback, disapproval, and criticism post-failure can diminish children's perception of self-worth. Such parental responses to failure are likely to make children fearful of failure and perceive the consequences of their failure as aversive. Negative performance-related feedback can be verbal (e.g., shouting, scolding and blaming the child for poor performance, expressing disappointment and loss of pride in the child) and non-verbal (e.g., communicating disapproval, disappointment and loss of pride with gestures and facial or body expressions or tone of voice, not responding to a poor performance, not talk to child, withdrawing love and affection) (Orlick & Botterill, 1975). Forms of social approval include effective reinforces and incentives for children such as praise or verbal comments indicating approval and encouragement, affection or positive physical contact (e.g., embracing) and facial attention (e.g., smiling, eye contact) (Orlick & Botterill, 1975).

5.4 Parental Expectations

Parental expectations of their child's achievement activity have been implicated in the development of children's FF. Although parental expectations are the primary source of influence on children's achievement attitude, motivation, behaviour (Eccles-Parsons et al., 1982), and sport achievement (Woolger & Thomas, 1993) they have also been implicated in the developmental origins of FF. Researchers have associated children's FF with high parental expectations and demands for achievement (Argyle & Robinson, 1962) and with maternal early demands for mastery and independent behaviours (Schmalt, 1982; Teevan & McGhee, 1972).

Parental expectations can become a source of stress and pressure for children, interfering with their participation in sport (Cote, 1999) and contributing to competitive

stress among young athletes (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). High parental expectations was also associated with less enthusiasm from children while intermediate level of parental expectations was associated with high levels of enthusiasm among young swimmers (Power & Woolger, 1994). Excessive intense pressure on young athletes has been linked with burnout and drop out from sport (Dale & Weinberg, 1990; Smith, 1988). Moreover, children's desire to meet parental expectations is the most frequently reported source of stress by children (Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991). Children may feel shame and guilt when not meeting parental expectancies (Lewis, 1992) and may fear not meeting parental expectations and demands and, consequently, disappointing and upsetting them (Conroy, 2001a; Conroy et al., 2002).

Parental high expectations may be a source of stress among young athletes due the extent of their awareness of their parents' commitment (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). Family life often becomes centred around the needs of the young athlete and becomes committed to the his/her sporting career, which can often have profound effects upon family activities and its members (Donnelly, 1993). Parents' commitment to their children's sport has its bases in both the demands made on the family's time and financial resources and the identity derived from the family membership (which may be evidenced by pride in the performance of their child). The effect of social identity is evident in parents' recognition of their children's requirements and in parents' projection of hopes and aspirations onto their children; who may be expected to aspire to achieve what they themselves could not (Lee & MacLean, 1997). Hence, in some cases the child may become a substitute for parental aspirations as well as a prospective asset to the family income. Therefore, young athletes can perceive parental high expectations as pressure to succeed and, accordingly, it seems reasonable to speculate that the possibility of failure will elicit fear among such athletes.

5.5 Parental Involvement and Controlling Behaviour

Parental involvement level and controlling behaviour in their child's achievement activity has also been implicated in the development of children's FF. While there is evidence that the nature of parental input and involvement is important, the extent to which parents attempt to take control of their children's achievement activity is a source of stress and pressure for children. Parental involvement can facilitate children's participation and achievement in various activities (Leff & Hoyle, 1995) and their support and involvement

are crucial for children's participation, progression, and sport career development (Brustad, 1993; Csikzentmyhalyi, Rathunde & Whalen, 1997).

Parental involvement ranges on a continuum from under involvement to over involvement, and where moderate involvement is said to facilitate a sporting career (Hellstedt, 1987). Over involved parents (or over engaged) can play a disruptive role in children's sport career development. Children of over-involved parents often perceive high levels of parental pressure, making their sporting participation stressful and detracting from the enjoyment and the quality of their sporting experiences (Strean, 1995). Parental over-involvement has also been associated with children feeling distress and guilt (Donnelly, 1993), lowered self-esteem (McElroy, 1982), and burnout (Smith, 1988). Research in education has associated parental over involvement (e.g., monitoring, enforcing, helping with homework) with students' (fifth grade) extrinsic motivation (showing less initiation, autonomy, persistence and satisfaction in doing schoolwork; Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993).

Intense parental involvement in sport (e.g., parental regular attendance, exerting control over various aspects) can be perceive as pressure by children and, thus, can be a source of stress. Lee and MacLean (1997) defined such pressure as "an imbalance between demands of the situation, or other people, and one's own needs" (p.168). Hence, young athletes may experience pressure when they perceive their parents' demands and expectations are greater than their own. Children's perceptions of parental pressure are rooted in their experiences, which are dependent upon the relationship between the child's personal preferences and parental behaviour. Children can experience high pressure when their parents are more intensely involve in their sports than the child desires (i.e., the child experiences high intensity). Equally, when parents demonstrate a lower level of involvement than the child desires, the child may perceive it as parental disinterest and can also experience pressure. Therefore, a moderate level of perceived parental involvement can result in satisfactory experiences for young athletes (Lee & MacLean, 1997).

Parental Controlling Behaviour

Parental controlling behaviour is on a continuum where on opposite sides are control and autonomy-support; which facilitates a sense of self-initiation and problem solving in children (e.g., taking the children's frame of reference, supporting children's creating rules and structures). Parental controlling behaviour can be overt (e.g., physical punishment, taking over responsibility, leading, communicating demands) or covert (e.g., controlling

praise and reward). Some parents' controlling behaviour arises from their wish to provide the best opportunity for their child and to assure that their child's talent is not being wasted. However, in cases where parents are ego-involved in their child's performance, they derive their own self-esteem from their child's achievements and, therefore, become controlling. Such parents typically exhibit behaviours such as shouting from the sideline, expressing frustration and disappointment with performance results, and pushing their child to perform well (Grolnick, 2003).

Through evolutionary heritage, parents are invested in their children's welfare and doing well and are bound up with their offspring (Grolnick, 2003). They often view their children as an extension of themselves (Crandall & Preston, 1961) and their children's success and failure can impact their own self-esteem (Katkovsky, Preston, & Crandall, 1964). This, however, is magnified for ego-involved parents, who typically perceive their child's success as their own and their child's mistakes and failures as reflection on them (Grolnick, 2003). Such parents also believe that how their child performs affects how others judge them as parents. Ego-involved parents experience internal pressures to have their children perform well (e.g., in school, sport) and be perceived well by others since their self-esteem is dependent on their child's performance outcome. Thus, when their child performs well they experience pride and feel good about themselves and when their child performs poorly they feel shame, embarrassment and bad about themselves. They are, therefore, highly motivated to protect their own self-esteem and, consequently, adopt a controlling behaviour to ensure that their child performs well and achieve positive outcomes. When academic or sport endeavours emphasise competition or evaluation, such parents will be more venerable to the effects of such pressures than others and, as a result, will push their child to achieve positive outcomes. Adopting controlling behaviour helps such parents alleviate the pressure of the evaluation that they feel as they transfer it into their behaviour (i.e., becoming controlling) and then onto their child (Grolnick, 2003). The greater the evaluative pressure the parents feel the greater their controlling behaviour becomes (Grolnick, Gurland, DeCourcey & Jacob, 2002). Accordingly, it is logical to assume that such parents will experience high levels of fear of their child's failure and adopt a controlling behaviour as a way of coping with their fear.

Parental controlling behaviour influences the way they interact with the child and their relationship since they become over-involved in their child's performance, behaviour, and outcomes. Parental controlling behaviour can decrease children's intrinsic motivation and

self-confidence, and can undermine their ability to initiate their own actions as they experience external and internal pressures to conform to their parents' wishes. In cases where children defy the parents' directives behaviour, a conflict will arise in their relationships. In sport, parental controlling behaviour can lead to children losing their love for their sport (Grolnick, 2003).

5.6 Study Aims and Rationale

Research has shown that FF is prominent in both sexes and across levels of actual and perceived ability (Covington, 1992; Elliot, 1999) and has associated prevalence of negative outcomes with high FF (see Study 1a). Achievement motivation theorists have long asserted that the motive to avoid failure is socially learnt during childhood and that motive dispositions are grounded in emotional experiences (McClelland et al., 1953). Parents have been implicated in the development of FF due to their primary caregiver role and attachment. However, despite the conceptual and applied importance of the FF construct, surprisingly little research has been conducted on its developmental origins. At present, existing research on the origins of FF has not examined it within the context of youth sport, consequently, the mechanisms of FF transmission within the sport context is not yet known. Therefore, the present investigation represents the first endeavour to examine the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF within the sport domain.

Sport represents a significant achievement domain for children and adolescents and is one of the most popular achievement contexts for youth today (Treasure, 2001). Sport is also a highly competitive achievement domain where the increasing pressure to achieve top performance brings with it an increase in anxiety and FF among athletes (Hosek & Man, 1989). Concerns about performance failure and negative social evaluation are the most prevalent sources of worry for athletes (Martens, Vealey, & Burton, 1990). Winning and losing are aspects of competitive sport and most youth sport participants view winning as important (Passer, 1984). It is, therefore, not surprising that losing is the most potent situational source of competitive stress. Many children interpret a win as a standard for success and, thus, losing becomes a threat and, accordingly, is defined as failure (Scanlan, 1984). Mistakes and failures are common and are integral part of an achievement activity such as sport. Therefore, in line with Elliot and colleagues' (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2004; McGregor & Elliot, 2005) research cited above, it is likely that high FF parents of young athletes will respond negatively to their child's failures. It is also possible that processes

other than love withdrawal are responsible in the development of FF among young athletes. Parents often project their fears, expectations, and hopes onto their children and view them as an extension of themselves (Crandall & Preston, 1961), and their children's successes and failures impact their own self-evaluative judgment (Katkovsky et al., 1964). Therefore, it is likely that parents high in FF will respond to their child's failure and their own failure in the same way because the two outcomes are intertwined (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

Based on the review of literature cited above, three issues underpin the present study. First, research has documented the prevalence of problems associated with FF in achievement settings (see Study 1a). Secondly, sport is popular and significant achievement domain for children and adolescents where winning is the typical demand (Passer, 1988). Thirdly, research has not explored the mechanism of intergenerational transmission of FF in young athletes. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to explore the mechanisms of FF transmission and, thereby, to comprehend the developmental origins of FF in young athletes. The central research question is as follows: is FF transmitted to young athletes from their parents and, if so, how?

In the present study, I focused on the role of parental socialisation (attitudes, perceptions and values) in the development of FF among young athletes, specifically parent-child communications and interactions. I sought to examine how parent-child interactions contribute to the development of FF in young athletes. Parental FF leads them to display particular patterns of affect, cognition and behaviour with regard to their children's failure. As such, I sought to explore the mechanisms and processes by which parents transmit their own FF to their children.

A qualitative inquiry was deemed suitable for the present study, as it provides flexibility and freedom to explore family interaction (Cote, 1999). The study adopted a social constructionist framework in order to explore the experiences, processes and meanings for the participants. Interviews with young athletes and their parents can provide in-depth information on the process and role of parents in the development of FF in young athletes. They can provide information on the role of the family in the early age of an athlete's involvement in sport and capture the individual and collective experiences of family members. Finding out about such experiences from the perspectives of parents and athletes allows exploring parental influence both from the child's perception of parenting practices and from the parents' own self-reports. This can provide information on child-parent interaction and, thus, the mechanisms by which FF are transmitted.

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5.7 Method

• Participants

Four British (of Caucasian origin) intact families (child and parents living together under the same roof; parents in their first marriage) of young elite athletes aged 13-14 years volunteered to participate in the present study. Athletes were drawn from local sporting academies and included one male (age 14 years) and one female (age 13 years) tennis player, one female figure skater (age 13 years), and one female gymnast (age 13 years). All four athletes reported 1.5 - 2 years competitive experience at international level, thus, competing at the elite level. The gymnast and her parents were interviewed for a pilot study and, subsequently, were excluded from the main investigation.

The procedure I chose for selecting participants was "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 2002). This type of sampling seeks to select cases (e.g., organisations, cultures, communities, families, individual people) for study because they are "information rich and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling then is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalisation from the sample to a population" (Patton, 2002; p. 40). Thus, it is a procedure of selecting participants (or cases) that the researcher believes can offer deep understanding and facilitate insight into issues of importance to the purpose of the research; hence the term purposeful sampling. Accordingly, qualitative inquiry typically focuses on small samples that can illuminate the question under investigation.

• Procedure

The study was cleared by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee. The study procedure involved three stages:

Stage 1- Seeking consent. Access to the athletes was obtained through local sporting academies in the Midlands region of the United Kingdom. I made an initial contact with the directors of the academies by telephone, explaining the aims and the nature of the study. Following this, the directors were asked to send a copy of my letter to families that fitted the selection criteria (intact families of athletes aged 12-14 years), asking them to contact me should they wish to participate. The letter explained the requirements, aims, and procedures of the study and assured the volunteers complete anonymity; that all information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and would not be passed on to

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the academies' coaching staff or others.

Stage 2- Building rapport. Four parents telephoned me expressing a wish to participate in the study. Following this initial telephone conversation I visited (for approximately an hour) each family at home in order to meet them for the first time and to explain the aims of the study, to answer their questions regarding the study and any concerns that they might have about participating in it, and to ensure that the parents and athletes volunteered of their own accord. In addition to explaining this to the parents and child together, I also discussed it separately with the child in another room, answering their questions and ensuring that they understood the nature and aims of the study, and agreed to participate in the study of their own free will. Finally, after obtaining a signed consent form for participation from the parents, I arranged a convenient interviewing time and place for both parties.

Stage 3- The interview. Three interviews were conducted individually with each athlete, mother and father, at home or in the academy, and in a quiet room where only the athlete or the parent and I were present. Interviews with the parents ranged between 90-200 minutes (*M*=118 minutes, *SD*=38.8 minutes) and with the athletes between 60-106 minutes (*M*=80.2 minutes, *SD*=14.7 minutes), and were audio-recorded. I also observed participants' non-verbal cues during the interview, especially during conversations about their experiences of failure, and discreetly noted them on a notepad. This would later serve to provide additional meaning to the verbal data.

The interviews were conducted with one family at the time. All nine interviews with each family took place over a period of 2-3 weeks. I spent considerable time with each family in order to gain a depth of understanding of parental socialisation processes and interactions and of experiences of success and failure of both athletes and parents. This is in accordance with Brustad's (1992) statement that, "interactions and socialisation cannot be captured through a single-moment snapshot of one moment in time" (p.72).

- **Data collection**

Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted (and audio-recorded) with the female gymnast and her parents prior to commencing the study in order to test and refine the interview guide. These interviews were used to test the order in which the interview questions were asked and the links between them (allowing for a flow and orderly sequence), to test for appropriateness and comprehension of questions and terms, and to make amendments accordingly. Based

on the feedback from the gymnast and her parents after the pilot interviews, and a critique of a colleague who specialises in qualitative research and interviewing techniques, I made modifications to simplify the wording of the questions and their order in the interview guide. The final guide was used for interviewing the three athletes and their parents who participated in the present study.

The interview design and structure

A semi-structured interview was conducted individually with each athlete, mother and father in order to allow them to relate to their own experiences in a more free and open manner, and to disclose information than perhaps they would have not in a group interview. I assumed that experiences of failure and fear of failure may be sensitive topics for some individuals to discuss and, therefore, the privacy of an individual interview was expected to facilitate a more in-depth disclosure than a group interview. Moreover, an individual interview can ensure that the issues discussed and raised in the interview do not disrupt the dynamics of the family; thus serving an ethical purpose.

A pre-designed interview guide was used as a flexible framework for the interview and was based on key questions most relevant to the study (Arksey & Knight, 1999). It contained open-ended questions, elaboration, and clarification probes to be used during the interview to clarify, expand and deepen the participants' responses and, thereby, to increase the richness of the responses. Although all the athletes and parents were asked the same questions, the order of topics and the order of questioning were free to vary within the natural flow of the conversation and related issues that were thought to be important by the participants were allowed to surface.

Each interview was divided into three sections: pre-interview, the interview, and post-interview debriefing. The pre- and post-interview sections were delivered at each interview. The aim of the pre-interview section was to establish rapport and orient the athletes and the parents to the interview process. It sought to reiterate the aims of the study, the reasons for audio-recording the interview and the use of data and the structure of the interview, and to assure the participants again about the confidentiality and anonymity practice. It also intended to encourage them to give honest and accurate responses to the questions asked, and to remind them that they could decline answering anything that they wished to and that they could terminate the interview at any point, should they wish to. The post-interview debriefing section offered both parties an opportunity to clarify or refine aspects of the

interview and for the participants to reflect on the interview process and experience. It also allowed them the opportunity to talk about some of the issues that were raised in the interview and to "let go" of any emotions that an in-depth interview can evoke (King, 1996), hence, providing a closure on the experience. This ensured that the participants left the interview in a positive frame of mind and, thus, served an ethical purpose. This section was also designed to thank the participants for their valuable contributions to the study and to unwind the interview by changing the focus to less personally directed issues.

Three interview guides were carefully developed (see appendix 1). The questions aimed to explore a wide range of experiences, interactions, socialisation practices, beliefs and attitudes. Hence, capturing the depth of the intergenerational transmission phenomenon. In each interview, the parents and athletes were asked the same questions in order to ascertain their perceptions, or meanings that they constructed for their experiences and interactions. Thus, studying parental influence not only from the child's perception of parenting practices and beliefs, but also from parents' own reports. Each interview had a different focus and different aims and was divided into several parts. At the end of each part the participants were asked whether they wished to add anything else concerning what had been discussed and whether they were comfortable to carry on with the interview. The focus, aim and parts of each interview is as follows:

Interview 1- Introduction

Interview 1 aimed to provide and introduction and background information about the family and their relationships. It was divided into four parts:

Part 1: Getting into sport- aimed to build rapport and gently ease interviewees into the interview.

Part 2: Value of sporting career- aimed to establish how the parents and the athletes valued the athletes' sporting career, whether there were similarities or differences in the ways they viewed it, and how they felt about it being an important feature in their lives.

Part 3: Parental support and involvement- aimed to find out about parental support and involvement, and how parents and athletes felt about it.

Part 4: Parents-child relationships- aimed to explore parent-child relationship in general and whether it revolved solely around the child's sporting career, and if so, to what extent, or also around other hobbies and activities.

Interview 2 – Transmission of beliefs, attitudes, and aspirations

Interview 2 aimed to establish how parental achievement perspective was transmitted to and influenced their child's achievement perspective, and how parents' and child's beliefs systems were linked to their behaviours. Thus, exploring the messages that the athletes received from their parent about achievement, and how parents felt about their own and their child's achievements as well as achievements in general. This interview was divided into four parts:

Part 1: Parents' childhood achievement experiences- aimed to find out about the parents' achievement experiences during childhood and their chosen careers. This can offer some explanation as to the source of their attitudes and beliefs on achievement. It also aimed to find out how parents told their child about their childhood experiences of achievement activities and how they talked about them with their child.

Part 2: Perceptions of success and failure- aimed to establish how parents and athletes perceived success and failure in sport, whether there were similarities and differences in their perceptions, how parents transmitted their perceptions and beliefs to their child, and how these affected their child's beliefs, behaviours, and well-being.

Part 3: Goals, aspirations and expectations- aimed to establish similarities and differences in parents' and athletes' goals and aspirations, and to find out whether the athletes competed in order to fulfil their own goals and aspirations or their parents' and, thus, wishing to please them. This part also sought to explore how the parents conveyed their expectations to their children and whether the children perceived it as pressure and, if so, how it affected them. Finally, this part aimed to ascertain similarities and differences in the parents' and children' hopes and fears in relation to the child's sporting career.

Part 4: Desire to succeed and please parents- aimed to establish why the athletes wanted to succeed and why the parents wanted their children to succeed, and again, ascertain whether the child competed in order to please his/her parents and fulfil their goals and expectations or to fulfil his/her own. This part also helped to identify the consequences of failure for the athletes and their parents; this can shed light on the types of FF.

Interview 3 – Experiences of sporting success and failure, consequences, fears, and communicative style

Interview 3 aimed to find out about past experiences of sporting success and failure, the

consequences of failure, types of fear of failure, and about parent-child communication and interaction style. This interview was divided into six parts:

Part 1: Experiences of sporting success and failure- aimed to establish the consequences of failure and the fears of failure of both athletes and parents. Some questions were also prospective in nature, thus, establishing current fears about future competitions. This part also examined the athletes' and parents' behaviours and reactions to past failures, the athletes' interpretations of their parents' reactions and behaviours, and the consequences of failure that the athletes and the parents had experiences. This would later help explain the transmission and development of FF.

Part 2: Parental evaluation style- aimed to establish parents' evaluation style of their child's performance and how they conveyed their approval and disapproval of their child's performance. By exploring parental evaluation style this part also established the consequences of failure that the athletes perceives aversive.

Part 3: Parent-child conversation and interactions- aimed to establish the nature of parent-child communications pre- and post-competitions, and to find out whether the parents were outcome- or mastery-oriented and how they transmitted their achievement orientation to their child.

Part 4: Parents and child characteristics- aimed to find out about the characteristics of the parents and child form both parties. This can give additional valuable information about the family interactions and dynamic and about parental transmission of beliefs and values relating to achievement of success in sport.

Part 5: Recommendations/advice- aimed to obtain parents' and athletes' recommendations and advice as to how parents should communicate and behave with their child athlete in order to help them become successful athletes, enjoy performing and competing in their sport and not fear failure. This information would indirectly reveal what the athletes liked and disliked about their interactions with their parents, and what the parents perceived as good and bad parental practices. Moreover, this information would contribute to the follow-up intervention programme (Study 3).

Part 6: The interview experience- aimed to find out how the participants felt about being interviewed and if they found it an enjoyable experience. Moreover, it sought to find out whether they had any concerns and reservations that impeded them from disclosing information during the interview; as this can impact the quality of the data collected.

Interview reflections

Immediately after each interview, I spent a few minutes in my car recording (into a Dictaphone) my initial reflections of the interview (while still fresh in my mind). For example, I reflected on what was said (i.e., the content) and how the participants discussed the issues raised (i.e., the emotions they exhibited, body language, tone of voice). I also reflected on my own experience of the interview, and on my performance as an interviewer and what I should improve, change or maintain in my interviewing style and techniques for the next interview. Immediately upon my return to the university, I transferred my reflections from the Dictaphone to my research journal (which also contained reflections on the entire research process) and while doing so I carried on further reflecting. My reflections would later serve to provide additional information in data analysis and memo writing.

After listening to the recording of the interview, I made further reflections, noting down points that I felt were ambiguous and required further clarification from the participant, and points that I felt I should probe further in order to gain more information. These were further explored with the participant at our next meeting, prior to commencing the next interview.

Measures

The *Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory* (PFAI; Conroy et al., 2002) (see appendix 2) was administered to assess the types and levels of FF of the athletes and their parents. At the end of interview 2, the parents and athletes were asked to complete the PFAI, which is a multidimensional measure of cognitive-motivational-relational appraisals associated with FF. It contains twenty-five items that measure five aversive consequences of failure: experiencing shame and embarrassment (e.g., "when I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it"), devaluing one's self-estimate (e.g., "when I am failing, I blame my lack of talent"), having an uncertain future (e.g., "when I am failing, it upsets my "plan" for the future"), important others losing interest in me (e.g., "when I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me"), and upsetting important others (e.g., "when I am failing, people who are important to me are disappointed"). Each one of these subscales comprises five items. Participants' responses are on a scale from -2 ("do not believe at all") to +2 ("believe 100% of the time"). In addition to completing the PFAI, parents were also asked to complete an adapted PFAI version that examined their fears for

their child's failure. By changing the stem of each item (for example, changing "when I'm failing..." to "when my child is failing...") I was able to measure parental fears for their child's failure. Thus, each parent completed two versions of the PFAI, one that measured their fears of their own failure (in relation to their work or achievement activity), and one that measured their fears for their child's failure. The athletes were asked to complete the original PFAI version that measured their FF. In addition to assessing the participants' types and levels of FF, the PFAI also served to stimulate discussions and generate further information (in interview 3) in order to gain a better understanding of their responses to the PFAI questions (e.g., please explain your reply to question 5, in question 24 who do you refer to by 'others') and their fears.

Reflexivity in my research

I was aware prior to commencing the study that I was not merely an external observer of the athlete-parent interactions. Rather, I was responsible for initiating discussions and disclosures about beliefs and values, fears, relationships, and experiences, while also reflecting on my own social world. As, Denscombe (2002) stated, "researchers have a personal history and a personal identity" (p. 34) that cannot be separated from the research process. Therefore, asking the athletes to reflect on their experiences and interactions with their parents, sometimes made me reflect on my own childhood experiences and interactions with my own parents. I had, however, to put my personal feelings aside and confront my own biases and assumptions. For example, I had ideas about 'good' vs 'bad' parenting, and 'rights' vs 'wrong' parenting that were based on my own childhood experiences with my parents as well as on my academic knowledge. I found myself continuously pondering on the question, 'how can I be an unbiased researcher and not let my own assumptions and presumptions cloud my perceptions and interpretations of the participants' experiences?' I kept challenging my thoughts, feelings, and assumptions on how parents 'should' and 'shouldn't' behave. Recording my reflections and biases in a journal while conducing the pilot study helped me to understand and challenge them and, thereby, minimise their influence on me (on my perceptions and interpretation) in the course of the study and to enable me to separate (to some extent) 'me the researcher' from 'me the person'. Self-reflection and self-awareness, however, remained constant for me throughout the duration of the study, therefore, echoing Ely et al.'s (1991) statement that self-reflection is "one of the most difficult and thought-provoking aspect of being a qualitative researcher" (p. 122).

Positioning myself in the study

Researchers must decide how to present themselves in their research project; which is influenced by who they are studying (King, 1996). As such, I faced an important issue when designing the study, which was the need to understand my role in the research process and to establish my position within the family and with the young athletes. Some have proposed that researchers studying young people should position themselves as "friends" (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988) and as "least adults" (Mandell, 1991) in order to make young participants feel at ease with them; thus attempting to neutralise the power relations between adults and young people. This was an important consideration for me as I believed that if the athletes did not feel comfortable and at ease in my company they would not fully engage and share their experiences with me, consequently, resulting in inferior data generation. After much consideration I decided to present myself as a student who sought to learn about their experiences as elite athletes. In this way, I was able to distance myself from the somewhat authoritative labels of 'teacher' or 'researcher'. Furthermore, my wearing of casual clothes (Fontana & Frey, 2000), using appropriate language to their age and commonly used terminology (Punch, 2002), and adopting a relaxed approach to their time-keeping (Christensen & James, 2000), were all strategies that I employed consciously in order to reinforce a non-threatening image and, thus, to enhance communication with the young athletes and gain a deep disclosure of information. Finally, I ensured that I was reasonably well informed about their sports (e.g., sporting figures, events, scores, latest news) in order to be able to engage in light conversation with them during our meetings in an attempt to build rapport and reinforce a non-threatening image.

I also had to consider how to position myself with the athletes' parents and siblings. I made a conscious effort to be flexible with parental timekeeping, cancellations and re-scheduling of meetings, relocation of a meeting venue (i.e., I travelled to their homes when they could not get to the academy to meet me), and meeting them during the evenings and weekends. Thus, I fitted myself around their schedules without appearing demanding. Furthermore, following meetings that took place at their home, I accepted offers for refreshments (i.e., tea) and engaged with the entire family (parents, athlete, siblings) in light conversation on various topics (e.g., sport, TV programmes, films, shopping, hobbies, school, looking at family holiday photographs) in their living-room. All was aimed at becoming accepted into the family and appearing non-threatening, flexible and accommodating and, therefore, engaging effectively, building rapport and good

relationships with all family members.

Building and maintaining good relationships with the participants was of the utmost importance to me for two reasons. First, I was respectful of them as people, and grateful to them for volunteering to participate in the study and, thereby, allowing me to enter their 'world' (i.e., their family, lives, relationships, and experiences) in order to help me with my research. Secondly, "getting on" with research participants is fundamental to the quality and quantity of data collection (Buchanan, Boddy, & McCalman, 1988). When participants understand the aim of the research and feel that the researcher is sincere, trustworthy, and has a genuine desire to listen to what they have to say it can contribute to good participant-researcher relationships and, subsequently, to the quality and quantity of data generation (Buchanan et al., 1988). Therefore, throughout my involvement with the families it was of a primary importance to me to be accommodating, understanding, non-judgmental, and always friendly with all the family members.

Exiting the family was another issue of a prime importance to me. Over the course of our meetings I formed a certain level of closeness with the parents, the athletes and their siblings, who, although not part of the study, interacted and engaged with me in light talk (e.g., school, hobbies, computer games). I chose to exit the family gradually both for my benefit (as I became fond of them) and the family members' (who became equally fond of me). Once all the interviews had been completed, I sent the family a musical thank you card and visited them a week later to thank them in person for their time, hospitality and contribution to my study. I also told them how much I enjoyed coming to their home and getting to know them. Although the parents invited me for future visits, over the following two months I visited and telephoned the family once a month (inquiring about their general well-being) and in the coming months I sent birthday cards to both the athletes and their siblings and a Christmas card at the end of the year. Over those months I gently declined invitations from the parents for dinners and outings (e.g., to the theatre, sporting events) in order to bring our relationships gradually to an end. I exited the family completely within approximately five months of gaining entry. This gradual process of withdrawal facilitated a non-abrupt termination of the relationships and maintained the option of returning for future research (indeed, in the following year these families volunteered to participate in study 3).

- **Data Analysis**

All interviews (a total of 43 hours and 23 minutes) were transcribed verbatim (yielding 990 pages of 1.5-spaced text). After completing the transcription of each interview, I listened to the entire recording again and examined the transcript for accuracy. Transcripts were inductively analysed using the principles of thematic analysis (Smith, 1995) and some principles of grounded theory analysis (e.g., open coding, constant comparison, mapping, writing analytical memos; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 1995) in order to identify common themes and categories, thereby, producing an explanation or a theory about the issue under investigation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data analysis is said to be about "the representation or reconstruction of social phenomenon" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; p.108). To facilitate data analysis (e.g., organising, coding, categorising data) I used a computer software programme, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002).

The process of data analysis

I began the process of data analysis by reading each interview transcript several times, as each reading can generate new insights (Smith, 1995). While reading each transcript I noted down (on the page margins) things that the participant had said that I deemed of interest or value to the research question, my initial thoughts, and emerging themes and the links between them. This initial form of analysis allowed me to have the first interaction with the data and to ascertain a better understanding of what the participants had said and to draw on my own interpretive resources. Thus, this first phase of the analysis allowed me to study the data for the first time and to identify key themes and preliminary questions before moving the analysis to NUD*IST for a more comprehensive analysis.

Coding the data is the first analytical phase where the researcher defines "what the data are all about" (Charmaz, 1995; p. 37) and begins to organise the data into meaningful categories (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The coding process involves creating codes as one studies the data, thus, allowing for codes to emerge from the data. Mechanically, coding begins by dissecting the data into text segments of similar meaning (i.e., common threads) and labelling them (open coding), examining them for similarities and differences (constant comparison) and grouping together conceptually similar data to form a hierarchical structure of emerging themes and categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process of constant comparison of themes and categories helped me to clarify and develop a theory. It also served to provide a form of trustworthiness in that I was constantly re-affirming the meaning of the category.

Coded data segments are quotes that capture a distinct concept and are defined as "text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information" (Tesch, 1990; p. 116). Coded text segments can vary in size and in the present study these varied from a sentence to several paragraphs. This inductive coding process, which moves through a number of stages, reveals essential categories and the relations between them, and how they reflect the phenomena studied, therefore, allowing for meaning of social phenomena to be explained (Sullivan, 2003). It is important to emphasise here that data analysis is a dynamic process and it does not occur in separate stages. This makes using NUD*IST advantageous as the programme is designed to facilitate a dynamic coding by allowing the researcher to move back and forth between open coding and building categories, and creating links between them, while concurrently writing conceptual and theoretical memos.

Trustworthiness and credibility of data

To insure trustworthiness and credibility of the research I employed rigour in data collection and analysis (e.g., thick description, audit trail, triangulation, an ongoing peer debriefing), examination of the credibility of the researcher (e.g., an ongoing reflection on my own bias and values, maintaining a reflexive journal), and making my epistemological and theoretical stance transparent. Using NUD*IST offered me an efficient way of managing (storing, organising) and coding the data, and to conduct complex searches of text. It also enabled me to generate a mapping display of the categories that I had constructed in hierarchical structures with the connections between them. Finally, NUD*IST allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer, et al., 2004) and facilitated the task of reflection on the research process as it evolves in memos, which constructionism epistemology deems important (refer to chapter 3 for a more comprehensive explanation on trustworthiness and credibility of data, and on the use of NUD*IST in data analysis; sections 3.4 and 3.5)

5.8 Results and Discussion

In this section I will present and discuss the results of each family separately, using pseudonyms. Family 1 represents the male tennis player (Alan) and his parents, family 2 represents the female tennis player (Jenny) and her parents, and family 3 represents the figure skater (Lisa) and her parents. For each family I will examine the following:

- Types of FF (common between the athletes and their parents)

- PFAI results- types and levels of FF

- Mechanisms of FF transmission (from parents to athlete)

Data analysis revealed three mechanisms of FF transmission: parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations. I will examine each mechanism separately in relation to each family. Finally, the athletes and parents perceived losing in competitions as a failure to achieve one's desired outcome, therefore, I will use the terms "failure" and "losing" interchangeably, as having the same meaning.

5.8.1 FAMILY 1

5.8.1.1 Types of Fear of Failure

The dynamic process of fear transmission is manifested by a parent (or both of them) and the athlete indicating the same fear. Table 5.1 shows the same types of fear reported by the athlete (Alan) and his parent(s) (Fred and Sally). They all feared Alan losing in competitions and the consequences of his losing, such as being negatively judged by coaches and peers, not attaining his aspiration to become a professional tennis player, losing ranking, and not getting selected to tournaments. Thus, their fear of Alan losing was underpinned by their perceived aversive consequences of losing. The athlete and both his parents referred to failure as losing, getting beaten, or not winning the competitions.

Fear	Dad's fear	Mum's fear	Athlete's fear
Fear of negative judgment	Fear of Alan being negatively judged by the coaches Fear of coaches labelling Alan as a weak player and not wanting to coach him Fear of coaches judging Alan as not good and not *putting in effort*	Fear of Alan being judged by coaches as not a winner Fear of academy coaches viewing Alan as 'not up to it' and rejecting him Fear of dad and coaches thinking that Alan is not trying and not 'coming up with the goods' Fear of coaches viewing Alan's losing as his fault	Fear of negative judgment from peers and coaches Fear of being judged as not a good player Fear of losing peers' respect (loss of social value)
Fear of non-attainment of aspirations	Fear of a bad injury for life Fear of Alan not achieving his ultimate goal Fear of Alan not becoming a top player	Fear of a career terminating injury Fear of Alan not achieving his ultimate goal Fear of Alan dropping out of tennis due to dad's pressure	Fear of not achieving my ultimate goal due to bad injury Fear of not achieving ultimate goal and not having education to fall back on
Fear of loss of rankings	Fear of Alan dropping in his ranking	Fear of Alan slipping in rankings	Fear of losing ranking
Fear of non-selection	Fear of Alan not being selected for international tournaments		Fear of not getting selected to tournaments

Table 5.1: Family 1- types of FF of dad, mum, and athlete.

Fear of negative judgment

The following quote illustrates dad's fear of Alan losing in a tournament when a week before he found out that his son's opponent was a higher ranked player,

> "I was dreading Alan to play that boy, [opponent]…, [dreading] that Alan won't beat him…. I heard that he was a very good, very tough player…you can't beat him…. and then *[sigh]* I went depressed…. I thought, what is the point? It is the first match [in the tournament]…and he [son] *is going to lose, because he* [opponent] *is much higher ratings than Alan*, there is no chance... he [opponent] used to be the number 1".

It is evident from this quote that expecting or envisaging his son's failure to beat a higher ranked opponent had made dad feel "depressed". Thus, anticipating his son's failure a week prior to the event elicited fear in dad, but not in his son, as dad stated "I don't think he [son] did [worry about playing, name], I think it didn't matter to him". This fear was provoked by dad's perceptions of the consequences of Alan losing in this tournament, as he explained:

> "I believed he [son] was going to the first match [of the tournament] to lose it and to become not in the top 8, but he will become in the bottom 8.… I know the LTA's [Lawn Tennis Association] system and they would look to the top 8, not below 8.… I thought if

> Alan beat [opponent's name], people higher [i.e., LTA managers and top coaches] will start to think 'that boy has it'. They look at results.... And after Alan beat [opponent's name] I felt 'oh when he goes again on court, people [LTA] will say 'its Alan, he can beat the best, he can be one of the best', and that's all I wanted for him".

Hence, dad's fear was underpinned by his belief that Alan would lose and consequently the LTA top coaches and managers would not show interest in him. Dad values greatly their opinion of his son and believes that "their opinions are the ones we need", thus perceiving that managers' and top coaches' (positive or negative) opinions of his son can impact (enhance or hinder, respectively) his son's future career as a tennis player. As such, dad feared the consequences of failure for his son's future. He stated "I worry about maybe coaches around him think he's not that good, that he's not putting the input". After Alan had won that match dad felt "relieved" that Alan had achieved the recognition and acknowledgment of the LTA coaches and managers as being a good player. A key statement from dad when discussing this experience with me was "I didn't know that he was going to win it". Thus, dad experienced fear of Alan losing for a week prior to the tournament while the reality, a week later, was that Alan, against dad's predictions, managed to beat his tough opponent. Therefore, dad's fear during that week was about something that had not happened yet (an imagined fear), and it is the consequences of failure that dad appraised as aversive that elicited his fear. In short dad's fear of Alan losing was unpinned by the fear of negative judgment following failure.

Following this win, Alan progressed to the quarter-final round, but had lost the match and, consequently, did not achieve a place in the top eight, as dad had wished for. This loss worried dad and immediately afterwards he told Alan, "the coach wouldn't want to coach you again because of your attitude". Dad explained,

> "I was worried deep inside that they [coaches] would see a weakness in him, in his attitude on court, and that this will be his label, his trade mark that 'he's so weak he's not really trying, he doesn't want it but his parents are pushing him'. I didn't want them [coaches] to think that.... For a bit the label stuck to Alan, his coach told me...'oh Alan is not really a match player yet'.... What I always say to Alan [is] 'you're dealing with human beings.... they [coaches] just have certain players in their mind and they protect them and other players they don't like'... So I was worried about that.... He needed that tournament, in my eyes, to have recognition, and not to be labelled as 'he's not good', or 'not a match player yet'".

Through such a conversation, dad can transmit his fear of negative judgment after failure to Alan. Thus, such conversations can serve as the mechanism of transmission of dad's fear to Alan. It appears from dad's disclosure that such conversations post-failure are a common practice for him. The following two quotes illustrate conversations that can serve to

transmit dad's fear of negative judgment to his son.

> "His coach didn't want to take him [i.e., coach him] at the beginning, and I only told him [Alan] about it after two and a half years when he was achieving [results]. I told him about their [coaches'] opinion and said 'look how they respond to you when you are working hard and achieving.... Everybody is 'oh Alan is very good, Alan is that'".

> "It's just my frustration has to come across to him, and the next day I said to him [Alan] 'you know I love you very much, but you have to understand that all my anger is for you, I don't want people [coaches] to think that you are weak because you're not weak, I know you're not weak'".

It appears from the last quote that dad's fear of coaches' negative judgment of Alan underlines his usual expression of anger (i.e., shouting and criticising) towards Alan after failure. In this interaction dad justified his behaviour to his son, explaining that it is for his (son's) benefit, as he wishes to prevent him from being negatively judged by his coaches. It is apparent from this interaction that dad believes that Alan's losing makes coaches perceive him as "weak", which is a consequence that dad perceives as aversive and fears. Dad transmits this fear to his son through both his aggressive behaviour after failure and by telling him "I don't want people to think that you are weak". This teaches Alan also to associate losing with coaches' negative judgment and winning with positive judgment. Such father-son interactions can explain the developmental origin of Alan's fear of losing and of perceiving negative judgment as an aversive consequence of losing that he fears.

Mum also revealed that she feared coaches negatively judging her son after failure:

> "I, and also Fred [dad], worry that the academy... may not think that he's [son] up to it and they may not select him for things [tournaments]. They may start to doubt him because of a loss.... They [the academy] want success, they want winners, they want achievers, and that's what they're there to produce. So if Alan doesn't, then he's letting them down and I'm worried of that. I'm worried of rejection or that they will doubt him whether he's actually up to it.... I worry mainly that Fred and the academy will think that he's [son] not tying, because obviously now we're in that kind of set up [academy], so in a sense we've got to come up with the goods for them [academy].... My worry is how the academy will view it [loss], 'cos sometimes they view it as Alan's fault that he lost".

It appears that both mum and dad perceived that losing in competitions could lead to the academy coaches negatively judging their son's ability to achieve success and, consequently, to reject him if he did not meet their expectations to achieve success. Dad stated, "I want him [son] to show them [coaches] his potential really, that's all"; this explains dad's eagerness for Alan to win and his fear of Alan losing.

Alan also referred to the tournament that his dad had discussed with me. He talked about playing in the quarter-final and losing the match. He attributed his loss to his fear of

losing,

> "I was quite flat... just going through the motions.... That time I was starting to climb up the ladder, and it [the tournament] was just after my first trip abroad and I was starting to get respect from people [players] that were higher [ranked] than me.... I was thinking it's a big thing to go to the semi-final in the biggest tournament in the country... I just felt scared to lose.... I felt nervous... but I just didn't get out of that and I was just down and low in energy".

It appears, therefore, that Alan also perceived that negative judgment and loss of peers' respect would follow failure. Perceiving this consequence of failure as aversive underpinned his fear of failure. This appears to have contributed to his non-optimal performance and eventually to failure.

My conversations with Alan yielded further evidence of his fear of others' negative judgment and loss of social value after failure, which resembled his parents' fear. For example, in reply to "what is your worst worry about failure?" he stated,

> "If I don't do well then other people might not think I'm as good as what I might be, like my coach and the selectors [top coaches], for [national] tournaments and for trips [tournaments] abroad. If I don't do well then they might not pick me for that.... People [players] might think things about me, they might not think I'm as good, might put me down, they might rate me less".

Dad explained the reason why Alan values his peers' opinions of him, "I assume he [Alan] wants to show every one of them that he's better and stronger than them.... They're colleagues not friends and most of the time they are opponents to him". Mum also provided an explanation, stating, "In competitions there's all the same boys.... Now he's slipped to 10th [rank], so he's dropped in his esteem with his peers, and I think it worries him how he will be perceived by those players on and off the court". Thus, it appears that being successful in competitions (which increases one's ranking) contributes to being respected on and off the court by this small group of elite level tennis players. Mum explained that peers might now think "'oh Alan's going down [in ranking], he is not so much of a threat to me now', so when they step onto court they won't fear him so much". She believed that losing peers' respect would also impact their interaction with Alan off court since they were all in a "hot house, pressurized environment [academy] where ranks are quite important. I'm sure he [Alan] thinks to himself 'oh because I'm number 8, this one or two boys are now speaking to me 'cos I'm going away [to overseas tournaments] with them, and when players are selected I'm being included in that little elite group, but if I drop to 10 and I start not to be included, so will they still speak with me and still be pally with me?'". Thus, failure and drop in ranking can lead to Alan losing his position within the group and to loss

of friendships. Such consequence of failure can explain why he perceives failure as a threat that he fears, and why winning and gaining respect and positive regard from his peers is so important to him.

In addition to fearing negative judgment, Alan's fear of losing is also underpinned by his fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon failure, as he revealed,

> "I think 'what if I don't play well?', 'what if I embarrass myself?' I get embarrassed of certain people when I lose, like people [players] that are lower [rating] than me, people that I don't respect. Some that are lower in rating and some that are same rating but I feel I am better than them in the academy.... So if I lose I'm embarrassed in front of them.... I want to play well, I want to show everyone that I'm the best, and things like that".

> "Losing to someone lower [rating] than me is embarrassing.... losing to someone higher or equal to me is not embarrassing".

> "If I don't perform that well and I lose in front of a crowd, I feel a little bit shy when I come off".

Alan's failure also causes his parents embarrassment. For example, dad said, "if I see Alan not trying [in a match] that's what upsets me, and I'm embarrassed of his behaviour on court". Dad's embarrassment may be grounded in his fear of others judging Alan negatively. Dad might also feel embarrassed by Alan not succeeding to obtain the top rank in the country, as mum's statement may indicate, "you'll find Alan at 8 [rank], but in all his [dad] talking with people he says that Alan is in the top in the country.... This is not true, why does he say it?.... He [dad] sees number 8 as too low... as not being successful, but also he doesn't see number 4 as successful as number 1". Dad lying to people about Alan's true rank might also be underpinned by his fear of others' negative judgment. By lying to people dad possibly tries to impress them and to gain their positive regard, respect and value for his son. Finally, Alan's failure causes mum embarrassment indirectly, via dad's behaviour post-failure. She explained, "I find Fred's reaction and anger afterwards [after failure] embarrassing. It's in a tennis centre and there are people around and I find it embarrassing the way they see Alan is being spoken to [by dad]". It appears, therefore, that Alan, mum, and dad experience embarrassment upon Alan's failure, although for different reasons, it is underpinned by their fear of others' negative judgment.

In summary, it appears that mum's and dad's fear of Alan's losing is underpinned by their fear that he will be negatively judged by his coaches and, subsequently, they will lose interest in him and will reject him from the academy. This fear is transmitted from dad to Alan via his conversations with Alan. Alan's fear of losing is also underpinned by his fear of coaches' and peers' negative judgment, loss of social value, and experiencing

embarrassment upon failure. Finally, both parents' experiences of embarrassment following Alan's failure are also grounded in their fear of others' negative judgment of Alan.

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations was reported by the athlete and both his parents. In addition to fearing a career terminating injury, they all feared Alan not achieving his ultimate goal in tennis, which is, according to Alan, to become a professional tennis player. Alan revealed his fear,

> "If I push and push but I couldn't make that breakthrough but I kept on trying and trying and I carried on till, say 22 [age], and then I realise I can't make it into the senior, and I kind of wouldn't have anything to fall back on, erm, with my school, 'cos I wouldn't have gone to university and I won't have any A levels.... And at the end of the day I wouldn't make it"

Alan also perceived that this was his parents' fear, stating, "I think they'd say they're worried that if I didn't make it in tennis that I wouldn't, if I don't take school seriously enough, that I wouldn't have a good job or something". He believed that if he did not achieve his goal his parents "would be upset for me". Mum believed that Alan feared "whether he is able to do it" (i.e., to achieve his aspiration in tennis) and dad stated "I assume his [Alan's] main concern, he's worried of not to achieve things. I think he will be devastated.... I would like him to achieve his goal... for his sake, because he will be the happiest person". Additionally, both mum and dad feared a career terminating injury that will force Alan "to drop his tennis, which will devastate him" [mum]. It seems that both parents perceive not attainting his aspiration (due to injury or lack of ability) as devastating to Alan. It is logical to assume that any parent will fear something that they perceive will cause their child to feel "devastated". Therefore, their fear of non-attainment of aspiration is underpinned by their perception of its effect on Alan. In other words, they fear that not attaining his aspiration will be harmful to his well-being. This raises the question, who transmits the fear to whom? Although it may be a chicken or egg type of question, as fear transmission is a dynamic process, in this case, however, the transmission of fear might be bi-directional. That is, Alan transmits his fear to his parents and they transmit their fear to him, making it reciprocal. The fear of Alan not-attaining his aspiration might be at the root of both parents' involvement in his career, especially his dad's over-involvement (see section 5.8.1.3 'parental controlling behaviour').

5.8.1.2 PFAI Results- Types and Levels of Fear of Failure

FF- Family 1

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
■ Athlete 1	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	0.40	0.20
▨ Mum1(child)	0.00	-0.50	0.75	0.80	1.40
☐ Dad1(child)	-0.57	-1.50	-0.25	0.60	-0.40

Fears
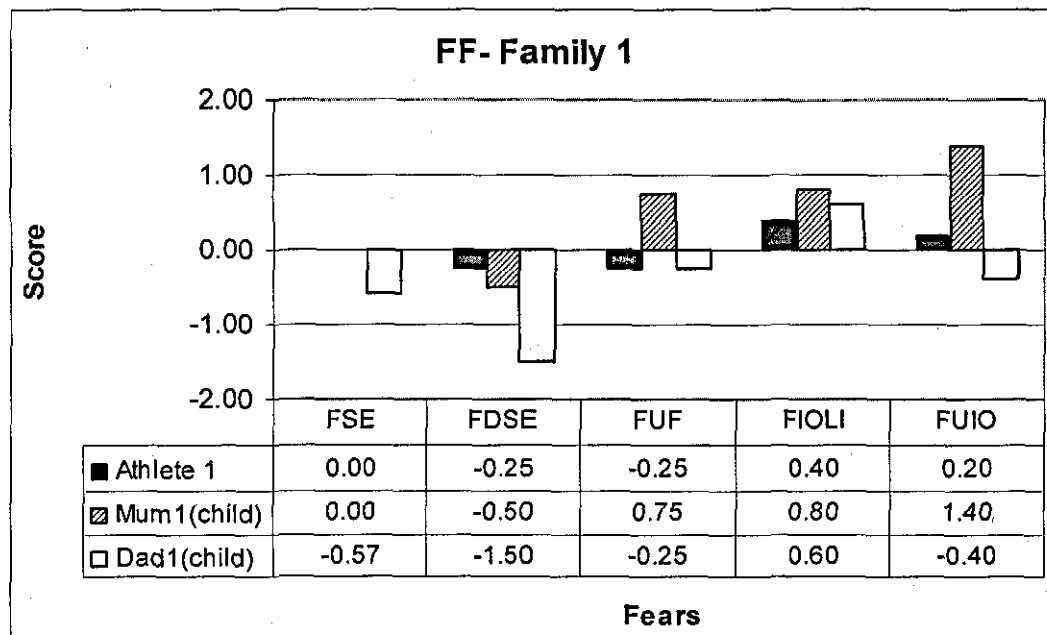
Figure 5.1: Family 1- types and levels of Alan's FF and of his parents' fear of his failure
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI measured the types and levels of FF of Alan and his parents (see Figure 5.1). The results showed that Alan's greatest fear was that important others will lose interest in him after failure, followed by fear of upsetting important others. Both of these fears can be explained by the qualitative data that revealed that Alan feared his coaches' and peers' negative judgment after failure and losing peers' respect and friendships; thus, losing social value. His high level of fear of upsetting important others was possibly mediated by dads' punitive behaviour towards him after failure and his desire to please his family and not let them down (see section 5.8.1.3 'parental punitive behaviour').

Mum's greatest fear of Alan's failure was upsetting important others, which she had told me related to dad's punitive behaviour towards Alan after failure. Her second highest fear was that important others will lose interest in Alan after failure. Again, based on the qualitative data, this fear may be grounded in her fear of coaches negatively judging Alan after failure and, consequently, not selecting him for tournaments. This, in turn, can adversely impact Alan's future career, which explains her third highest fear, fear of uncertain future after failure. Like mum and Alan, dad's highest fear of Alan's failure was also that important others will lose interest in Alan. Thus, this fear was found to be high for all three of them, with mum reporting the highest level, followed by dad followed by Alan.

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This fear, that they all had in common, can be explained by the qualitative data that revealed that they all feared coaches' negative judgment of Alan after failure. Dad's fear of uncertain future was at the same level as Alan's, and for both of them it was lower than mum's.

The PFAI results for parental fear of the consequences of their failure for themselves (see Figures 5.2 and 5.4) revealed that mum overall had a high level of FF, with fear of devaluing self-estimate being her highest, and fear of uncertain future being her lowest (see Figure 5.2). When comparing mum's FF for self with mum's FF for Alan, the results showed that mum's fears of upsetting important others, important others lose interest, and uncertain future were greater for Alan's failure than for her own failure. In contrast, fear of shame and embarrassment and fear of devaluing self-estimate were greater for her own failure than for Alan's failure.

Mum 1- FF for self and child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
▣ Mum1 (self)	0.71	1.00	-0.25	0.00	0.20
▢ Mum1 (child)	0.00	-0.50	0.75	0.80	1.40

Fears
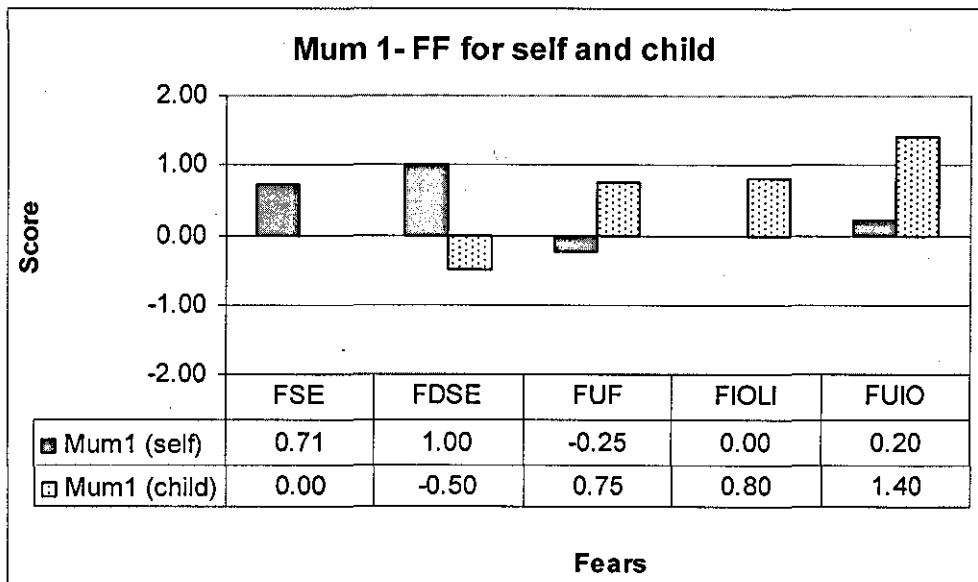
Figure 5.2: Family 1- mum's types and levels of FF for self and for Alan (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In contrast with mum's PFAI results, dad's PFAI results (see Figure 5.3) showed that his overall fear of the consequences of his own failure was lower than mum's overall fear of her own failure. Dad's highest fear was of upsetting important others, and his lowest fear was of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon failure. Dad's fears of shame and embarrassment and of uncertain future were slightly higher for Alan's failure than for his own failure. However, dad's fear of important others lose interest was much higher for Alan's failure that for his own failure.
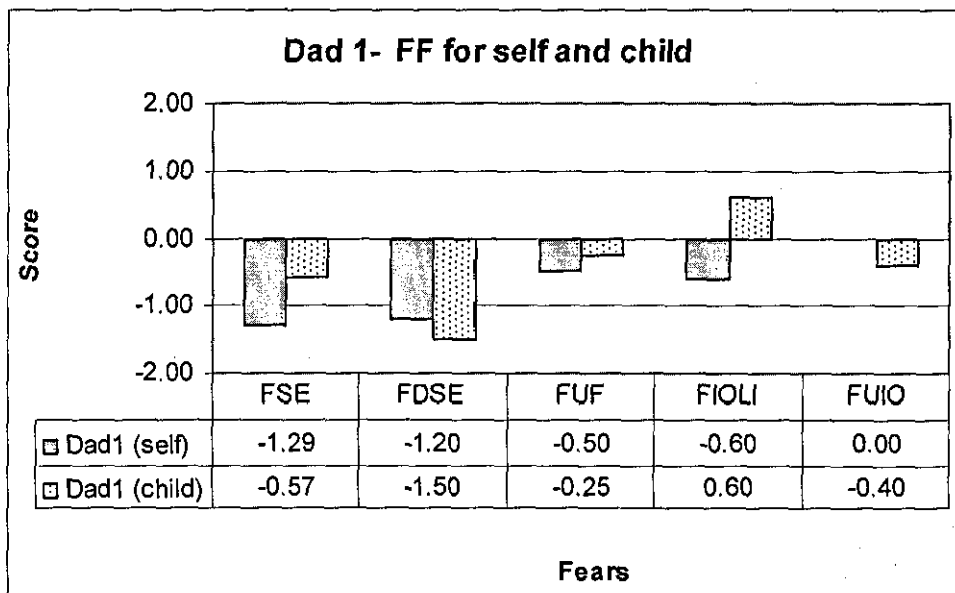
Figure 5.3: Family 1- dad's types and levels of FF for self and for Alan (FSE- fear
of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain
future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In summary, it appears from the PFAI results that both mum and Alan feared that
Alan's failure would upset important others, which mainly relates to their perception that
failure upsets dad and the family. Fear that important others will lose interest in Alan after
failure was a fear that mum, dad and Alan had in common. This fear was mediated by their
perception that coaches will judge Alan negatively after failure. The PFAI results for
parental FF for their own failure revealed that mum overall had a higher level of FF than
dad. When comparing parental FF for self with their FF for Alan, findings showed that
mum's fears of upsetting important others, important others lose interest, and uncertain
future were greater for Alan's failure than for her own failure. Dad also reported a much
higher level of fear of important others lose interest for Alan's failure than for his own
failure. Therefore, the PFAI findings may indicate a transmission of FF from both mum and
dad to Alan.

5.8.1.3 Mechanisms of Fear of Failure Transmission
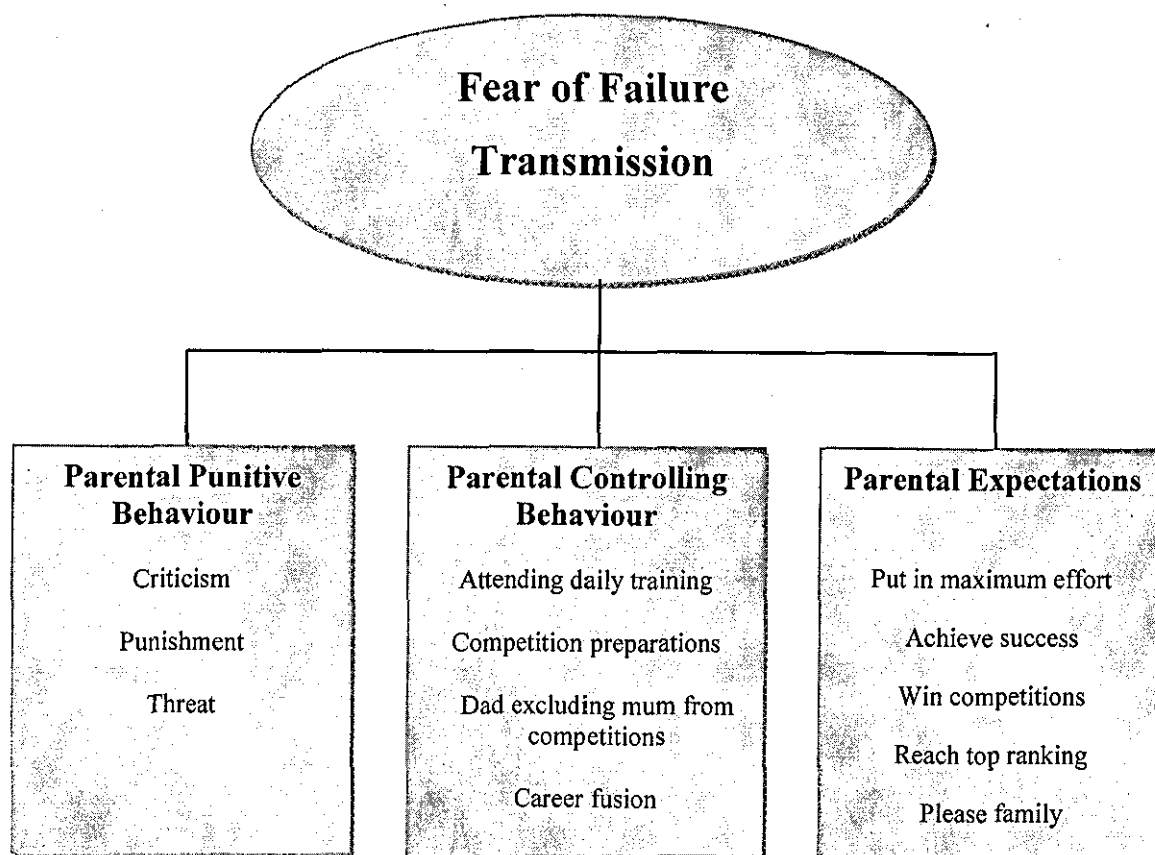
Figure 5.4: Family 1- mechanisms of FF transmission from parents to athlete.

Fear of failure was transmitted from parents to child through parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations (see Figure 5.4). I will examine each mechanism separately below.

- **Parental Punitive Behaviour**

Fear of failure was transmitted through parental punitive behaviour, which encompassed criticism, punishment (love withdrawal), and threat. Each will be examined here separately.

Parental criticism

After losing in competitions dad typically reacts harshly and criticises Alan for lack of effort and for making mistakes in the performance. For example, dad stated, "If he's not doing well... I get upset with him", "I get emotionally upset about it and I get down", "I get angry and disappointed", "Alan was losing every single match to that boy [ranked 1 in the county] and I was angry with him about why he wasn't beating him, why he made the

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mistakes", and "I was upset that Alan didn't take the opportunity to win the match". Alan also described his dad's behaviour and criticism following failure, blaming himself for it,

> "My dad gets upset if I don't do well.... He says 'I'm disappointed in you' and 'you could have done this and this' and 'you weren't doing your best and trying hard'.... But my feelings might be that I was [doing my best] .... He gets really really cross with me, angry, like shouting.... I prefer him not to be as angry.... He gets upset for a day, a day and a half, and then he'll be fine.... I get upset, so I try doubly hard [in the next competition] to make up for his disappointment.... It's really my fault because when I was younger... I'd get quite nervous when I was playing... and I was, like freezing when I'm playing... so then he [dad] would get annoyed with that 'cos he felt that I had a potential but just wasn't giving it"

Mum also described dad's criticism after failure, a behaviour that she condemns,

> "He said [to Alan] 'that was the most disastrous tournament you've had.... We had the worst result, you could have beaten him, you should have just put that little bit more effort into it'.... He [dad] was angry and disappointed, and said 'you should have got him in the second [set]'.... He said 'I'm very disappointed in your performance, you could have got him today... you gave it up in the second set, that was a disgrace .... You're never going to win anything if you give it up'.... He said 'that was your worst performance ever.... you're going backwards and you have to really seriously consider if you can do it, you can't do it on performances like that'.... I never criticise him if he loses.... I say to him 'never mind don't worry'.... From Fred it's generally very very negative.... Normally it all comes out in shouting on the spot.... Fred's own disappointment is being directly communicated to Alan.... I disagree with his criticism. It's quite forceful and not what I think, so I won't reinforce it.... I'd like him to accept what Alan is capable of and control his emotions... and be less critical.... For Fred the bottom line is winning and losing"

Mum also described an occasion when dad humiliated Alan in public, "He [dad] criticised him in the tournament in front of his peers.... Alan was devastated, he was in tears". Thus, it appears that dad's criticism upsets Alan. Mum believes that Alan would like dad's "shouting and anger and annoyance to go away.... It upsets Alan deeply 'cos he's aware of the let down and dad's hurt, and he knows he is the direct cause of dad's shouting, anger, annoyance, and him walking off". Thus, Alan feels upset because he blames himself for losing and consequently upsetting and disappointing his dad. Moreover, Alan's failure appears also to disrupt family harmony. Both mum and Alan talked about the impact of Alan's losing on the home environment. Mum stated, "everything is more upbeat if he's winning", and Alan stated, "after I lose the house is not as chirpy like normal, everybody is a bit down, and I'm a bit down and he's [dad] a bit down.... I feel guilty". It appears, therefore, that Alan internalises the blame for both upsetting and disappointing his dad and for adversely impacting the home environment. Subsequently, such consequences of failure can make Alan perceive failure a threat and fear it.

Dad also criticises Alan during the match, as mum revealed, "I see Alan looking up at his father.... Dad's disapproval comes across as sighing, moving back from the balcony

rail, walking off, shaking his head, and shouting to him 'what are you doing?'". Finally, dad also criticises Alan after winning matches "because I want him to keep assessing himself" [dad]. In the following quote dad describes his criticism of Alan for playing poorly in a match that he had won,

> "Alan played a match and he beat the other boy but I hammered him.... He played as if he was not bothered. I said to him afterwards 'I'm really disappointed in your performance, what is it? what are you doing?", he said 'but I won', I said 'I know, but you could have lost it, you were very lucky, God helped you to win.... but you could have finished it in two sets instead of three... your performance really wasn't good'".

Hence, despite winning dad criticised Alan because he believed that Alan "could have lost" the match, thus, indicating that his criticism was underpinned by his fear of Alan losing.

Dad's harsh criticism teaches Alan to criticise and put himself down (punitive behaviour against self) after failure, saying to himself "I'm useless" [Alan]. Dad stated that Alan had told him several times after losing "oh, I'm not a good player, I'm not good enough". Mum described an interaction between dad and Alan after losing where dad re-affirmed Alan's self criticism, "Alan said to his dad 'I can't play tennis', and Fred said 'yes that's right, you can't'". Dad's behaviour and harsh criticism after failure also teaches Alan to associate his failure with receiving harsh criticism (from dad and from himself) and, thus, to perceive consequences of failure as aversive. Such perceptions are at the root of FF development. In other words, Alan's FF develops through his associating failure with dad's reactions and harsh criticism and with the negative home environment that it creates. Alan perceives these consequences of failure as aversive and, as a result, views failure as a threat and fears it. In short, dad transmits his fear to Alan via his harsh reactions and criticism post-failure.

Parental punishment

Parental punishment after failure came only from dad. He employed practices such as walking away from the sporting arena during the match (when perceiving that Alan was not performing well) and after losing, removing Alan from the family and breaking off communication with him after losing. I grouped all these practices under love withdrawal since they communicate to Alan that his failure results in dad's disapproval and emotional or physical withdrawal of love and support. I will examine each of dad's practices separately below.

Dad walks away from the sporting arena

Dad often walks away from the sporting arena during competition when he is dissatisfied with Alan's performance. Dad explained, "If he's [Alan] in one of the moods, he's not happy or down or not playing confident.... I just don't like it... I leave the place". Dad's departure during the match demonstrates his disapproval to Alan, as Alan stated,

> "He [dad] has walked away when I'm really not that good, or not good at all.... when he feels that I'm maybe, like not trying hard.... But it makes me try harder, and then he'll come back and watch again.... When he leaves it makes me try harder 'cos I don't like to see him disappointed.... He leaves 'cos he's disappointed".

By leaving the arena during the match, dad openly communicates to Alan his disapproval of his performance and, consequently, his withdrawal of support and affection for Alan. Dad's behaviour indicates to Alan that he has disappointed his dad, which makes Alan improve his performance in order to gain back his dad's support, approval and affection. Alan has learnt that by improving his performance he can re-gain his dad's support, thus, associating good performance with dad's support and love. In other words, by playing well he pleases his dad and, in return, he re-gains his love and support.

Dad has also walked away from a tournament after Alan had lost his match, as he explained, "Alan played a dreadful match... so I was upset about it, and I said 'I'm leaving you here and I'm going home'". Mum also discussed dad's walking away from the sporting arena, stating, "When he's [Alan] losing he [dad] moves about, he's very agitated... and at times he has walked off, left the arena, gone in the middle of the tournament". Mum disagrees with dad's behaviour since "It's communicating bad vibes to Alan... it's not a positive sign.... Alan interprets it as dad is disgusted or disappointed with him.... He [Alan] doesn't like it... but he's never said it to dad". Mum further disclosed that after losing dad "communicates his disapproval with anger and criticism directly to Alan and he'll say, 'Andy [older sibling] go and get him his lunch', and Fred will walk off away from Alan". This behaviour also communicates to Alan dad's love withdrawal since usually after winning dad gets the food for Alan and they eat together. It appears, therefore, that on occasions when Alan is not performing well, is behind in the score (i.e., losing), and loses the match, dad withdraws his love by walking away from the arena and by not getting the food for Alan and eating with him. Alan does not like dad's behaviour of love withdrawal and, therefore, it is logical to assume that he perceives such consequences of failure as aversive and fears them. Thus, dad's behaviour serves to teach Alan to associate failure with dad's love withdrawal.

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Dad removes Alan from the family

Dad's removal of Alan from the family after failure and, thus, isolating him, is also an act of love withdrawal. Dad described an interaction with Alan in a hotel room when he was angry with him for losing a quarter-final match and, consequently, the tournament,

> "I told everybody [family members] to leave the room... I gave him hell, I was angry shouting at him 'what is that? If you're going to play a match, play, but not like that', and he was in tears, crying.... I said 'I'm disgusted with you', and I was, and that lingered for a whole week really, because I was really annoyed with him because I thought he had a fantastic chance to win.... Then I told him 'you eat now', and I sent Sally [mum] with him downstairs [in the hotel] to have his meal, it was 4, 5 o'clock in the afternoon, 'and then you go to your room and you sleep, I don't want to see you the rest of the evening, because I'm disgusted with you.... I told him 'my punishment is just you go and eat, mummy will take you down to eat or order room service, or whatever, and you go to bed I don't want to see you'.... And it was horrible I didn't sleep all night, I was really angry, I didn't know why he did it [lost]. I felt it was the chance of his life to be recognized if he won it and it would have taken him to top 4 [ranking in the country].... That was one of the saddest times for me".

Dad's hostility, expressing disgust in Alan, and removing him from the family for losing the match is a harsh response. It can serve to teach Alan to associate such response with failure and, thus, to perceive it an aversive consequence of failure and to fear it.

Dad breaks off communication with Alan

Alan revealed that after losing competitions dad breaks off communication with him. Alan stated, "For a day, a day and a half he [dad] is a bit upset and you can see it.... There is less conversation between us when he's upset... there's a little bit of tension.... I don't like it really". This breakdown in communication is also perceived as an aversive consequence of failure by Alan and possibly feared.

Parental threat

Mum revealed that when dad is upset with Alan for not performing well and losing he threatens him by saying, "I don't want to take you to training, I'm not taking you to training this week', so that worries Alan". Dad also threatens to remove Alan from the academy, as mum disclosed,

> "Fred says to him 'oh I'm thinking of withdrawing you from the academy, you're obviously not suited to it'. This worries Alan a lot and I said to him once, 'don't let it worry you Alan I won't let that happen, I'll go and speak to the academy, and I won't let dad take you out of the academy'".

Mum further disclosed that after losing in a major tournament dad told Alan, "'They

[coaches] may drop you from the academy after this loss', and 'you're not worthy of your place if you produce performances like that'... and Alan's face dropped, he was very scared". Dad telling Alan that losing in the tournament can lead to his removal from the academy may reflect dad's own fear. This may be dad's imagined consequence of Alan's failure. Thus, this may be the threat of failure (or the consequence) for dad that he fears and, which he transmits to Alan via this communication. It is apparent from this quote that Alan fears the possibility of losing his place in the academy. As a result of this conversation with dad, Alan may associate failure with the threat of removal from the academy and consequently will fear failure.

Contrary to dad's beliefs, that "children need threats to motivate them... because they're lazy" and "to achieve you need pressure, and threats are positive pressure... it works", when parental threats follow failure, children can perceive these threats as aversive consequences of failure, and fear failure. Therefore, parental threats following failure contribute to the development of children's FF.

In summary, dad's punitive behaviour (such as, criticism, punishment, threats) towards Alan for not performing well and losing is the mechanism by which he transmits his FF to Alan. Dad's punitive behaviour upsets and worries Alan and he does not like it, thus perceiving it as an aversive consequence of failure, which he fears. Associating failure with dad's punitive behaviour contributes to the development of Alan's FF.

- **Parental Controlling Behaviour**

Parental controlling behaviour only involved dad's behaviour. It appears from the disclosures of mum, dad, and Alan that dad is over involved in Alan's tennis career. Dad spends considerable time attending Alan's daily training sessions, travels to tournaments daily to watch Alan perform, and gets involved in competition preparations. Thus, dad tries to controls Alan tennis career. Both mum and Alan discussed dad's daily attendance at Alan's training sessions,

> "You know, every day Fred is in the academy watching him train *[saying quietly]*, none of the other parents are there watching their child train..... But is that making Alan feel different? How does he feel that his dad is watching whereas all the other lads' [parents] don't? Does he get teased about it? You don't know, they are 14 year old lads, do they think like, 'can you not hit a ball without your father being there?" [mum].

> "My father is always with me in training and tournaments, and my mother is in the background, *she does entry forms for tournament and things like that....* I'd like to have a little bit of space to myself every once in a while... maybe like in training.... he's always there and no-one else's parents are there.... I'd like him not be in every session.... I feel

slightly shy really that he's there and no one else's parents are there.... My dad always comes to the tournaments, my mum doesn't really come.... I normally go with the academy to tournaments, and my dad travels down [to the venue] every day, so he is away [from home] for the day and then he goes back at night.... Sometimes I just feel a bit guilty about him travelling so much" [Alan].

It is evident from their quotes that both mum and Alan dislike dad's daily attendance at training sessions. While mum expressed concern about how it is impacting Alan and his relationships with his peers in the academy, Alan stated that it made him feel awkward among his peers and that he would prefer dad to attend training sessions less. Moreover, dad's long daily journeys to tournaments (which often last several days) to watch Alan perform make Alan feel guilty. Dad also referred to his daily training attendance, stating "If I don't go and watch his training one day, I ask him to give me a report at night, what he did and what he didn't and what was good and what wasn't good. And next day, when he's in school, I'll go to his coach in the academy and say 'how was it yesterday?"

Dad's over involvement also encompasses involvement in competition preparation, as both dad and mum revealed,

> "We prepare for a tournament very early and talk about it every day, like 'we can beat him' and then we can do this and that.... We talk tactics.... and about training well. I watch his training the week before competition to see how he's playing.... I tell him 'you have to train well... and work hard.... your forehand is very good but you should get it even better', and things like that.... I also like to watch his opponents to see how they're playing.... I always think 'oh, if Alan plays this well, and that well', and 'oh if Alan goes and beat him' [saying enthusiastically]. I always try to encourage myself the night before to think positive not negative.... I try to think that it will go our way, to the winning side.... I dream it" [dad].

> "Days before the competition there's lots of conversations from dad about what Alan needs to do about sleeping, eating, preparing his rackets, warming up properly, and how he's got to play the match.... He [dad] tells him 'you have to establish your dominance from the start and you have to walk onto court looking up-beat like you mean business, and don't walk on looking scared.... On the day he'll [dad] say 'have you eaten enough? Have you had your vitamins? Have you done your stretches? How are you feeling? Did you sleep well? Are you ready for it? You must practise your serve before you go on court, make sure you do your warm up.... And just before [the match] he'd say 'he's [opponent] got a strong backhand so don't play a lot to his backhand'.... Fred [dad] always starts these talks, it never comes from Alan. It's always 'sit down Alan I want to talk to you" [mum].

It is apparent from these conversations and instructions from dad, in the days preceding competition, about match tactics, planning and preparation, and from dad watching Alan's training sessions and studying the opponent, that it is about dad trying to control everything in Alan's preparation in order to ensure his success in the competition. Dad's controlling behaviour is underlined by his fear of Alan losing the competition and, therefore, his behaviour serves his need to control Alan's preparation in order to guarantee (at least in his

mind) Alan's success in the competition and to prevent failure. This behaviour possibly gives dad the sense of control and of ensuring Alan's success. Exerting this control is dad's way of coping with his fear of Alan losing and, thereby, reducing it. Indeed, mum stated, "He [dad] wants to talk everything through and do everything in his power to put Alan in the best position he possibly can in order to give him the best possible chance to win.... He likes everything to be very precise and to know that he's done everything he can to fully prepare Alan to win".

It is via his controlling behaviour that dad transmits his fear to Alan a few days before competitions, as Alan stated,

> "My dad gets very nervous before my competitions.... He just goes on and on and on about what I should do and shouldn't do, and I know all that, and I just wish he'd shut up 'cos he's just making me nervous.... I think he's worried that I'll lose and then I won't make it in tennis".

It is apparent from this quote that Alan is sensing his dad's fear of him losing and of not attaining his aspiration in tennis. Alan is also indicating here a transmission of fear from dad to him before competitions through dad's behaviour by stating, "he's just making me nervous". Indeed, mum revealed how Alan recently felt before competitions,

> "Alan must feel his dad's anxiety and worry 'cos he [dad] spends so much energy and time and focus on talking and planning before competition.... On three occasions recently Alan cried before going on court, and said 'I'm nervous, I'm worried about this match, I'm tense'.... He feels his body is tightening up and his muscles aren't relaxed. I think it's all about losing.... It's about the outcome, 'cos he [Alan] knows a lot hinges on it, so he wants to win".

Mum is describing here symptoms of FF (i.e., behaviour that one exhibits that is underlined by experiencing FF) that Alan was exhibiting before competitions, which she believes, and I support, are underpinned by his fear of losing and of the consequences of his loss. Similarly, dad also revealed that, pre-competition, Alan sometimes says, "I'm worried.... I'm nervous". Dad described Alan on the day of competition as: "short in conversation" while "nearer the time of the match he's more short in talking". Dad's behaviour prior to Alan's competitions seems to resemble Alan's. Dad stated, "I don't like to speak to anybody before the match.... I get very quiet". Dad's fear of Alan losing also prevents him from sleeping well on the night pre-competition, as mum revealed, "He [dad] keeps getting up at night.... He says he's thinking about the match". Dad also experiences symptoms of FF during Alan's performance, as he described very vividly,

> "I was watching his match and I was really shaking.... I was nodding to Alan and trying to

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motivate him.... then I went outside and I was smoking a lot... I was very tense".

> "My heart rate was *puh puh puh puh puh, really high....* Alan went 8-2 up, and my heart was *puh puh puh*, I thought I was going to have a heart attack. Every point I was playing it. And then he started to lose, 8-3, 8-4, 8-5, 8-6, 8-7, and by then if anybody tested my blood pressure, phew *[raising his arms up to indicate a rise in his blood pressure]....* and then he won it. I was shattered after it".

Dad's vivid description of the match clearly demonstrates the tension of his experience. In telling me about his experience I felt the tension in his voice and it was as if he was going through that experience again and drawing me into it with him. Thus, I felt his tension through his story telling. It clearly illustrated the strength of the anxiety that he experiences when Alan is losing in a match; anxiety that is underpinned by his fear of Alan losing. Dad stating "every point I was playing it" and "I was shattered afterwards" also indicates the extent that his fear affects him. Alan's next quote indicates that he is aware of how dad feels when watching him play: "he's [dad] playing as well, he goes through it.... The coach will feel nerves, but he's not as strung as my dad". Thus, Alan is aware of his dad's fear of him losing and its impact on dad. It is logical, therefore, to suggest that dad is transmitting his fear of losing to Alan through the symptoms of FF that he exhibits around Alan pre- and during performance. Indeed, when recounting a match that he had lost, Alan described experiencing symptom of FF during his performance such as, "I was quite flat.... I just felt scared to lose.... I felt nervous.... I just didn't get out of that and I was just down and low in energy".

Another way in which dad exerts his control in order to ensure Alan's success in competitions is by instructing mum not to attend competitions. She explained,

> "I am not allowed to watch [competitions]. Fred doesn't want me to watch because he says I am too softening, I am too comforting to Alan and it's having a bad affect on him [Alan].... Alan has Fred, the tough, and Andy [older brother], the calming, there [in competitions] with him... so Andy, in a way, is playing my role there, and then I do it at home.... But does Alan wish that Mummy was there or that Mummy was not there?.... I don't know if he [Alan] even questions it 'cos it just happens, 'cos dad says so".

Excluding mum from attending and watching her son perform in competitions illustrates the extent of dad's exertion of control over all the variables that he believes can cause Alan to fail. Thus, excluding mum is another example of dad's attempt to prevent Alan's failure. Alan explained, "My mum never really come to the tournaments to watch me play because when I was young... when I went to a tournament, I would always be quite tearful like, say if I lost I'd run to her and cry.... But I don't think that it would happen now...but my dad thinks it's better for me if she doesn't come". By excluding mum, dad communicates to

Alan that mum is a negative influence on his tennis success. This can demonstrate to Alan the extent of dad's pursuit and investment to ensure his success and, thereby, to perceive that failure will disappoint dad and sabotage his efforts. Therefore, excluding mum from competitions can serve another mechanism by which dad transmits his FF to Alan.

A case of career fusion?

Career fusion can explain dad's FF that mediates his controlling behaviour. Career fusion is a term I use to describe dad feeling and behaving in a way that is as if Alan's career is his own; as if dad is the athlete. Dad's career fusion is manifested in his over-involvement in Alan's career, the symptoms of FF that he experiences and exhibits pre-and during Alan's competitions (both described above), and his use of language in his account of events. In this section I will examine dad's use of language, specifically his use of the word "we".

Dad's use of the word "we", instead of 'Alan' or 'he', was very noticeable in his account of events, but not in mum's or Alan's accounts. Dad used "we" in relation to playing in competitions (e.g., **"we** went on court, us and the boy from Surrey", **"we've** never played him before", **"we** played [opponent's name] four times now", **"we** went to play somebody from Leeds", "so **we** played doubles), winning and losing (e.g., "we never discuss '**we** are failing'", "before **we** used to go to matches and tell if **we're** going to win that match or not", "now **we're** going to semi-finals whereas before **we** were not passing the first round", "so when **we** won that match", "the other boy won it by playing fantastic and **we** couldn't match him so we lost"), preparing for competitions (e.g., **"we** used to prepare for a tournament very early and talk about it every day like '**we** can beat that and then **we** can do that'"), improving tennis skills and progressing (e.g., "I always see how maybe **we** can work on that", "their [coaches'] opinion are the ones **we** need really"), coping with the ups and downs of a tennis career (e.g., "what **we** really need is to believe, if **we** don't **we** wouldn't go through a lot of the hassle.... **we** need to keep our motivation"), national ranking (e.g., **"we** are lucky now **we** are in the top flight... at least **we're** in that top 8 in the country and that's relieved us a lot"), and pulling out of competitions (e.g., "He [Alan] wasn't well and I said 'shall **we** pull out?'"). It appears that dad also uses the word "we" when communicating with Alan's coaches. Dad described a conversation with the coach where he had challenged the coach's decision, "I told him 'we don't care who it [opponent] is, it's not our goal, our goal is to be the top player in England and whoever is there, [name] or [name] or whosever, it doesn't make any difference to us"

The word "we" is a reference to a collective or joint effort and, accordingly, to a sense of a collective success or failure. Dad might be describing experiences and outcomes as "we" because he perceives them as shared experiences and outcomes due to his high level of involvement in Alan's sporting development and progression. Dad might want to or need to feel that Alan's career is his too because his own sporting career was cut short and, therefore, he might sense that through his son's career he can achieve the success that eluded him. In other words, dad may be trying to re-live his career through his son's career, hence, behaving and feeling as if Alan's career is his own. Career fusion may explain dad's over-involvement in Alan's career and his fear of Alan's failure, as he perceives it as his career too. The following quotes from dad and Alan also illustrate dad's career fusion.

> "When I heard that [Alan is not expected to win every match] from the coach... it relaxed us [dad and Alan] because when we lost matches we were more relaxed about it and happier about it because now we understood it [tennis] more.... But before we didn't see really, because we were new [in tennis]" [Dad].

> "He [dad] says that he feels that when I go to do something a bit of him goes as well.... Like, he felt that he's achieved something by me going to TARBS [a prestigious French tournament]" [Alan].

In summary, dad's controlling behaviour is manifested in his over-involvement in Alan's career, which encompasses attending Alan's training sessions and tournaments daily, becoming overly involved in competition preparations, and challenging coaches' decisions. Dad's controlling behaviour is unpinned by his fear of Alan losing in competitions and, therefore, this behaviour possibly gives dad a sense of control and of ensuring Alan's success and preventing failure. Dad transmits his FF to Alan before competitions through his controlling behaviour and by exhibiting symptoms of FF pre- and during Alan's performances. Excluding mum from attending competitions is another example of dad's exertion of control over the variables he believes can cause Alan to fail. Excluding mum can serve as another mechanism of FF transmission from dad to Alan. Finally, career fusion may explain dad's FF and his over-involvement in Alan career. In short, dad's controlling behaviour is underpinned by his fear of Alan's failure and it serves as a mechanism of FF transmission from dad to Alan.

- **Parental Expectations**

Parental expectations also serve as a mechanism of FF transmission. It appears that dad's expectations are a source of pressure for Alan, contributing to the development of his FF. Parental expectations comprised expectations for Alan to put maximum effort in his performance, to achieve success, to win matches and tournaments, and to reach top national

ranking. Examples from each theme are presented and discussed separately below.

Parental expectations for maximum effort

Alan revealed that before competitions dad typically tells him "give it all you've got", "try your hardest", and "perform to the best of my ability". Alan stated "He [dad] expects that I go out in a match and give it all I've got to the last point". Indeed, dad said,

> "I told him he has to work hard.... I believe if you work hard enough you will achieve whatever you want to achieve, but if you don't, you wouldn't.... I want from Alan is if I tell him to do ten of something, that he does eleven.... I want him to show his potential.... I always tell him [Alan] 'go and try to achieve it, try to do it better'"

When discussing his values and beliefs, dad stated that his core beliefs are, "do your best or don't do it at all, work hard, give it 100%, and be committed to your goals". Mum also expects Alan to put his best effort into his performances, stating, "we [mum and dad] always say to him 'you need to work hard, you have to put your best when you step onto court and play your best". Mum, however, disagrees with dad's unrealistically high expectation, stating, "He [dad] expects him always to be the best of the best, always to give his 100% when he steps onto court, but Alan is a human being he can't always do that... it's not realistic.... He [dad] thinks Alan can achieve it". Thus, dad's values and beliefs underpin his high expectation of Alan always to be committed and put maximum effort into his training and performing.

Parental expectations to achieve success

It appears that achieving success is important to both parents. In reply to my question, "Why does Alan want to be successful?", mum said,

> "He [Alan] realises it's [success] important. It's a value that we've [mum and dad] probably instilled in him that 'you must work hard for something to achieve success', and 'it's an important thing in life to be successful in whatever you do'. Successful as a person, successful as a business man, successful as an accountant, successful as a teacher, whatever".

Thus, through their communication with Alan both mum and dad instil their values and beliefs about the importance of working hard and achieving success both in sport and in life generally. Indeed, dad said "I want them [his sons] to try their best. I believe they have the ability to achieve success and I want them to achieve it".

Parental expectations to win matches and tournaments

My conversations with dad and mum revealed that dad expects Alan to win matches and tournaments. He even expects Alan to defeat the number one tennis player in the country, as mum stated, "Alan played the number one in the tournament last weekend and Fred said that Alan should have beaten him…. He thinks that Alan should be capable of beating him…. But Alan said he felt he wasn't equipped to take the number one".

Dad stated, "Every match I want him to win", and he also wants Alan to want to win. He said:

> "Most of his goals when he goes to tournament are 'I want to be in the top four', but he's not yet saying 'I want to be winning that tournament'. This is what I'd like him to think…. I'm hoping he'll start to say 'I'm going to win this tournament, I'm not going to be happy with quarter final or semi-final'…. I'd like him to set higher goals and take that risk and push himself harder for and win it…. He tries to do achievable goals, but I would like him to be more, maybe I want him to make it too early, which is wrong maybe…. My next aim for him is that by December [in six months] he gets to the final of the National tournament".

Parental expectations to reach top national ranking

Winning matches and tournaments earns tennis players points that help them climb up the national ranking. Thus, winning contributes to high ranking and progression in one's career. Alan talked about his dad's expectations of him to reach a higher rank, "My dad told me to try and be top 2 or 3 [rank] in the country, to guarantee top 3 at least by the end of the year [in six months]…. Now I'm around top 8…. I'd be disappointed… not feel pleased if I don't meet the expectations". Alan further stated that if he did not meet dad's expectation, "I think he'd [dad] want me to work even harder than I was to get the third place by the end of the year". Dad declared, "I want him to be the number 1, but I'm not in a rush for it now. As long as he's in the top 5 now I'm happy". Thus, it appears that dad is expecting Alan to climb up at least five ranks in six months. This can be a difficult task for Alan to meet and, therefore, a source of pressure for him as it will require him to win many matches and tournaments. This can contribute his fear of losing and not meeting dad's expectation and, consequently, letting him down.

Mum also perceived dad's expectations of Alan to achieve high ranking a source of pressure for Alan. She stated,

> "He [dad] wants Alan to take the number 1 [rank] in his age group…. He thinks that Alan is capable of it now and that he should be number 1 now…. I think there must be certain

> amount of pressure [on Alan] in it.... Alan wants to be the top 4 in the country.... But if we were sitting with Fred, Alan might say [he wants to reach] the top 1 or 2 in the country, because Fred often talks to Alan about 'if you're the top one or two you get chosen for' this or that tournament.... But if he [Alan] was sitting on his own he would say that he wants to be in the top 4.... Top 4 is really good in Alan's eyes.... But dad wants him to be the number 1 really.... And once he's achieved it then there'll be another something".

Thus, it appears from mum's disclosure that dad expects Alan to reach a higher rank than Alan expects to reach. In other words, dad's goals and expectations of Alan are higher than Alan's. Alan, however, does not reveal this discrepancy in expectations to his dad, instead, he expresses the same expectations for ranking as dad when dad is present. This maybe due to Alan wishing to please his father as he knows how important success and achievement is for him.

The impact of parental expectations and FF transmission

Dad's expectations of Alan are greater than mum's. Mum stated, "Alan probably realises and knows that his father has higher expectations than I have, that's clear, he must know that". Mum talked about the impact of dad's expectations on Alan, saying, "I don't know if he [Alan] feels that he can live up to Fred's high expectations, it must frustrate Alan, and I think maybe put pressure on him". Mum believes that Alan worries about not meeting expectations "because he has his own expectations in himself.... Also maybe he feels he can't come up with the goods on the day of the competition also for the family. This makes him feel pressure.... I think he's concerned to let himself down, his coach, the family, not in any particular order". Similarly, when talking about the impact of not meeting the expectations on Alan, dad stated,

> "I think he [Alan] would be disappointed because he has expectations of himself that he wants to achieve.... And he knows I will be upset for a day, for two days.... He wants to please us.... He will be upset and disappointed that we're not happy, or he will be worried or concerned about us being disappointed.... From very long time ago I told him that he's not performing to please others, but that he's performing to please me, to please himself, and to please his family"

Dad's quote illustrates that he is communicating his disappointment to Alan by showing him that he is upset for a day or two when Alan does not meet his expectations. Furthermore, by telling Alan from an early age that he is performing to please himself and his family, dad is shaping Alan's expectations and desire to please his family. Thus, dad has been transmitting his belief to Alan from an early age and, thereby, contributing to his fear of losing and displeasing his family. It is, therefore, not surprising that Alan dislikes not meeting expectations and feels disappointed in himself when letting his family down. Alan

stated, "If I'm expected to do something and then I don't do it, that's one of the worst feelings.... If I'm expected to win a match and I don't win it, it just feels like "ooooooohhhhh" *[sigh]*. Accordingly, it is reasonable to suggest that Alan's fear of losing is mediated by his fear of not meeting others' expectations and consequently letting others down and feeling bad and disappointed in himself. Thus, dad contributes to the development of Alan's FF by communicating to him that he is required to please himself and his family and that winning matches pleases the family.

It is clear from my conversations with Alan, mum, and dad, that mum's expectations of Alan are not as high as dad's and are not a source of pressure for him. This is confirmed by Alan's statement, "for my mum, just if I come through the door and I'm smiling that would please her". Indeed, mum stated,

> "Alan's exceeded my expectations, my wildest dreams *[laugh]*.... Fred would say that Alan didn't meet his expectations.... This maybe makes Alan feel underachieving.... I try to not put him [Alan] under parental pressure, but I think his father puts him under parental pressure. I'm proud of what he's reached.... I want him to push himself to do well in whatever he wants to do, but I don't say to him 'I want you to be number one in tennis'. For me it's what first and foremost Alan wants"

Mum indicated that dad's high expectations of Alan are a result of dad's career fusion, stating, "It's very difficult because you can't live your dreams and ambitions out through your child. You can't force things in your child, the child has got to want to do it, not 'cos you want the child to do it. It won't go anywhere like that, the child has got to want to do it". Dad's statement "I think in a similar way, he enjoys it [high expectations] like me", might also indicate a career fusion.

In summary, both parents expect Alan to achieve success. Through their communications with him, they have transmitted their values and beliefs about the importance of working hard and achieving success. Dad has also been communicating his belief to Alan from an early age that he is performing to please himself and his family and that achieving success and winning competitions pleases dad and the family, thereby, contributing to Alan's fear of losing and displeasing his family. As a result, dad's high expectations of Alan are a source of pressure for him, contributing the development of his fear of losing and not meeting dad's expectations and, consequently, letting him and the family down. Indeed, dad communicates his disappointment of Alan losing in competitions by being upset for a day or two. In short, Alan's fear of losing is underpinned by his strong desire (that came about through parental social conditioning) to meet his parents' expectations, (especially his dad's) and, thereby, to please them and his family and not let

them down. Finally, dad's punitive and controlling behaviours and high expectations of
Alan might, in addition to contributing to the development of Alan's FF, also contribute to
his drop out of sport, as mum fears, revealing, "I fear that he will drop out of tennis because
of the pressure from his father. I saw it with Andy [older sibling], and it might come to a
point where Alan can't take it and quit". Indeed, Andy has told me that he had dropped out
of high level sport at age 14 years because "I couldn't handle his [dad] pressure". Dad,
however, justified his behaviour, stating "As a father somebody has the authority and
somebody doesn't have the authority. Maybe he sees my anger anti him or maybe he sees
my anger as productive. He's not mature yet to see what I mean by it".

5.8.2 FAMILY 2

5.8.2.1 Types of Fear of Failure

Table 5.2 shows the same types of fear reported by the athlete (Jenny) and her parent(s)
(Jack and Paula). They all feared the consequences of Jenny losing in competitions, such as
not attain her aspiration to become a professional tennis player, lose ranking, and not being
selected for tournaments. Additionally, Jenny and her dad also feared that Jenny would be
negatively judged by coaches and peers. Thus, their fear of Jenny losing was mediated by
their perceived aversive consequences of losing. The athlete and both her parents referred
to failure as losing, getting beaten, or not winning a competition.

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations was reported by the athlete and both her parents.
Additionally, both Jenny and her mum feared a career terminating injury and, hence, Jenny
not achieving her aspiration in tennis. Jenny explained that she typically gets angry with
herself when making mistakes during her performances because "I just want to win so
much…. I want to be a professional tennis player and I just think if I don't win matches
then I won't become a tennis player *[begins to cry]*". Thus, she perceives not becoming a
professional tennis player an aversive consequence of failure and fears it. Although this is
an imagined fear (as she has not experienced it yet), it is real and potentially threatening to
her and, therefore, makes her cry. Mum stated, "*my fear is that she won't achieve her goals
in tennis…. She probably worries if she doesn't get to what she wants within tennis, she
may have fears there*".

Fear	Dad's fear	Mum's fear	Athlete's fear
Fear of non-attainment of aspirations	Fear of Jenny not moving to next level and not attaining her ultimate dream Fear of Jenny not achieving her ultimate dream and its effect on her	Fear of career terminating injury Fear of Jenny not achieving her ultimate goal	Fear of long term injury so that I can't play Fear of not achieving my ambition to become a tennis player
Fear of loss of ranking	Fear of Jenny not going up the ranking	Fear of Jenny not going up the ranking	Fear of not going up the ranking
Fear of non-selection	Fear of coaches not selecting Jenny for tournaments Fear of Jenny not winning and not qualifying for tournaments Fear of Jenny not performing well and not get selected for the academy [pre-academy]	Fear Jenny not get selected for tournaments	Fear of not getting selected to international tournaments Fear of not qualifying for tournaments
Fear of negative judgment	Fear of coaches' negative opinion of Jenny Fear of coaches thinking less of Jenny Fear of coaches thinking that Jenny is not capable of handling the mental side of high level tennis Fear of coaches judging her as unable to deal with tough matches Fear of Jenny being judged by coaches, peers and other parents as not a good player		Fear of coaches and players thinking negatively about me Fear of top coaches thinking I'm not a good player and I can't become professional Fear of coaches not liking me Fear of losing peers' respect and friendship Fear of other players, their coaches and parents thinking I am not a good player Fear of opponents thinking I'm not a good player and will believe they can beat me (increase opponents' confidence)

Table 5.2: Family 2- types of FF of dad, mum, and athlete.

Dad also fears Jenny not attaining her aspiration. In reply to my question "what's your biggest worry or concern about failure for Jenny?", he stated,

> "If she realises that she's not ultimately gonna make what she wants to do how that will affect her, that's what I'm ultimately worried about.... You know, it could totally demoralise you as a person, and that's what I'm concerned, that's the ultimate consequence, what it can do to her.... it might affect her as a person.... It's just one direction that she's going in now and if someone [top coaches] takes that away from her because they're saying in two years time 'you're not tall enough', or 'you're not fast enough', or 'you haven't got the ability'. So they can take away from her what has been her dream.... How will it affect her if she doesn't make her ultimate dream? In her mind she'll feel she's failed... and this is my concern, how will she view it?.... I'd love her to make it but what if she can't make it, or if something stops her from making it? How will it affect her?"

Thus, dad fears that not attaining her aspiration will be harmful to Jenny's perception of self and well-being in the future because she is currently focused exclusively on pursuing her aspiration to become a professional tennis player. A key sentence in his quote is, "if someone takes that away from her", which indicates that he fears the possibility that top coaches could decide in the future that Jenny is not suitable to becoming a professional player. Dad further stated that he worries about "whatever could interfere in her journey to achieve her ultimate dream.... I worry about everything". Thus, Jenny not attaining her aspiration possibly underpins his fear of her losing in competitions. It might also be at the root of his over involvement in her career and his desire to guarantee her success and to avoid failure (see section 5.8.2.3 'parental controlling behaviour'). As with family 1, this fear also raises the question, who transmits the fear to whom? In this case, as with family 1, I suggest that the transmission of fear might be bi-directional. That is, Jenny transmits her fear to her parents and they transmit their fear to her, making it reciprocal.

Fear of loss of ranking

Loss of ranking, or of not progressing up the ranking, is a consequence of losing in competitions that Jenny and both her parents fear. Jenny explained, "I worry about making a lot of mistakes.... 'cos then I won't be playing good tennis and I'd lose more [ranking] points". Thus, making mistakes can lead to losing the match, which leads to not earning points that can take her up the ranking. Her worry, therefore, is a result of her fear of losing and, consequently, not progressing up the ranking. Jenny further explained,

> "I think when I don't play well it's mostly because I'm nervous on court.... If I'm playing someone who's not as good as me [ranked lower] I'm nervous that if I lose to them I might go down in the rankings.... It's just that I want to win so much and I don't want to lose. I'm just thinking losing and not wanting to lose.... It's just that I'm worried like if I don't win then I go down in ranking and I don't get accepted to go on trips [overseas tournaments].... I'm not worried when I'm playing someone better than me [ranked higher]... and I'd take more risks in that game because I don't have anything to lose".

Dad also worries before competitions about Jenny losing ranking, as he explained,

> "I would be thinking more about the consequences of if she did lose the match, and that's probably where my tightness comes from. I think if she lost what impact would that have for her, does it mean that she doesn't get the ranking? If she loses to a girl her own ranking or ranking below it will impact her ranking, and we need to get her ranking up so that she can go into tournaments. So I would be thinking more of the impact of the match if she lost. This is the way that I've seen it before some of the games".

Thus, it appears that both dad and Jenny fear a drop in ranking as it will result in not gaining an automatic entry to tournaments (lower ranked players are typically required to

play in a pre-tournament qualifying competition). Mum's following quote illustrates the consequences or the ripple effect of failure that explains why they all fear it:

> "There is a pecking order within the tennis scene, you know, if she hadn't been getting the results even now, the LTA will drop you if you're not getting the results, wins, then you're not getting the rating, and if you've not got the rating then you don't get into tournaments, and if you're not doing that then you're not getting selected to play and there will be other children selected over her.... So you worry and you hope you're gonna get the results"

Fear of non-selection

A consequence of not winning tournaments can be not qualifying for future tournaments and not being selected by the academy coaches to play in international tournaments. Jenny and both her parents expressed fear of non-selection. Jenny stated that non-selection to international tournaments, or "not being taken on trips [overseas tournaments]" is one of the consequences of failure that she fears. She believes that by winning national tournaments her coaches "might think, 'she's doing well we'll send her on a trip'". Dad explained, "The consequence of her losing in tournaments could mean quite easily that she doesn't get selected for another tournament, 'cos coaches wouldn't take the people who are losing". On one occasion dad told Jenny after failure, "You've got other games coming up, you just don't want to show that sort of attitude again on court'.... Because the consequences if she continues it, is she's not gonna be ultimately selected to the teams". Thus, by telling Jenny his perceptions, dad transmits his fear of non-selection to Jenny. It is not surprising, therefore, that losing a match (or a round) in a tennis tournament (which typically means losing the tournament) is a consequence that Jenny fears. As, indeed, dad revealed, "In these two tournaments Jenny's nerves were there because of the fact that it was the first match of the tournament and she wanted to get through it.... You can get knocked out in the first round, so she was nervous that she wouldn't get through the first match".

Dad's fear of non-selection makes him feel anxious before Jenny's competitions, as he explained, "I get uptight 'cos I can see an opportunity for her, for example, if she won a particular tournament then she is selected for the next tournament, and if she loses then she doesn't". Dad revealed his thoughts before competitions: "Losing definitely goes through my mind. Although in that one [tournament] I didn't expect her to lose.... But I still thought 'I hope she wins, I hope she doesn't lose, but what if she loses?'". Thus, before competitions dad anticipates and fears the consequences of Jenny's loss for her future selection to tournaments.

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Finally, lower ranked tennis players are required to compete in pre-qualifying tournaments in order to qualify to enter the main tournament. Thus, the consequence of losing a match in a pre-qualifying tournament is not qualifying for the main tournament. Jenny talked about her fear of losing in a pre-qualifying match, "I was quite nervous before [the match] that I might not beat her.... I wanted to beat her so much 'cos I wanted to qualify to get to the main draw".

In summary, fear of non-selection encompassed losing in tournaments and, consequently, not being selected by coaches to play in international tournaments, and losing in a pre-qualifying event and, consequently, not entering the main tournament.

Fear of negative judgment

Fear of losing and, consequently, being negatively judged by others was a common fear for Jenny and her dad. Jenny cares a great deal about how she is regarded by her coaches, her academy peers, her competitors, and other parents. She stated that when performing in tournaments, "I just think about the top coaches.... its more often now that they are in the tournaments.... Its just that you hope that they think good things about you, that you're good and that they think that you're gonna do well and gonna be a professional [player]".

Jenny also wants her competitors and their parents to judge her positively. She revealed that before competitions she often thinks about, "just wanting to win and wanting other girls [players] to think that I'm good, and wanting their parents to not underestimate me and say that I'm not very good, and stuff". In the next quote Jenny reveals that her fear of negative judgment impaired her performance in a recent international tournament:

> "I was really nervous.... she [opponent] was a good player but I should really beat her.... I was really worried that I was gonna lose.... And I thought [if I lose] that everybody would underestimate me and say 'oh, she's not as good', not my parents, but just other girls, other parents and other coaches.... It was just mainly that. And I played really bad, probably because I was thinking about losing and not wanting to lose.... My coach said that I looked really tight 'cos I was nervous. So it [pre-match worries] had come out in my match and affected my play".

Mum also talked about Jenny's worries about others' judgment of her, she stated, "Sometimes she [Jenny] says 'what if I don't perform well?'.... she's probably also worried about what her friends are gonna think of her". When describing a loss in a competition that Jenny had experienced, mum revealed, "She [Jenny] was devastated by that [loss] because probably of the other girls.... by losing to that girl I think she'd lost quite a bit of respect from the other tennis girls.... So it's more her thoughts of how she is seen and thought of

by her fellow players.... She worries that they'd think less of her". Dad also revealed, "Her [Jenny's] nerves would have been more to do with the fear of losing and with the responses and the way that she's perceived by others.... It's to do with the girls in the little [tennis] community that she's in that she wants to be doing well within her peers, with the parents of the girls, and with the coaches that are in the tournaments".

Jenny associates losing with people judging her negatively and not liking her. For example, she stated that she wanted her academy coaches to like her and was worried about, "if I lose and if they [coaches] don't like me". She also revealed that after a defeat in Italy recently she thought, "Maybe the Italian girls [players] and the Italian coaches thought 'she's [Jenny] not as good as she's meant to be' and that they can beat me.... It just made me unhappy. I feel sad because you want to be liked". Jenny also wants her peers in the academy to like her, to be her friends, and to regard her positively. However, peers' friendship and positive regard appear to be contingent on achieving success, as she disclosed, "Some just sticks with the people who's doing well [winning] at the time.... If you were successful [winning], they'd hang around with you and if you're not then they'd leave you alone and think 'she's rubbish'.... If I'm successful they think I'm good.... and everyone wants to be with you". Similarly, mum stated that when the academy players go away on training camps "they're all more around whoever is doing well at the time". Hence, relationships among the academy players are shaped and governed largely by competition outcomes. Mum stated that such behaviour by the academy players upsets Jenny. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that Jenny perceives coaches', opponents' and peers' negative judgment and the loss of their respect and friendships to be aversive consequences of failure, and fears them. Accordingly, Jenny fears negative judgment and losing social value after failure.

Dad also talked about peer pressure to win in the academy, saying, "The academy is very competitive and you hear the kids saying to each other 'did you win on Saturday?'.... So there is pressure to win with her peers, with the girls, and they don't want to say continually 'I lost last week, I lost last week'". Dad referred to the academy and the junior tennis circuit as a "goldfish bowl" where competition results over the weekend are instantly circulated among peers. He stated,

> "She gets texts and phone calls saying so and so has lost to so and so..... So before she arrives back here [academy] on Monday morning she knows everything that had happened over the weekend from all the girls.... If she did lose it shouldn't make any difference because it's just one building brick in a great big wall, but that's not the case in this environment.... Because she's been quite successful everybody knows her, so if she goes

> into a tournament, as I said it is a goldfish bowl, and if she lost to someone that she shouldn't.... the textings and the phone calls would be going round straight away. It's a small environment, so if Jenny loses to somebody it will definitely, I believe everybody knows, absolutely. How does that make me feel? I don't like it, I don't like it at all".

It appears, therefore, that losing a match instantly becomes a common knowledge among junior tennis players, academy peers, and parents, and dad does not like it. This practice of circulating results can elicit fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon failure among players and their parents. Thus, this practice can possibly be an antecedent of fear of shame and embarrassment, which is linked to fear of negative judgment and loss of social value within the tennis environment; fears that both Jenny and dad reported. In reply to my question "what do you think is the consequence of failure that Jenny fears the most?", dad stated, "I'd say it's people's perception. People in the tennis environment having negative perceptions of her.... It's everybody in that tennis goldfish bowl... the parents, the coaches, peers. Everybody knows everybody". This appears also to be a consequence of failure that dad fears.

When talking about Jenny's fear of negative judgment in a recent tournament, dad disclosed that he shared Jenny's fear. He stated,

> "I felt that Jenny felt a lot of pressure...and I did too because I didn't want her to lose to a girl that was two years younger than her.... On me the pressure was very very similar to Jenny's, that I didn't want my daughter to lose to a girl two years younger.... She [Jenny] wasn't playing her best tennis probably because of nerves, she was very tense and really tight.... I think her biggest worry was losing to a girl two years younger. You had [name of the academy director] and every coach in the country there and she knew probably about fifty percent of them. So in her mind it would be that she's lost her position in their mind, so they'd think less of her if she lost... and it was a similar worry for me too".

Hence, both dad and Jenny feared others' negative judgment if Jenny lost and, therefore, both felt worried and anxious during the match. Dad felt stressed because he believed that people expected Jenny to win and that she was "heading towards defeat" and, therefore, he was worried about their judgment of her as a player if she lost. He stated,

> "All the people there would have expected Jenny to win. The people that she sees in tournaments each week, like other players, their parents, coaches that have already got players in the ranking order in their own minds, you know, like so and so plays this sort of type of game she's gonna be difficult to beat, or whatever.... The fact that this girl was younger it could have put questions on how Jenny deals with that type of match.... It worries me.... The environment that she's in is like a little goldfish bowl and everybody is making comments.... It is quite a competitive environment and it wasn't a game that she should lose, you know, everybody expected her to pull through it".

Dad's fear of coaches' negative judgment is grounded in his strong belief that losing in competitions will result in the top coaches viewing Jenny not suitable to play at elite level

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and this, consequently, will adversely impact her career. As he stated,

> "It could hinder her career, her going forward. For example, if there are selection for certain tournaments then she doesn't get it, and so she doesn't get the experience in playing at it. It's really quite a competitive environment and even here in the academy... it's all geared for winning.... There is pressure for them to win tournaments, and by doing that it's when they get to another level, and if they win at this level then they go to another level. So they've [players] gotta keep performing. I feel that as soon as they stop performing at this level that this could be taken away from them.... They [coaches] have never put any pressure on Jenny to win.... The pressure is coming from me, it's the pressure that I feel".

Thus, despite no pressure from coaches on Jenny to win, dad still fears coaches' negative judgment of her if she does not win. Dad saying "this could be taken away from them", indicates that he believes that Jenny's place in the academy is dependent on her progress, which in turn is dependent on her winning in tournaments. Indeed, in reply to my question "what is the worst consequence of Jenny's failure that you want to avoid?" dad stated, "that they [academy coaches] decide after 12 months that she's not good enough in the academy. So therefore she's gonna have to put the effort into her training and hopefully be successful in matches". Dad also explained that before Jenny entered the academy "we felt that the academy ultimately was the only way forward in British tennis... So ultimately you can say that this is the pressure that I was feeling if she doesn't perform well.... So in my own mind I was thinking I really want her to win this so she's perceived in the right light within the academy". Therefore, dad's fear of Jenny's removal from the academy is underpinned by his belief that being in the academy is the only way that she can progress in her tennis career. Accordingly, if Jenny stops winning, she will not progress in her career and will be removed from the academy, and this will prevent her from attaining her aspiration to become a professional tennis player. This perception, therefore, mediates dad's fear of Jenny losing and being negatively judged. Hence, dad's fear of coaches' negative judgment is underpinned by his fear of Jenny not attaining her aspiration. This can explain why dad fears Jenny losing tournaments and why he pressurises her to win. The pressure to win that dad feels is an internal pressure, elicited by his fear of the consequences of Jenny losing, and which he transmits to her.

Dad's fear of negative judgment is also linked to his fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon Jenny's failure. Dad described a match where he expected Jenny to beat her opponent. The opponent was, however, playing well and dad felt anxious as the match progressed. He explained, "You don't want her [Jenny] to lose in front of 200 or 300 people.... because in your mind you feel that she could beat that girl.... she shouldn't be losing to her. You're living and breathing it with her all the while and at the end of the day

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you want the best for her, and when that's not materialising on the court I get tighter and tighter". Thus, dad's emotional distress was evoked by his fear of Jenny losing in front of a large audience and possibly be judged negatively by them for not winning. Moreover, fearing Jenny losing in front of an audience may indicate that dad feels shame and embarrassment when Jenny loses in front of an audience. Indeed, mum indicated that dad is concerned about other people's opinion of Jenny. She stated, "He'd say 'what would people', not necessarily anybody specific, 'gonna think of her losing to' so and so.... He says he doesn't care about what people think but he does". Dad, however, stated, "I'm not too concerned about the audience, I am more concerned about the views of the [academy] coaches and... the national coaches [top coaches]".

Dad's fear of coaches' negative judgment appears not to be grounded in past experiences but is rather an imagined fear. For example, dad talked about a tournament that Jenny had lost in front of top coaches and where he felt stressed and concerned during and after the match about the coaches' opinions of Jenny. However, the actual consequence of her loss was not as he had feared. He explained,

> "The consequence, ironically nothing [short laugh]... the LTA coaches didn't see it the same way as I did. No one said 'Jenny performed badly', or 'Jenny didn't do that', or anything else.... But I see it that way as a father and as somebody who is with her most of the time.... They [coaches] are quite positive towards the kids and they don't sort of dwell on it [failure], whereas me as a parent, I was blowing on all the negatives from her performance whereas they didn't. She didn't feel any pressure from the coaches afterwards in any way and it was only my disappointment. My conversation [i.e., dad's criticism] with her afterwards put pressure on her [i.e., she cried and was upset]. So it was my view not the coaches' view".

It appears, therefore, from this quote that dad's fear of negative judgment was an imagined fear as, in reality, the top coaches did not judge Jenny negatively after her failure. On the contrary, one of the top coaches judged Jenny positively, as dad stated, "His views were that the children don't perform every time they go on court. He was quite relaxed about it and he was quite positive towards Jenny with his comments.... as a father, I'd just seen it in a totally different light". Furthermore, two days later Jenny performed in front of the same top coach and again lost the match, and again was judged positively by him and he "immediately selected her for a trip [tournament] to play in Italy" [dad]. Thus, dad's fear of negative judgment and of non-selection after failure was an imagined fear and was not founded in reality (i.e., in his current or past experiences). It was dad's imagined fear that contributed to his stressful emotional reaction during and after the match. Nevertheless, although it was an imagined fear, it was real and potentially threatening to him. Perceiving

negative judgment an aversive consequence of failure elicited dad's fear of failure. Thus, negative judgment is the threat of failure that dad fears and transmits to Jenny via their interactions after failure (see more in section 'parental punitive behaviour'). A similar situation occurred in two different competitions where dad felt anxious and worried before and during a match about "what the coaches and people might think of her [Jenny] if she lost" [dad]. Jenny won these matches, however, and dad felt "relieved... only because she won them". This example also illustrates that dad's fear of negative judgment is a source of his stress and anxiety and that this fear is about anticipating something that has not happened yet, hence, imagined fear.

Jenny is aware of dad's concern about the top coaches' negative judgment of her. She stated "they [coaches] make him [dad] nervous.... When top coaches watch me he tries to acts calm *[laughs]* but he's not.... He feels nervous for me 'cos he wants me to impress them". Being aware of dad's anxiety and desire to impress the coaches when they watch her perform may have contributed to her fear of coaches' negative judgment. In other words, dad may have transmitted his fear of negative judgment to Jenny by demonstrating his distress when she performs in front of the top coaches through his behaviour (modelling behaviour). Indeed, mum stated, "Jenny fears similar sorts of things that Jim [dad] fears.... He'd be worrying about what the coaches think of her, how they interpret things, how she's going to do with the LTA. She'll be worrying about what they're [coaches] thinking of her". Mum does not share Jenny's and dad's fear of negative judgment, as she stated,

> "Both her [Jenny] and her dad worry about what people think of them.... like other tennis players, other tennis parents, as a general, as a whole. Whereas with me... I don't care what other people think.... I want her to do well but I don't worry about what people and coaches think.... I don't really worry about what people think, if they don't like me for me then that's up to them, that's their loss... and I try to instil it in Jenny.... I don't really feel that upset if she loses.... But they [Jenny and dad] worry about what other people think"

Thus, the fear of negative judgment is not transmitted to Jenny from her mum, but rather from her dad.

In summary, it appears that both Jenny's and dad's fear of her losing is underpinned by their fear that Jenny will be judged negatively by her coaches and, consequently, they will not select her for tournaments, she will not progress in her career, and will be removed from the academy, and this in turn will adversely impact Jenny's career. Thus, they perceive the consequences of losing aversive for Jenny's career. They also fear the negative judgment of players and other parents in the tennis environment. Jenny associated losing with not being liked by her coaches, by other players and their coaches, and by her

academy peers, whose friendships were contingent on winning tournaments. Thus, she perceives loss of social value an aversive consequence of failure, and fears it. Mum did not report fear of negative judgment, but, like Jenny and dad, also reported fear of Jenny not attaining her aspiration, losing ranking and not being selected to tournaments. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the fear of negative judgment is not transmitted to Jenny from her mum, but rather from her dad, as indeed, both dad and Jenny are concerned with people perceiving Jenny negatively after failure. However, as the fear of losing is mediated by the fear of Jenny not attaining her aspiration, it is also possible to suggest that the fear of non-attainment of aspiration may be transmitted bi-directionally, thus, transmitted from Jenny to parents and vice versa.

5.8.2.2 PFAI Results- Types and Levels of Fear of Failure

FF- Family 2					
	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
■ Athlete 2	0.57	-0.75	0.25	0.40	0.00
▨ Mum2 (child)	-1.71	-1.75	-1.75	-1.20	-1.20
☐ Dad2 (child)	0.85	-1.50	1.50	0.60	-0.40
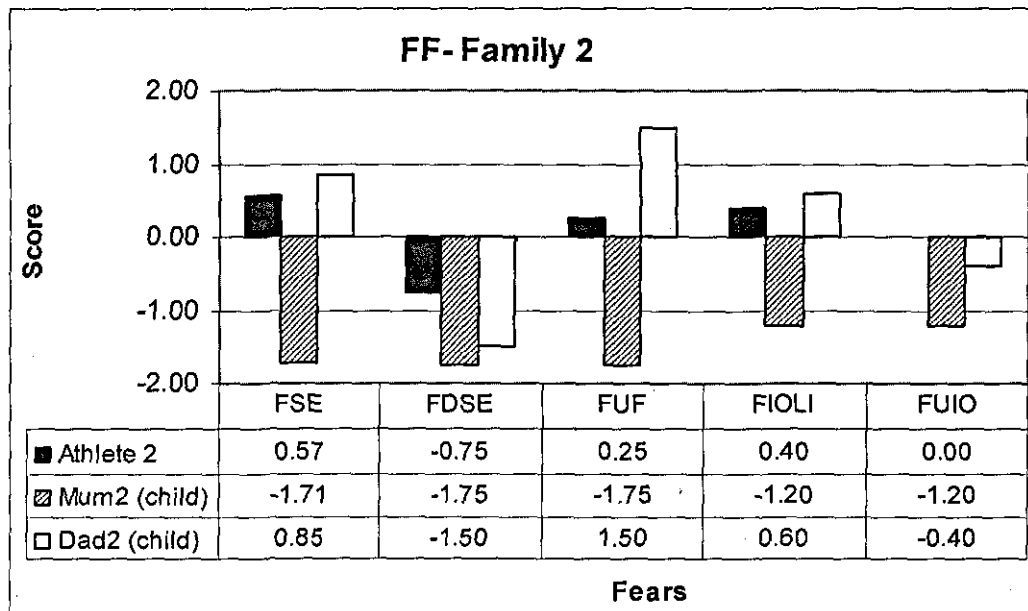
Figure 5.5: Family 2- types and levels of Jenny's FF and of her parents' fear of her failure (FSE-fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI results (Figure 5.5) showed that Jenny's greatest fear was of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon failure, followed by fear of important others losing interest in her after failure. Both of these fears can be explained by the qualitative data that revealed that Jenny feared others' (i.e., coaches, opponents, academy peers, and other parents) negative judgment of her post-failure and, subsequently, losing social value; as peers' respect and friendship is contingent upon achieving success (i.e., winning) in competitions. Jenny's third largest fear was fear of an uncertain future after failure, which she explained

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was related to her worry about non-selection to tournaments.

Dad's greatest fear of Jenny's failure was of an uncertain future, which was six times greater than Jenny's fear. Dad, like Jenny, also feared experiencing shame and embarrassment when Jenny fails and feared that important others would lose interest in her. The levels of both of these fears, however, were slightly higher for dad than for Jenny. These results, like Jenny's results, can be explained by his fear of others negatively judging Jenny after failure, as revealed by the qualitative data. In contrast to dad's and Jenny's PFAI results, mum's results showed that she did not fear the consequences of Jenny's failure. This contrasts with some of the qualitative data that revealed that mum feared Jenny not attaining her aspiration, losing ranking and non-selection. It is supported, however, in relation to FUIO and FIOLI as she stated in her interview, "I don't worry about what people and coaches think.... I don't really feel that upset if she loses".

Mum 2 - FF for self and child

Fears	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
Mum2 (self)	-0.86	0.75	-0.25	-1.00	-0.80
Mum2 (child)	-1.71	-1.75	-1.75	-1.20	-1.20
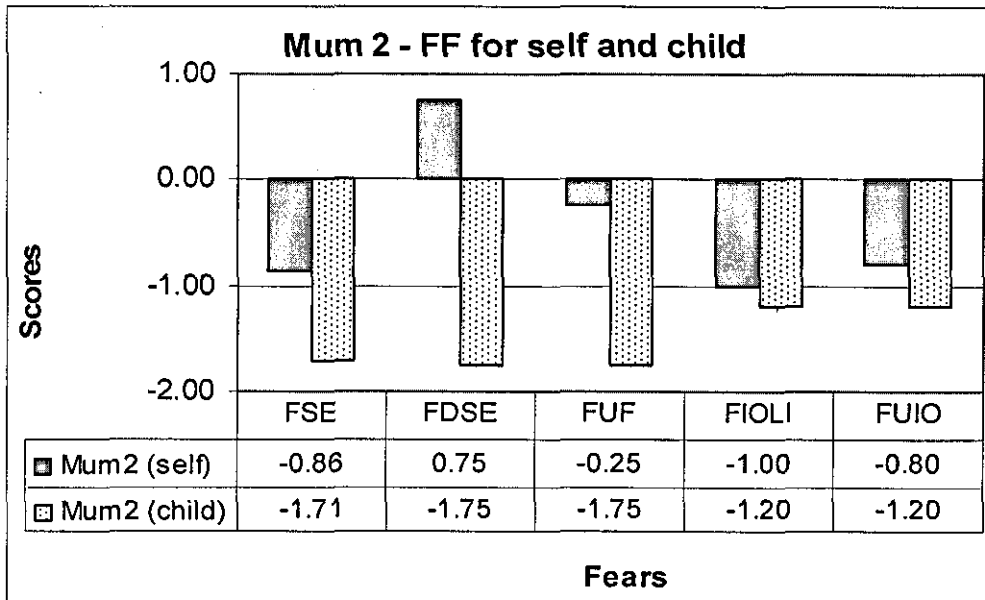
Figure 5.6: Family 2- mum's types and levels of FF for self and for Jenny
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI results for parental fear of the consequences of their failure for themselves (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7) revealed that mum overall had low levels of FF, with the exception of fear of devaluing self-estimate, which was at a high level (see Figure 5.6). Moreover, mum's overall level of fear of Jenny's failure was even lower than her fear of her own failure.

In contrast with mum's PFAI results, dad's PFAI results (see Figure 5.7) showed that his overall fear of the consequences of his own failure was greater than mum's overall fear

of her own failure. Dad's greatest fear was of uncertain future, followed by fear of shame and embarrassment, followed by fear of important others lose interest. Interestingly, these are the same three fears that he has of Jenny's failure. When comparing the levels of these fears, it appears that his fear of uncertain future for self was a little higher than his fear for Jenny. The levels of his fear of shame and embarrassment and fear of important others losing interest for his own failure were similar to those of his fear of Jenny's failure. Although his level of fear of upsetting important others was very low for himself, it was higher for Jenny's failure.

Dad 2 - FF for self and child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
Dad2 (self)	0.86	-1.00	2.00	0.80	-2.00
Dad2 (child)	0.85	-1.50	1.50	0.60	-0.40

Fears
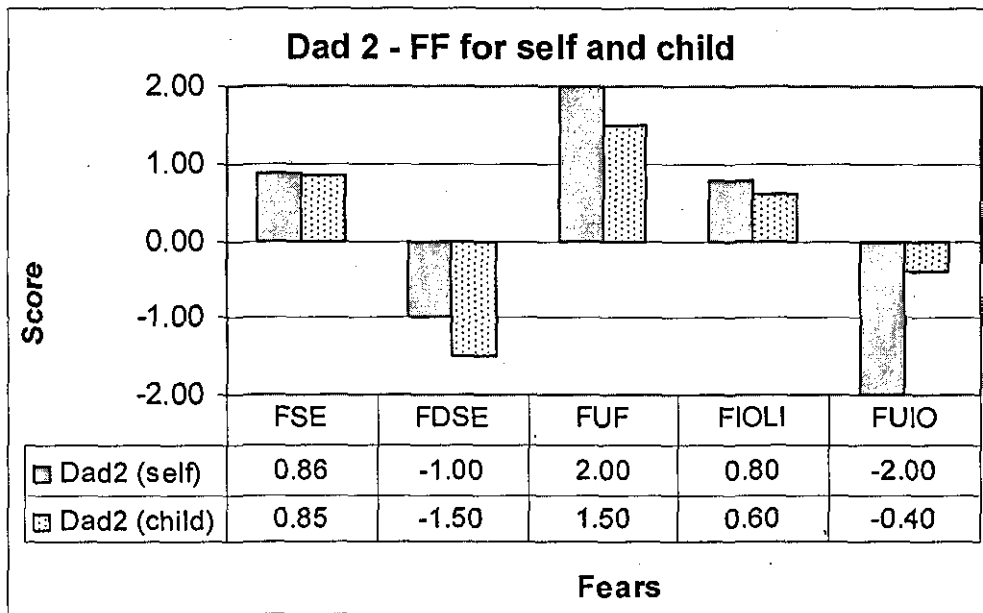
Figure 5.7: Family 2- dad's types and levels of FF for self and for Jenny (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others)..

In summary, the PFAI results showed that both Jenny and her dad feared an uncertain future after her failure, with dad reporting a much higher level than Jenny. They also both reported high levels of fear of shame and embarrassment upon failure, and fear of important others losing interest in Jenny after failure. These fears were mediated by their perception that negative judgment and loss of social value are aversive consequences of Jenny's failure. In contrast, mum's PFAI results showed that she did not fear the consequences of Jenny's failure. Moreover, the PFAI results for parental fear of their own failure revealed that mum's overall FF was low while dad's overall FF was high. When comparing parental FF for self with their fears of Jenny's failure, findings showed that mum's overall level of fear of Jenny's failure was even lower than her fear of her own failure, while dad's overall levels of fear of his failure were similar to those he reported for Jenny's failure. Dad's

greatest fears for his failure and for Jenny's failure were fear of uncertain future, fear of shame and embarrassment and fear of important others losing interest. Therefore, these findings may indicate a transmission of fear from dad to Jenny, but not from mum to Jenny.

5.8.2.3 Mechanisms of Fear of Failure Transmission
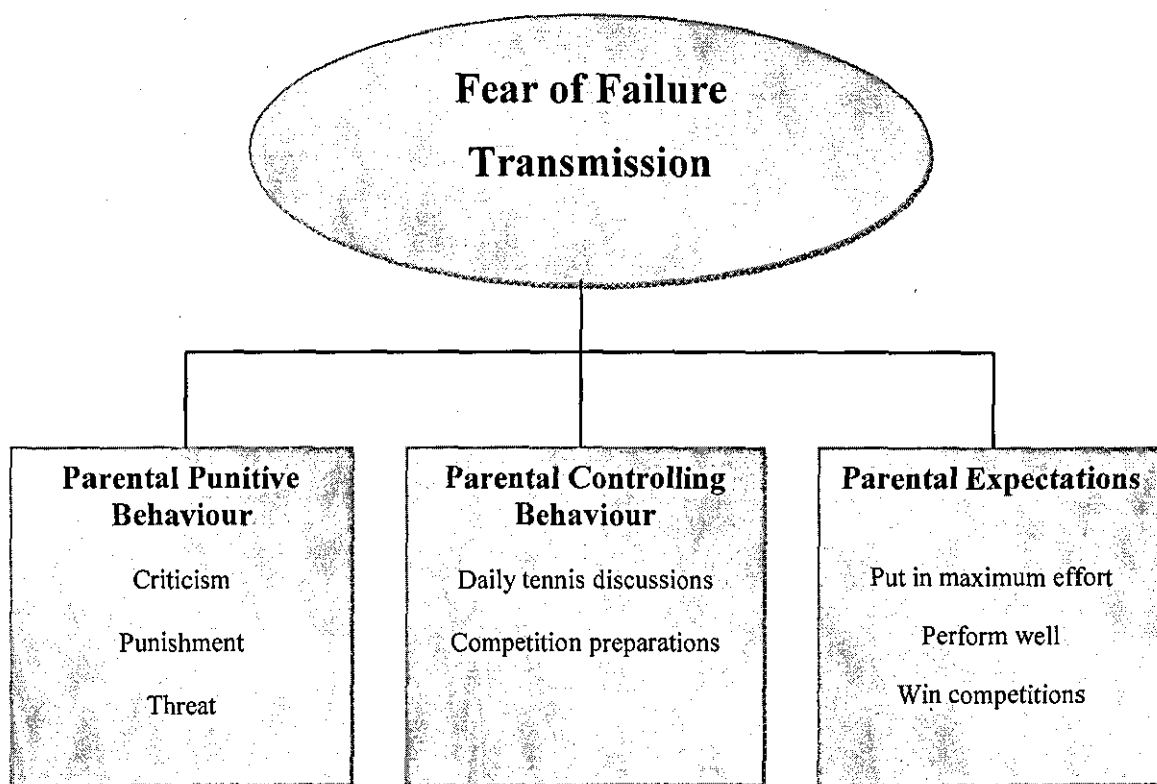
Figure 5.8: Family 2- mechanisms of FF transmission from parents to athlete.

Fear of failure was transmitted from parents to child through parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations (see Figure 5.8). I will examine each mechanism separately below.

- **Parental Punitive Behaviour**

Fear of failure was transmitted through parental punitive behaviour, which encompassed criticism, punishment (love withdrawal), and threat. Each will be examined here separately.

Parental criticism

After losing in competitions dad typically reacts harshly and criticises Jenny for poor

attitude, for lack of effort and for making mistakes in the performance. Jenny talked about dad's criticism after losing and about him getting angry with her. She stated,

> "He gets annoyed for the way I play and when I make a lot of mistakes in a match... and afterwards he'd tell me that I've made a lot of mistakes, even though I know that I have. My mum doesn't really say anything 'cos she's not tennis mad *[laughs]*. My dad normally says when I'm making mistakes that I was silly and I didn't use my head and I didn't make the right decisions... he says it when I come off court.... I don't agree with him, but that's probably because I'm upset at the time".

> "If he thinks I've not competed well and not tried my hardest or I've had a bad attitude in the match, like bad body language, he gets annoyed with me.... He tells me afterwards that he's annoyed and what he's annoyed about.... He tells me all the bad things I did and he hardly says the good things. He raises his voice... he's shouting at me.... like, 'why did you get annoyed on court?' *[shouting]* or he'd say 'that was the worst performance I've seen you play in quite a long time', *[shouting]* or something.... I get annoyed with him because he's annoyed with me, kind of thing.... Normally when I lose its because I'm tired or not feeling very well, or something like that.., but my dad will say I didn't try".

Mum also talked about dad's criticism of Jenny's performances, indicating her disapproval of dad's practice. She revealed, "If my husband is not happy if she's not played well he would be very honest with her and tell her straight away, 'that was awful', 'that was disgusting', 'why did you do that?, 'what was going on there?'.... but I mean nobody can hit 100% and do it 100% right all the time, can they?.... She's not doing it on purpose, does she?". Dad's criticism appears to carry on in the car on the journey back home from competitions. Mum described such an occasion after Jenny had lost a match, "He said she played really bad... like headless chicken.... He wasn't happy, he was frustrated and disappointed in how she played.... She just listened and cried". However, sometimes, "Disagreements happen between them [Jenny and dad].... he may think that she's not tried hard enough and she thinks she has.... She'll tell me 'dad thinks I'm not trying when I am'" [mum].

Dad explained his reasons for criticising Jenny's performances,

> "I was getting quite frustrated and annoyed with her because she didn't seem to want to work hard and fight for it, to win it.... What really stresses me is when I feel that she's not really trying, she's not putting effort into her game... and when that happens that really disappoints me.... I'm just a dad that wants his daughter to win and I just get tensed up".

Thus, dad feels tense during Jenny's performances because he perceives that her not putting effort into her performance will lead to her not winning the match. When describing a match that Jenny had lost in front of the top coaches, he revealed,

> "She was playing in this really big international tournament, and top coaches and players came from everywhere.... Her body language was poor when she walked on court, she looked subservient.... She wasn't showing any enthusiasm to be out there, and I found that

disappointing.... I wasn't happy, I was seriously annoyed with her.... Afterwards, I definitely upset her, it probably was the wrong way of me dealing with it, but I shouted at her, 'what was this all about?', 'what's going on, why couldn't you put more into it', and 'you know we discussed it, you've got to show good body language, what went on? It was poor'.... I was very upset... I was very disappointed that she didn't show her true colours.... It was just a total disappointment for me... she just didn't grab that chance.... So afterwards I was frustrated and I got really annoyed, I was shouting at her, 'what on earth is going on? Why did you go on court with this attitude? .... I was just shouting, 'why, why, why', 'absolutely ridiculous Jenny'.... and she cried, she was upset".

Hence, it appears that dad shouted and criticised Jenny after the match because he believed that she did not take the opportunity to "show her true colours". Hence, she did not perform well to impress the top coaches who were watching her performance, and whose negative judgment of Jenny dad fears.

Jenny and both her parents talked about the impact of dad's criticism on Jenny. Jenny revealed that she anticipates dad's criticism and reaction after the match as it has become his usual practice. She stated, "I expect that he's gonna probably tell me off that I've done all these things wrong.... and I know what he's going to say when I come off court because it's normally the same". She stated that his reaction and criticism upset her, making her feel "sad and angry". She also stated, "Sometimes I feel that I've tried my best but my best isn't good enough, and he says something like 'you've made too many errors', but I know I have, I was having a bad day on that day, or something.... Both of us [Jenny and dad] will be upset straight afterwards if I didn't play well". Thus, Jenny associates losing with being criticised and shouted at by dad and with dad getting upset. She stated that after the match she would like dad, "to let me cool down and let him cool down... probably half an hour.... I want him to still tell what he thinks but in a calmer tone, not shouting". Hence, Jenny does not like dad shouting at her. Accordingly, she perceives dad's criticism as an aversive consequence of failure that she disliked.

Dad believed that while playing, Jenny is concerned about upsetting him, stating, "The reason she's looking at me during the match is she probably thinks 'my dad's getting really upset because I'm losing'". Similarly, mum stated, "Jenny keeps looking at him when she's playing.... Probably she wants to see what he's thinking". Mum also believed that Jenny worries about "what dad would think when she's finished the match.... She probably fears losing 'cos she doesn't want Jack [dad] to be upset at the end of the match if she hasn't done well, so she possibly fears what he's gonna say". Furthermore, mum revealed that after losing Jenny "Sometimes, if she's worried, she'll say 'what's dad said? Has dad said anything?' Or 'is dad annoyed with me?' So she's concerned about how he's feeling, if he's upset". Thus, Jenny worries about annoying and upsetting dad and, consequently, being

criticised by him for losing. Interestingly, mum revealed that when Jenny performs well and wins "she'll come straight up and give us a hug", however, at other times Jenny's tries to avoid and delay confronting dad, "Sometimes if she knows or thinks her dad is upset with the way she played then she'll just go off somewhere separately initially". Indeed, in reply to my question "what makes you worry about losing?", Jenny stated, "Not being taken on trips (overseas tournaments), not being the best, and losing and not wanting my dad to shout at me and be upset with me". Therefore, Jenny perceives upsetting dad and dad's harsh criticism and behaviour aversive consequences of failure that she disliked and fears.

Dad's criticism during the performance

Dad, who typically stands close to the court, also communicates his criticism to Jenny during her performance by openly conveying his disapproval through verbal and non-verbal cues. As Jenny revealed,

> "My dad gets quite stressed, moving about and walking off.... he jolts about and says 'oh what you doing?'.... I can see by his facial expressions.... and sometimes if I've missed a easy ball he'd laugh, and it really annoys me..... I know that he's getting upset. I used to get upset when he used to chuckle or pull like a horrible face, or go 'tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk' *[making the sound]*, I'd hear it and I'd see him do *[rolling up her eyes to imitate dad's action]*.... I know what he thinks from his actions...'cos sometimes when I'm playing I can see him like smirking, and laughing 'cos I've made a mistake, or I'm being silly, stupid. And sometimes like if I've worked hard for the point and then missed it I can sometimes see him going, like 'aaaahhhhhhh' *[sigh]* and shaking his head *[demonstrating side to side in disapproval]*.... His actions normally tell me if he's annoyed with me or not.... like if he's annoyed he'd walk away, he'd shake his head, or smirk.... If he is happy with me he'd make fist up.... I like the good signals but not the not nice ones".

> "I don't like the smirking, that really annoys me when he smirks at me, it's like 'you can't do this!', and I feel like saying 'you come on court, you do it'. It's the smirking that is the worst thing, and him walking off, and his movements, like shrugging his shoulders around or shaking his head and then he walks off, and then sometimes he like smirks at me in a sarcastic way.... "I don't think he should walk off, and I don't think he should do his actions when I'm failing, like shaking his head and smirking".

> "I'd prefer it if he sat down and didn't show any actions and didn't do anything.... but I'm too scared to tell him *(laugh)*.... Like the other day he was laughing at me because I missed an easy ball... and then I shouted at him [during the match] something like 'can you stop smirking at me'... 'cos I was just fed up of him doing it, and then in the car on the way home he said 'if you do that again', like if I shout at him again, because it showed him up, 'then I'd just walk off and I wouldn't come back', so he'd go home and he'd ring mum to come pick me up.... He smirked at me when I was playing last Saturday, and I had that stomach pain, and I was like saying something inside but I didn't tell him because I knew that he'd walk off".

It appears from these quotes that dad's verbal and non-verbal criticism of Jenny during her performance upsets her and she does not like it. She perceives his behaviour as criticism of her ability to play and gets annoyed with him (thus, it is likely to harm her concentration

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during the match). She likes his approval cues and associates them with success and with pleasing dad, as she stated, "I like the way he behaves when I'm being successful and he says 'come on' and 'good shot'... encouraging me. I like the way that he behaves then, and I think parents should do that". Accordingly, Jenny perceives dad's criticism during her performance as aversive consequences of failure that she disliked. Thus, dad also transmits his FF to Jenny via his criticism during the match.

Dad is aware of the impact of his behaviour at courtside on Jenny. He stated,

"I'm terrible *[laugh]*.... I get up, move about, walk away, so that's not good, is it?.... It must put her under pressure because she can see me pulling faces and things like this, because I live every minute of it with her. That's why I said to you I was the father from hell, because it must be horrible for her.... She looks at me quite a lot, she's probably thinking something like 'what is my dad thinking'.... She can read me like a book and I shouldn't show any facial expression, she knows me inside out".

"There is definitely pressure from me, you know, the way that I am when we go to tournaments.... I'm not meaning to put pressure on her but undoubtedly I do, and definitely in her eyes she sees it that way. I've tried to change the way that I react to things, but I'm useless. I just live the moment with her and so afterwards it would be pressure when I'm of saying to her 'it was not acceptable', or whatever".

Jenny also criticises and puts herself down (punitive behaviour against self) during and after losing the match. For example, she stated, "When I'm down in a match and I'm missing balls... I normally shout at myself 'oh for God's sake!' or 'what are you doing?!' or 'why did you do it?!', 'what did you do that for?!', 'you're rubbish!' or 'you're not good enough!' or 'you shouldn't be here!'". Her self-criticism carries on after losing the match, as she revealed, "I'm just annoyed that I've lost and I'm negative to myself.... I just say to myself 'what's the point in doing it?' and 'you're not good enough' and 'you're rubbish'.... I just feel that I'm not good enough anymore". Mum revealed, "She is, very, very hard on herself, and her coaches are working with her on that... If she hits one bad shot she would be very low and very negative on herself". Thus, it appears that Jenny, like dad, is very critical of her performance and of making mistakes, a behaviour that she may have learnt from dad. Dad's criticism and expression of disappointed and anger with her performance teaches her to criticise herself. Receiving harsh criticism (from dad and from self) after failure teaches Jenny to associate her failure with receiving harsh criticism and, thus, to perceive consequences of failure aversive. Such perception is at the core of FF development. In short, dad transmits his FF to Jenny through his harsh criticism after her failure.

Parental Punishment

Parental punishment after failure came only from dad. He employed practices such as walking away from the sporting arena during the match, and breaking off communication with Jenny for several days after failure. I grouped these practices under love withdrawal since they communicate to Jenny that her failure results in dad's disapproval and emotional or physical withdrawal of love and support. I will examine each of dad's practices separately below.

Dad walks away from the sporting arena

Dad, but not mum, often walks away from the sporting arena during competition when he is dissatisfied with Jenny's performance. Jenny explained, "He gets annoyed for the way I play... when I'm having a bad day, or I'm in a bad mood and I've got a bad attitude, and I'm like getting annoyed with myself". Thus, dad leaves the arena when he perceives that Jenny is not performing well. She revealed how dad's departure makes her feel:

> "It makes me feel 'ooohhh he's going off again!' *[says with irritation]* and it makes me get annoyed because he's walked off because he's annoyed with me.... Instantly I think 'he's walking off again, why is he doing it?', and sometimes I just go off in a strop, and sometimes I go and like slap the ball and get really annoyed and just smack it out and don't really care".

Thus, Jenny gets angry with herself when dad walks away because she perceives that she has made him annoyed and made him leave. Indeed, mum also stated, "If he's [dad] not happy with her he'll walk off.... She gets upset when he walks away". Mum also described an occasion when dad walked away because "She [Jenny] was making lots of mistakes". On several occasions mum has heard Jenny shout at herself angrily on court, "'that's it, you've made dad walk away, that's brilliant!'". Jenny stated that "him [dad] walking away" is one of the worst things for her, and "I haven't actually said to him 'I don't like you walking away', because I'm scared he might shout at me".

Dad's departure appears to affect Jenny in two ways: she gets angry and vents her anger (e.g., "slap the ball"; in the quote above), and she improves her performance, which results in dad's return. Therefore, Jenny and both her parents perceive dad's walking away as having a positive effect on Jenny's subsequent performance and even leading to her winning the match. For example, although mum disagrees with dad's walking away ("because you've left your child playing a match without your support") she believes that, "sometimes it's made her [Jenny] sort of come to her senses, like 'what on earth am I

doing'…. And she starts to play better". Similarly, although dad said "I know it's wrong... I shouldn't walk away", he stated "But the irony is that in many cases after I leave she re-focuses and she gets on and does what she has to do…. I've noticed that she reacts positively to it when I walk away…. In my opinion it does motivates her to perform better". Thus, both parents disagree with dad's walking away but, nonetheless, both perceive it as beneficial to Jenny's subsequent performance. Jenny also perceives dad's walking away in this way, stating,

> "He's [dad] said to me 'when I do it [walk away] it puts you into place' and that the times when he has walked away I've played better and I've ended up winning or getting close…. Sometimes it teaches me a lesson and I start to get on with it more and I know that he's walked off for that reason…. Sometimes when he walked off I thought that he's right... and I then start playing better and he comes back".

> "That time when he walked away I won…. I think that's because he'd walked off, because if he hadn't walked off I probably would have carried on shouting at myself and playing bad…. I think it's just that I knew that he'd walked off because I'm getting annoyed with myself and that I need to try harder so that he'll come back to watch, 'cos I want him to watch, and that's really what it is…. I felt upset when he went off because I wanted him to watch me in the final of a tournament".

It appears, therefore, that on occasions when Jenny is not performing well and is losing the match and dad walks away from the arena, when she improves her performance dad returns. By leaving the arena during the match, dad openly communicates to Jenny his disapproval of her performance and, consequently, his withdrawal of support and affection for her. Dad's behaviour indicates to Jenny that she has disappointed and annoyed her dad, which makes her improve her performance in order to gain back his support, approval and affection. Jenny has learnt that by improving her performance she can re-gain dad's support, thus, she has learnt to associate good performance with receiving dad's love and support. In other words, by playing well she pleases dad and, in return, she re-gains his love and support. As Jenny does not like dad's withdrawal of love and support it is, therefore, logical to assume that she perceives such consequence of failure aversive. Moreover, Jenny also associates dad's walking away with receiving criticism, as she explained, "If he walks off I feel angry because he's walked off because he's angry with me and I know that he'll probably have a go at me afterwards". Thus, she perceives dad's withdrawal of love and receiving criticism as aversive consequences of playing poorly and losing. Accordingly, dad's behaviour serves to teach Jenny that dad's love and affection are contingent on her match results and, therefore, to associate failure with love withdrawal and to fear it.

Dad breaks off communication with Jenny

Jenny and both her parents talked about dad breaking off communication with Jenny for several days after she loses in competitions. Jenny described troubled father-daughter relationships post-failure:

> "We [Jenny and dad] are definitely really close, we normally have lots of cuddles…and long conversations…. but sometimes when we are upset with each other when I haven't done very well, or like not performed well or not tried my hardest, then we're not close. My dad gets annoyed with me and shouts at me, and then we get upset and we just stay away from each other and not speak…. sometimes for that day, sometimes for three, four days…. I feel tension, I worry 'cos I want to be friends again…. It's uncomfortable. It feels that something is wrong and I just wanna say sorry and let's make up…. So then I go to apologise and we make friends again…. And it goes on like that *[begins to cry]*…. I wish we could just be friends and tennis wouldn't come between us".

It appears that dad's criticism post-failure leads to a temporary break down in communication between him and Jenny and, thus, harms their usually close relationship. Jenny described her dad as normally warm and affectionate, but post-failure he withdraws his love for several days, causing tension in their relationship. This worries her and she and wants to gain his love back (e.g., "I want to be friends again"); eventually she apologises to him and restores the relationship. She does not like this usual scenario that occurs between them post-failure and talking about it makes her cry. She stated, "I think if I haven't performed well and he's had that shout at me, I think after that he should still communicate with me instead of just going quiet and not talking to me". Thus, she would like him not to break off communication with her and not withdraw his love when she has performed poorly and lost.

Dad explained "I get quite frustrated with her and really annoyed, and she'd cry and go off in one direction and I'll go off in another…. and I'll be thinking 'no, she'll come to me'…. In some cases it took us a few days to make up… so we don't talk for a few days…. There is tension…. We want to talk but we're being stubborn. I hate it and she probably hates it too". Mum also feels the tension at home when dad and Jenny are not talking to each other, and her intervention triggers parental arguments. As mum stated,

> "He [dad] feels disappointed and frustrated and he goes on about the match for quite a while and dwells on things a lot…. He'll say 'she played awful', and he's not happy with her about the match, and then they're not talking for a few days…. You feel the tension at home, so I'll have a go at him…. I tell him to stop it, 'for god's sake stop being so stupid, she's supposed to be the child here not you', and 'it happened and you got to accept it' [saying in a reproaching tone]…. I protect her… even if sometimes I agreed with Jack… but I turned round, 'yes, ok she didn't do this, she could have done that, lets move on now you can't change it, it's done it'…. and then we'll have arguments about it…. It's hard work… it's a roller coaster".

These parental arguments make Jenny feel bad and guilty. She revealed,

> "If my dad isn't pleased with what I've done and we get back and we're both in a bad mood and not talking to each other, then my mum is normally like 'why aren't you speaking?', and then my mum and my dad get into an argument.... So that's one of the reasons I want them [parents] to be pleased with me. Sometimes it makes me feel like the tennis is making this happen.... It makes me feel bad because it's kind of my fault that I haven't tried hard, or whatever I've done, and then my dad is not speaking to me and it caused them to have a fight because I haven't succeeded. It makes me feel bad that what I've done has caused them to have a fight".

It appears that Jenny perceives that her poor performance and loss causes the tension and the unpleasant atmosphere at home and she blames herself (internalising blame) for it. Thus, the consequences of failure for Jenny are: dad withdraws his love for several days and this causes her to feel worry and tension, her parents argue and she blames herself for that, and everybody at home feels the tension for a few days. Jenny perceives these consequences as aversive, stating, "The worst thing about losing is that my dad doesn't speak to me and my parents end up fighting", while in contrast, "winning makes my family happy *[laughs]*". Therefore, dad's punitive behaviour of breaking off communication with Jenny and withdrawing his love for several days after failure contributes to the development of Jenny's FF. In short, a mechanism of FF transmission is via dad's love withdrawal.

Parental threat

Jenny revealed that when dad is annoyed with her for not performing well and losing he threatens not to take her to tournaments. She stated,

> "Sometimes he's [dad] said to me 'if you play like this again then I'm not going to take you places' [to tournaments] and I feel worried that he actually won't [take me].... 'cos it means I'm not going to play the tournaments.... He hasn't done it yet, but actually yes he did, he stopped my playing for a week once because I had a really bad attitude on court and played bad... and I was worried that he wasn't gonna let me play tennis again, but we made up.... Sometimes he has stopped taking me to places for a week or so and I've been quite scared while that's been happening, that I might not be able to play tennis again. Also he cancelled lessons with my coach before as well".

Thus, another consequence of Jenny's failure in competitions is dad's threat to stop taking her to tournaments. She fears dad's threat because not play in tournaments is a threat to her greatly valued tennis career. Although dad has not threatened to stop her playing tennis she perceives his threat as leading to the end of her tennis career. Indeed, in reply to my question "What's the worst consequence of failure for you?" she stated, "My dad stopping me from playing tennis". This consequence, she stated, was worse than people judging her negatively after failure. It is interesting to note that when dad breaks off communication

with her she worries about his threat and its implications and when they make up she feels safe and stops worrying about it. Accordingly, a consequence of failure for Jenny is the possibility that dad will stop her from playing tennis in tournaments, a consequence she perceives as aversive and fears.

Dad has also threatened to remove Jenny from a tournament after she had played badly and lost the match. She recalled,

> "My dad had walked off because he was angry... and when I came off [court] he took me outside in to the car and he was shouting 'what are you doing?', he had real go at me.... He just got really, really, really annoyed.... and he said 'I'm taking you home' *[sounding forceful]*. I was staying there in the hotel with the academy girls and the coaches... but then he said that the only reason why he didn't was because he didn't want to let the other girl down, this other girl I was in the doubles with.... I was crying my eyes out 'cos he was being really nasty to me and 'cos I think he's going to stop me from playing tennis, 'cos he actually said he would if I play like this and carry on with this attitude".

Thus, dad's threat was again a consequence of Jenny's failure, a threat that she perceived aversive and harmful to her tennis career and, therefore, feared it. On another occasion, when Jenny played badly and lost the match, dad has threatened to abandon her in the tournament venue. She stated, "He said that he'd just walk off and he wouldn't come back, he'd go home and he'd ring mum [to pick me up].... So he'd just leave me there and go home".

In summary, dad's punitive behaviour (such as, criticism, punishment, and threats) towards Jenny for not performing well and losing is a mechanism by which he transmits his FF to Jenny. Dad's punitive behaviour upsets and worries Jenny and she does not like it, perceiving it as an aversive consequence of failure and fears it. Associating failure with dad's punitive behaviour contributes to the development of Jenny's FF.

- **Parental Controlling Behaviour**

Parental controlling behaviour involved only dad's behaviour. It appears from the disclosures of mum, dad, and Jenny that dad is very involved in Jenny's tennis career. Dad's communications with Jenny revolved mostly around her tennis, he travels to most tournaments with her, and gets involved in competition preparations. Thus, dad tries to controls Jenny's tennis career. Jenny described her typical communications with dad:

> "Because my dad doesn't normally watch me training in the academy... so I come back home about 6 or 7 o'clock at night and he's always asking me 'how did you play? What did you do? Did you play with [coach's name]?', 'what drills did you do?'. And sometimes I can't remember and I just want to go to bed and I just gets annoyed with him when he asks all these questions about training every day.... 'aaaahhhhhhh' *[sigh]* it's too much sometimes.... Sometimes he talks to me about drills that he reads in the tennis magazine

and he reads to me passages out of that hypnosis book about being nervous.... *And then we've done this relaxation thing to relax your muscles.... and then he talks about attitude sometimes.... Most of the time, probably 80% of what we talk about is tennis.... I talk tennis with my dad and other stuff and fun stuff with my mum*".

Thus, it appears that the majority of the communication between dad and Jenny during the evenings is around tennis and Jenny's daily training. She does not like it and finds it a burden on her as she feels that dad overdoes it. Dad also revealed, "I ask her about the academy, what they did in training, what the coaches told her.... Sometimes the girls play sets against one another, so I ask her details about it.... We talk tennis mostly".

Dad also gets involved in competition preparation. He described a typical preparation a week prior to competition,

> "The week before, probably on most days we'll be talking about tennis.... on the specifics of the match and we'd be talking about whose gonna be there... I say 'who do you think is gonna be playing?'.... We probably sort of build it up gradually about what we're doing. I've got this self-hypnosis book and we're talking about it, and it's just picturing, you know, like where you hit your best forehand from, or believing in your best rally.... We discuss what type of game she should play, and if she can play her ideal game how is it gonna be. So we go over few things and I would throw a few wobblies in there and say 'ok but if she [opponent] did' this or that 'how would you react?'. So we'd be talking about situations that could arise in the match.... So I cover a lot of eventualities to make sure in my mind we've got it right".

It appears that a great deal of their conversations revolves around match tactics and rehearsing scenarios that can occur in the match. Dad tests Jenny by rehearsing various hypothetical situations that can arise in a match in an effort to prepare her to deal effectively with them. Thus, dad seeks optimal match preparation in order to ensure (at least in his mind) an optimal performance that will lead to Jenny winning. Match preparation seems to intensify 24 hours prior to the competition, as dad described,

> "We talk lots and lots and lots about the ideal type of game that she should be playing, and if that wasn't working what other type she'd play, how she should react to situations.... It's just a normal sort of conversation that we're having about the match.... I think that probably I have more worries than her before [the match].... I have those concerns.... for example, there was an event recently that I felt could be a really awkward situation, just me being the way I am. And I was asking her 'do you think you've got a good chance [to win]?'.... you know, it was just me feeling all these worries".

Thus, pre-competition preparation encompasses dad guiding Jenny how to attain optimal performance, ensuring that she takes the best options available and making the best decision in order to increase her chances to win and to avoid failure. Dad's worries before the competition are underpinned by his fear of Jenny not winning the competition as, indeed, he asks her "do you think you've got a good chance [to win]?", indicating that he is

concerned with the competition outcome. Dad's conversations with Jenny in the days

before a competition reflect his thoughts and worries that are underlined by his fear of

Jenny losing. It is through such conversations before competitions that dad is transmitting

his fear to Jenny. Indeed, Jenny senses dad's pre-competition worry about her losing. She

stated that on the morning of the competition and immediately pre-competition dad "just

talks me through what I should do and shouldn't do and what the tactics are and what she

[opponent] plays like.... So he tells me what I have to do and it's just what we discussed

before.... He probably worries, he want to make sure that get it right". Dad further added,

> "I am the same with Brian's [son] Judo and school .... I want to make sure that they
> [children] succeed, and by doing that I suppose I'm controlling, but I don't want them to
> fail at things. I hate failing.... So I do worry about the future.... I'm also quite strict with
> the way she [Jenny] does her school work and her tennis.... I do worry about the outcome
> for them really more than for me".

Hence, dad's controlling behaviour extends to both his children's schooling as well as

sports. His controlling behaviour is underpinned by his fear of his children's failure and,

thus, by controlling their preparation he possibly senses that he can prevent their failure. In

other words, all the planning and preparation for Jenny's competitions are underlined by

dad's FF.

Mum also talked about dad's controlling behaviour in the week leading to Jenny's

competitions, stating, "I don't put pressure on her, maybe her dad, but not me.... I don't

really do too much on the tennis side sort of with the game plans and what she needs to do

in a match". Thus, mum perceives dad's match preparation as pressurising Jenny. Mum

explained dad's worries before Jenny's competitions:

> "Jack [dad] worries because he wants to make sure that everything has turned right.... He's
> a worrier.... He worries that Jenny could lose, and so he'll try and do his best with her
> before [Jenny's match] to make sure that she is well prepared.... He's very competitive and
> it's probably because he knows what he can do but he's not in control of it when she's
> playing, and he does like to be in control, but its [Jenny's match] something out of his
> control. So that's probably what it is and why he gets so anxious before [Jenny's match]....
> So he just gets so engrossed and involved in the match preparation.... The problem I think
> is because with tennis you're not allowed to coach while they're [players] on court... so
> Jack gets frustrated because he's not allowed to communicate with her, to tell her what to
> do in the match".

Mum's quote also indicates that dad fears Jenny's failure and that his controlling behaviour

gives him the sense of guaranteeing Jenny's success. Indeed, dad stated, "I fear for her

failing. I can't do anything about that *[her failing]* 'cos she's on the court and I'm not there

personally, it's only her there. So I fear for her failing, or I'm anxious because of the

potential consequence". Dad's controlling behaviour, albeit his way of coping with his FF,

is the mechanism of transmitting his fear to Jenny. Indeed, both mum and dad stated that Jenny fears losing ("She hates it when she loses.... She probably fears losing" [mum]; "I'd say she worries about failure, she doesn't like not succeeding... she hates failure" [dad]).

Mum also revealed that when reaching the competition venue dad usually studies Jenny's opponent's playing style in order further to prepare Jenny. Mum talked about a recent such occurrence:

> "Jack watched and analysed how this girl [opponent] played in the match beforehand, whilst Jenny was playing her other match.... So he knew the sort of game that that girl plays, and he sat with Jenny when they had some lunch before her match and he said 'if you do this she will normally do that', and they analysed it. And Jenny went on court, she listened to what Jack has said, because he dissected this girl's game, and Jenny went on and beat her".

Thus, dad studying the opponent may have helped Jenny to win on that occasion.

While watching Jenny's matches dad usually charts the match (compiling match statistics stroke by stroke) and studies it with Jenny after the match. He explained,

> "I monitor the game as it goes on and I go through it with her after the game so that we can study it afterwards and discuss it. Normally I give her five minutes to just come round after the match, and I'll say 'what I feel that she should have been doing here', and 'Jenny you really should have done this or done that'.... like tactics in the game or things that have been happening on the court that she could have done better.... and I probably upset her sometimes.... that's why I say I'm the father from hell".

Charting the match and conducting match analysis with Jenny immediately after the match is also a part of dad controlling behaviour that aims to guarantee Jenny's success and avoid failure in future competitions. As indeed, he explained that he wants Jenny "to learn from her mistakes". However, dad often criticises Jenny during these post-match analyses and upsets her (as described above in section 'parental criticism'). Moreover, Jenny revealed that on occasions when dad does not attend her competitions he instructs her by telephone immediately pre-match, and discusses the match with her immediately after the match. Jenny stated, "Mostly my dad comes with me to tournaments but sometimes, not often, my mum does. And if my mum takes me, my dad rings me before my match and he tells me stuff to do and then afterwards... I ring my dad and he asks me questions on how I played and stuff like that".

In summary, dad's controlling behaviour encompassed his over involvement in Jenny's competition preparation a week prior to competition, studying her opponent's playing styles while they are playing in other competitions, and post-match detailed analysis with Jenny. Dad's controlling behaviour is underpinned by his fear of Jenny losing, and by controlling

her match preparation he senses that he can prevent her failure. In other words, the excessive planning and preparation for Jenny's competitions are underlined by dad's FF. His controlling behaviour gives him the sense of guaranteeing Jenny's success. Although dad's controlling behaviour is his way of coping with his fear, it is the mechanism of transmitting his FF to Jenny.

- **Parental Expectations**

It appears that dad's expectations are a source of pressure for Jenny, contributing to the development of her FF. Parental expectations comprised dad's expectations for Jenny to put maximum effort in her performance, and to perform well in order to win matches and tournaments. Examples from each theme are presented and discussed separately below.

Parental expectations for maximum effort

Jenny revealed that her parents expect her to put maximum effort into her training in the academy and her performance in competitions. She stated,

> "As long as I've tried my hardest and tried to win he's [dad] happy, and I do my best and do what he [dad] tells me normally *[match instructions]*.... I know that they [parents] expect me to do my best because what they're doing for me. They've told me that as long as I try my hardest they're happy with me.... They expect me to do my best and because I'm in the academy... I'm hopefully going to go up another level. I think that's what they [parents] hope for me to do.... My dad really hopes that I'm going to go up a level".

Thus, Jenny perceives that her parents expect her to put maximum effort and progress in her tennis career in return for their effort and investment. Dad's expectations of Jenny appear to be higher than mum's. While dad stated, "I want her to give her best every time when she is here [academy], you know, to do her best to reach her goal.... [to] put 100% in when she is here [academy] and in matches [competitions]", mum stated, "I feel it's a game, you can't be 100% all the time, even the top players in the world don't, they all make mistakes. So I'm sort of more of a realist than him [dad] really. For me it's as long as you give your best".

When explaining his disappointment after one of Jenny's losses in a competition, dad stated, "I just felt she should have gone into it [the match] and really tried her best and tried to work it out, or changed the game, she wasn't putting any effort into her game.... that's why I was annoyed with her when she lost". Thus, he was disappointed that Jenny did not meet his expectations that she should put in maximum effort and try to figure out the match and win it. Similarly, dad explained his disappointment on another occasion when Jenny

lost: "In that match she should have put more into it. And probably I treat her more like an adult, like I would treat somebody at work or whatever, rather than a 13 year old little girl. Maybe I expect a lot from her, I'm quite tough with her when it comes to details for what we're doing in tennis.... I've probably been too strict in some ways, and my expectations of how she should behave on court is equal to 'are you doing your best'". Thus, dad acknowledges that he has high expectations of Jenny in relation to her tennis. Dad explained the rational behind these expectations:

> "I and Paula [mum] will invest as much time in them [children] to give them the opportunity.... if she [Jenny] wants to play at elite level and I need to take her away [to tournaments] and I need to have time off work, or we need to go away for weekends [to tournaments] then she needs to put her hardest effort.... I will invest as much time in them as a parent can, providing they want it or they put the effort into it themselves.... It's [tennis] something that she wants, but we're all [family] coming together as a team to try and give her the opportunity to achieve her dream".

Thus, dad views Jenny's tennis career as a family investment where they are all supporting her and, therefore, he expects her to put her best effort into it and to achieve her aspiration. When discussing his values and beliefs, dad revealed that his core beliefs are, "you got to give it your all if you want to be successful.... got to put 100% or it's not gonna work". Accordingly, it is not surprising that he applies the same values to Jenny's tennis career and has high expectations of her.

Parental expectations to perform well

Dad also expects Jenny to perform well, as she revealed, "He [dad] says if I don't make many mistakes then he's fine with it, and if I don't just go like 'headless chicken' and slap every ball as hard as I can.... If I just smack every ball as hard as I can he'd be annoyed 'cos he says that it means I haven't tried to suss out the game". Thus, dad expects her not to make too many errors in the match and to play tactically, which obviously can lead to her winning the match. Indeed, dad explained why he became annoyed with Jenny after losing a match, "Because things weren't going her way, her body language was poor... instead of her thinking 'what's going wrong here, what do I need to do', you know, having a strong mental approach to how she's going to deal with the situation and win it. But instead of dealing with it, she was going lower and lower in herself and the result of it was that she lost". Thus, dad expected Jenny to be mentally strong when the match did not go her way and to win it and as she did not meet his expectation he was annoyed with her.

When explaining his disappointment after one of Jenny's losses in a competition, dad

stated, "I expected her to do better than she did.... It was a very important competition... the pinnacle for her age group. She had the option to win it... she was ranked higher, but she didn't perform well.... She hit everything [balls] out.... she came third". Hence, dad was annoyed with Jenny for not performing well and losing a match that he had expected her to win as she was ranked higher than her opponent. However, despite her higher ranking, Jenny lost and dad was angry and disappointed at her.

Dad stated, "My expectation for her is to do well in them [competitions].... I'm stressed out during the match because I obviously want her to do well, I want her to play her best and I want her to win every match and what really stresses me is her behaviour in certain matches when I feel that she's not really trying to work it out, or change her game, or she's not putting any effort into her game.... and when that happens that really disappoints me". Thus, dad's stress during the match is underpinned by his fear of Jenny losing and, accordingly, he becomes more anxious during the match when she's not performing well as he anticipates her failure to win. Therefore, Jenny not meeting his expectations contributes to his anger, disappointment, and criticism of her after the match. It is not surprising, therefore, that Jenny finds dad's expectations high, and perceives that he expects her to achieve perfection. As she stated, "I think he [dad] wants me to be perfectionist.... I think he thinks it's a good thing.... I think it has to be balanced and I can't be perfect at everything, but I think he thinks that everything has to be perfect.... But sometimes I have a bad day... but I don't think that he sees it like that".

The impact of parental expectations and FF transmission

Jenny worries about the consequences of not meeting her dad's and coaches' expectations. She explained, "Sometimes I worry about my coaches' expectations... 'cos if I don't get them they [coaches] just might not have as much interest in me.... And I want to [meet] my dad's [expectations] 'cos I want to make him happy.... sometimes I get annoyed with myself for not playing well and for not pleasing them [coaches and dad]". Thus, Jenny perceives that if she does not meet their expectations her coaches will lose interest in her and her dad will be displeased with her. Thus, she perceives the consequences of not meeting their expectations as aversive and fears them. Mum also believed that parental expectations may be a source of worry for Jenny because, "She [Jenny] may be thinking 'if I don't do my best my mum and dad will be upset'. But then at this level [elite] it's the needing to be that good really, because if you're not then you won't go any further". Thus, mum believes that high parental expectations, despite being a source of worry for Jenny,

are necessary at elite level tennis. Mum further revealed,

> "She [Jenny] likes to please as well, she's one of these people who likes to do things for you, for other people, anything, anybody. She's that type of character, you know, if her coach says 'jump' she'll jump.... If she feels that you expect her to win and she didn't then she hates that fact because she doesn't like to, she very much wants to please you, she wants to do it for you, she's always been like that since she was a baby.... If she doesn't meet your expectations she will be very disappointed. But, I hope that it's 'cos she's disappointed for herself not for us.... I hope she's doing it [tennis] for herself and not for us or for her dad.... She doesn't want me and Jack to be upset at the end of the match if she hasn't done well... so she maybe fears it.... She wants dad to be pleased with her".

Thus, it appears that it is important to Jenny to meet others' expectations and, therefore, for her not meeting her dad's expectations is likely to elicit fear. Dad also believes that Jenny fears letting down others. He believes that young athletes fear failure for two reason, "Because of who they perceive they're letting down, and also because... they're committing 99% of their life to it [sport]... and this is what they want to do.... So I suppose there is a fear of failure because they either want it so bad or they think they're letting the people down.... It must be also Jenny's fear there somewhere.... We are very close so maybe she wants me to be happy with her.... I don't think I have high expectations... but maybe she feels that when she loses I'm not happy with her, that I'm disappointed".

In summary, dad's expectations of Jenny are greater than mum's, contributing to her FF. Dad expects Jenny to put maximum effort into her performances and not to make too many errors, to have a positive body language on court, to play tactically well, and to win the competition. When Jenny does not meet his expectations he feels disappointed and angry with her and criticises her performance. Jenny expressed fear of not meeting dad's expectations and, consequently, not pleasing him. By expressing his anger and disappointment post-failure, dad communicates to Jenny that she has not met his expectations and has displeased him. Accordingly, it is reasonable to suggest that Jenny's fear of losing is mediated by her fear of not meeting dad's expectations and, consequently, letting him down and feeling bad and disappointed in herself. Thus, dad contributes to the development of Jenny's FF via his high expectations and expressing his disappointment when she does not meet them. In short, Jenny's fear of losing is underpinned by her desire to meet her dad's expectations and, thereby, to please him and not let him down. Jenny's following quote, which is a reply to my question 'what is the best thing about winning?', summarises the consequences of failure she fears:

> "People [other players], everyone want to be with you and want to know you, and they think that I'm good, if I'm successful and I'm winning they think that I'm good.... and that I'm getting better and better.... and I'm getting closer to being a top player.... And my dad

is pleased with me if I'm successful. My whole family are pleased with me if I'm successful".

5.8.3 FAMILY 3

5.8.3.1 Types of Fear of Failure

Table 5.3 shows the same types of fear reported by the athlete (Lisa) and her parent(s) (Jim and Julia). They all feared the consequences of Lisa losing in competitions, not attaining her aspiration to become an Olympic figure skater, and being judged negatively by coaches, judges and peers. Additionally, Lisa and her mum also feared that Lisa would not be selected to the national squad and would not be selected to further international competitions. Finally, both mum and dad feared Lisa's response to failure, fearing the impact of failure on her emotional state. Thus, their fears of Lisa losing in competitions were mediated by their perceived aversive consequences of losing. The athlete and both her parents referred to failure as losing, getting a low score, and not winning a competition.

Fear	Dad's fear	Mum's fear	Athlete's fear
Fear of non-attainment of aspirations	Fear of not improving and not reaching a higher standard (not progressing)	Fear of not progressing as a skater Fear that failure will lead to Lisa giving up skating and not making it.	Fear of parents stopping my skating if I don't try hard Fear of not achieving my goals in skating Fear of career terminating injury
Fear of negative judgment	Fear of coaches' negative judgment of Lisa if she does not achieve good results Fear of Lisa not giving a good account of herself in competitions	Fear of the judgment of the governing body and of Lisa's coaches	Fear of judges' negative evaluation of my performance Fear of coaches and skaters thinking I'm not good
Fear of non-selection		Fear of Lisa not being selected for international competitions Fear of Lisa not being selected for the British squad Fear of Lisa being dropped out of the British squad	Fear of not being selected for international competitions Fear of failing and being dropped out of the British squad
Fear of Lisa's emotional response to failure	Fear of Lisa falling and feeling upset and unhappy	Fear of Lisa not qualifying and feeling disappointment and upset Fear of Lisa failing and feeling devastated and upset	

Table 5.3: Family 3- types of FF of dad, mum, and athlete.

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations

Fear of non-attainment of aspirations was reported by mum, dad, and Lisa. At the time of the interviews Lisa had been a member of the figure skating academy for five months and had been unsuccessful in performing the jumps in competitions and achieving high scores. This worried mum, as she explained, "Lisa has twelve months to prove herself in the academy… It worries me longer term 'cos obviously… if you're gonna make it as a skater then you have to have got all the jumps…. and if you can't do it then your long term skating career isn't there, if you don't have the jumps then you don't progress, so then it's the end for you as a skater". Thus, mum worried that Lisa failing to perform the jumps successfully in competitions would end her skating career. Dad's worries were similar to mum's. He stated, "Obviously they've [skaters] got to perform well to get to win their competitions and to get to a higher standard. They're looking to improve all the time at this age, so it's quite important at this age to perform well and win…. It worries me if she doesn't do well 'cos it might impair her progression as a skater". Thus, dad, like mum, also perceived non-attainment of aspiration as an aversive consequence of Lisa's failure in competitions.

In reply to my question "what is your worst fear of Lisa's failure?", mum stated,

> "I think it's just about her giving up skating and how it's going to affect her in the long term…. it can have a knock-on effect on her motivation and confidence as a person…. It's just how she now takes these knocks [failures], and it can either take her one way or another…. I worry about her worrying about it. So I worry about it, I don't want it to knock the confidence that she has in other things".

Thus, mum perceives that failure can lead to Lisa giving up her sport and she fears that it can harm her motivation and self-confidence when engaging in other present and future activities.

Lisa's fear of non-attainment of aspirations differed from her parents'. She feared that a bad injury or her parents could stop her from attaining her aspiration. She explained, "I worry about getting badly injured, which would stop my goals in skating all together .·… It would stop me from going anywhere, like Olympics…. you can fall and it can just… cause a bad knee injury or my back and then you can't skate". She also feared that if she did not perform well, "My mum and dad stopping my skating kind of before my career has been started… and I might not complete my goals in skating".

Fear of negative judgment

Fear of Lisa losing and, consequently, being negatively judged by coaches and peers was a common fear among Lisa and both her parents. Lisa explained how she feels when she makes mistakes and loses in competitions:

> "It frustrates me, just like if it's an easy thing and I know I can do it and then I fall or something it gets me really angry…. I just worry about what people think about me when it happens, just anybody that is really looking, like the coaches and the other elite skaters…. I feel a bit embarrassed in front of them…. They might say 'she not really good', or something".

Thus, Lisa perceives that others judge her negatively when she fails and as a result she experiences shame and embarrassment upon failure. In reply to my question "what is the worst thing for you about failure?" Lisa stated, "Coming last [in the competition], and not achieving my goals…. And feeling a bit embarrassed". Mum also talked about Lisa's fear of others' negative judgment:

> "I think her [Lisa] anxiety is about not delivering it [performance] well on the day, and I suppose it's all about her reputation, you know, at this moment 'Lisa Harris is' at this position in skating and, you know, what people might think of her…. I think she worries about it… 'cos now people in skating expect her to live up to her name and deliver".

Hence, mum indicates that Lisa fears failing and not living up to her reputation of being a good skater and being negatively judged.

Dad and mum also fear Lisa being negatively judged by others after failure. Dad explained why he feels nervous before Lisa's performances:

> "I just want her to do well…. I never used to be nervous before, it's just since she's got to higher up [level]…. Julia [mum] also gets nervous…. Sometimes she [mum] can't even watch her [Lisa]…. So she'll sit outside somewhere…. Something must have rubbed off from Julia [mum] on me *[laughs]*…. 'cos you just want her [Lisa] to do well, and you don't know when she's gonna [fall], I mean it's something they [skaters] can do in their sleep, a jump or whatever, but under competition pressure it can happen, she can fall, or anything can happen…. I'm nervous about the fall 'cos obviously it disrupts her skating, and affects her final score…. So you just worry about her not having a good skate. You just want her to go out and have a good skate, and give a good account of herself in front of the judges and the coaches".

Thus, dad fears Lisa not performing well, getting a low score and, consequently, being judged negatively by the judges and her coaches. Dad revealed, "I do worry about what the coaches think, but not what other parents [think]…. The coaches, yeah, people who are important in skating, yeah, but not anybody else…. I'm more worried about them [coaches] because obviously they know what they're talking about".

Similarly, mum also fears other's judgment of Lisa after failure. She stated,

> "I'm worried more about the people that I think can have an impact on her. About how they look at the situation, so that worries me.... It's the people who are important within Lisa's skating career.... Like people from NISA [National Ice Skating Association; governing body], and coaches. It's just their perceptions of her [Lisa].... I don't mean other parents or other skaters".

Thus, it appears that mum, dad and Lisa fear the negative judgment of Lisa's coaches following her failure, but, unlike Lisa, they do not fear the negative judgement of the spectators and Lisa's peers. It is interesting to note that mum also revealed, "I also worry about people's perceptions of me when I fail..... I finds failing a bit embarrassing... It's not a position I enjoy being in, it's not a comfortable position for me". Thus, mum perceives others' negative judgment as an aversive consequence of failure and fears it both when she fails and when Lisa fails. Accordingly, it is logical to suggest that mum transmits her fear of negative judgment to Lisa.

Fear of non-selection

Both mum and Lisa expressed fear of non-selection after Lisa's failure. This fear related to Lisa not being selected for the national British skating squad and also not being selected to perform in international competitions. For example, mum talked about Lisa's fear before performing in the qualifying competition for the annual British National Championship:

> "The biggest issue that she seemed anxious about was the double axel [jump], and because it was in the beginning of her programme [skating routine] she seemed to put the success or failure of the rest of the programme on that one jump. So if she landed it [did not fall] she would be happy and so everything else would flow and go well, but if she didn't, she sort of got all anxious about it.... and about not qualifying for the British championship.... so she could be disqualified from entering the British and also not be selected for the British [skating] squad".

It appears, therefore, that Lisa feared both consequences of her failure in the qualifying competition, not qualifying to enter the British National Championship and not becoming a member of the British skating squad. Performing the jump well was a key to the success of failure of her performance and, thus, she feared not performing it well and falling and, consequently, obtaining a low score from the judges and not winning.

Mum also revealed her own fears prior to one of Lisa's performances in an overseas competition:

> "My worries for that competition really were the measuring of her success within the event, because obviously the results then go back to NISA [governing body] so you want a good result for her [Lisa].... I think the expectations from NISA is that you get a place within the top ten. So obviously she's [Lisa] being monitored by her results.... I mean, obviously the

consequence [of failure] potentially could be that she won't get another international [competition] and that may also have crossed her mind that it could be the consequence.... I did worry about it. Not really about her ability but more about her holding things together and her nerves, and really being able to hold herself together for that event and get a good score... for her and for NISA".

Thus, mum feared the consequence of Lisa's failure, which she perceived as Lisa not being selected to future international competitions. Lisa also feared the same consequence before that competition, stating, "I was just worried if I don't win it I'm not going to go to internationals [competitions]".

It appears that mum generally fears the consequences of Lisa not winning and not meeting NISA's expectations and its impact on Lisa. As she explained,

"It's just from what the coaches said... that sometimes they [NISA] do look at the results, that they're looking at it in black and white and not necessarily the whole picture. So from the coaches saying that then you expect that there are some consequences if she didn't achieve good result"

"I worry overall about her not meeting their [NISA's] expectations and how she's gonna feel if she doesn't meeting them, and what if she's worrying about the consequences of not meeting them.... It worries me for Lisa's perspective that she can get dropped off the squad because I know that it's important to her.... because at the moment some of the criteria that they [NISA] set is kind of unrealistic, it's very high, and so that worries me".

Thus, mum fears Lisa not winning and not meeting NISA's high expectations and, consequently, being dropped from the British skating squad. Mum fears the effect that this consequence will have on Lisa's emotional well-being. Indeed, at the time of our interview Lisa was scheduled to perform a week later in an assessment weekend whereby NISA assessed the British squad members. Mum explained her fears a week prior to the assessment:

"From the letter they [NISA] sent it looks like the consequence is that she could be dropped from the squad. That's the biggest consequence.... I'm apprehensive about it because they've set the criteria and because I think she [Lisa] could worry about how she'll do next weekend.... I've not said anything about it and she's not said anything about it... I don't want to talk about it and to get her mind worrying about it. But then maybe she's already worrying about it anyway.... We've [mum and dad] talked about it but not when she's been around.... The thing in skating is you can have a fantastic training period up until an event and then you mess up on in competition, so you don't know what kind of a day she's gonna have next weekend".

It appears that mum fears Lisa not performing well on her assessment weekend and, consequently, being dropped from the British skating squad. Thus, mum perceives Lisa losing her place in the squad as an aversive consequence of failure and fears it. Lisa appears to share mum's fear, as she revealed, "You just worry about maybe not skating well.... falling on basic stuff, just not skating my best really.... I guess they [NISA] want good

skaters in the squad... and if you don't do well they might not keep you in [the squad]".

Thus, like mum, Lisa also perceived being dropped from the squad an aversive

consequence of failure and feared it a week prior to squad assessment weekend. Dad, in

contrast, did not share mum's and Lisa's fear. He stated,

> "I'm not worried. She's skating really well at the minute.... Basically they just assess their fitness, their programmes, the music, the jumps, it's just an all round assessment I think.... She's been to squad camps before.... She'll do well.... from the ones [squad camps] I've seen they've not been anything to get too worried about.... I'm not too worried because Lisa is the academy now and she's got three good coaches".

Thus, dad did not perceive the coming assessment weekend camp as a threat to Lisa's

position in the British squad and, therefore, did not fear it. Accordingly, it is likely that

mum transmitted her fear to Lisa.

Fear of Lisa's emotional response to failure

Both mum and dad feared the negative emotional response of Lisa after failure. For

example, dad stated,

> "You just don't know how she'll react to it [a fall].... She can just think 'oh I fell on that but I'll carry on and do the rest fine', or she can think 'oh I fell' and then it all goes to pot.... You don't know how she's gonna react, do you?.... You just want her to come off [the ice] feeling happy with her performance and the results, and you worry that she won't and she'd be upset.... I want her to be happy with what she's doing ".

Thus, dad fears that a fall will harm Lisa's performance and she would feel unhappy and

upset with her poor competition results (i.e., low score). Mum, like dad, also feared the

emotional impact of failure on Lisa. She explained her reasons for feeling nervous before

Lisa's competitions:

> "I was nervous about the qualifier [competition], definitely, and I think it's because... it's her disappointment, and she'd worked really hard up until that time and she'd done all that and then not to get through [the qualifier competition]. I mean some of the kids that didn't qualify were devastated and it's hard to look at that.... So, yeah, I was very worried about how she'd respond if she didn't [qualify]".

> "I just want her to do well and I think that's why I get nervous. I just want her to do on the day what I know she can do, and because I know that she wants to do well I want the same for her.... 'cos we've had times before... when she'd come off [the ice] and she'd been in tears because she's not skated well and had poor scores.... And I think to me it's about her doing a good skate so that she's happy when she gets off.... I think the first time I felt really bad for her it was when she was age 9.... and I remember afterwards she was devastated, she was really really upset... she was in floods of tears... and that was quite hard for me.... I think the consequences of her failing are what she feels from the competition or from the situation.... It's just really about how she's able to deal with it and move on and go through the experience.... So it's the consequences of how she'll deal with that at times".

It appears, therefore, that mum worries about Lisa not coping well with failure and about

her negative emotional response to failure. Thus, both mum and dad have fears of the
emotional consequence of failure on Lisa's well being. Accordingly, both mum and dad
perceive Lisa's negative emotional response to failure as an aversive consequence of failure
and they fear it.

5.8.3.2 PFAI Results- Types and Levels of Fear of Failure

FF - Family 3

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
■ Athlete 3	0.43	-1.25	0.00	-2.00	-0.20
▨ Mum3 (child)	-0.57	-1.75	-0.75	-2.00	-0.80
☐ Dad3 (child)	-1.29	-0.50	-0.50	-1.20	-0.80

Fears
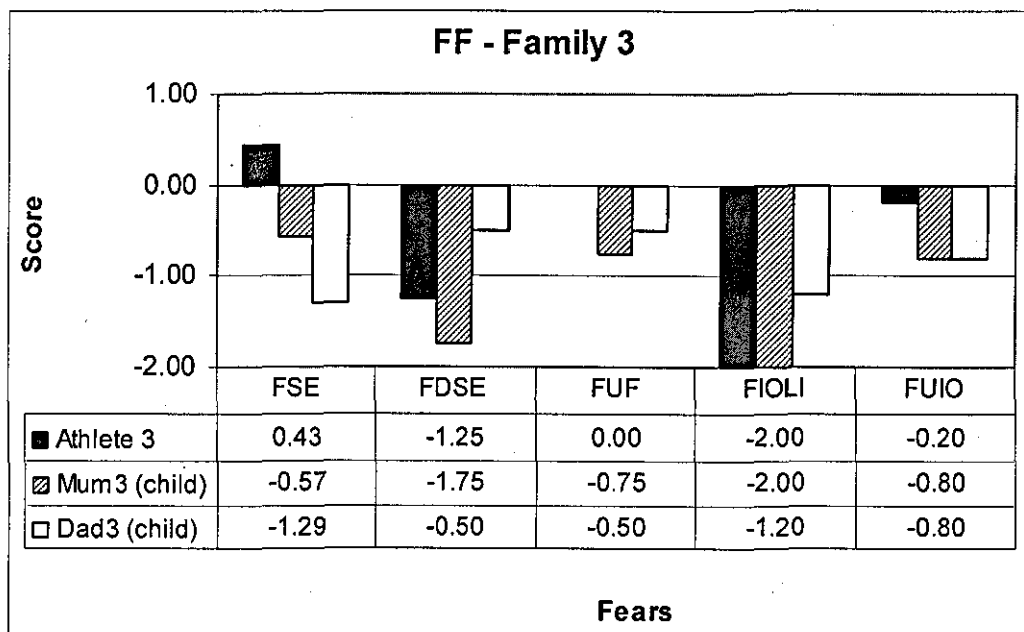
Figure 5.9: Family 3- types and levels of Lisa's FF and of her parents' fear of her failure
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain
future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI results (Figure 5.9) showed that Lisa's greatest fear was of experiencing
shame and embarrassment upon failure followed by fear of uncertain future. Both of these
fears can be explained by the qualitative data, which revealed that Lisa fears the negative
judgment of her coaches and peers and feels embarrassed when she fails in front of them.
Lisa's fear of an uncertain future may have related to her fear of non-selection to
international competitions after failure and to parental threat to stop her skating (see section
5.8.3.3 'parental threat'). Lisa's third largest fear was of upsetting important others, which
may be related to fear of failing and not meeting her parents' expectations and,
subsequently, disappointing them and being criticised by them (see section 5.8.3.3 'parental
criticism' and 'parental expectations'), as was also revealed by the qualitative data.

The PFAI results for parental fear of Lisa's failure showed that both mum's and dad's
overall levels of fear of Lisa's failure were low. Of the five types of fear, dad feared

devaluing self-estimate and uncertain future the most. Although both dad and Lisa feared uncertain future after her failure, Lisa's level of this fear was higher than dad's. Dad's level of fear of devaluing self-estimate after Lisa's failure was much higher than Lisa's level. This may be related to his fear of Lisa's emotional response to failure, as was revealed by the qualitative data. Mum's highest level of fear of Lisa's failure was of shame and embarrassment. Although both mum and Lisa feared shame and embarrassment after Lisa's failure, Lisa's fear level for this was much higher than mum's.

Mum 3 - FF for self and child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
■ Mum3 (self)	0.29	0.00	-1.00	-1.80	-1.40
▣ Mum3 (child)	-0.57	-1.75	-0.75	-2.00	-0.80

Fears
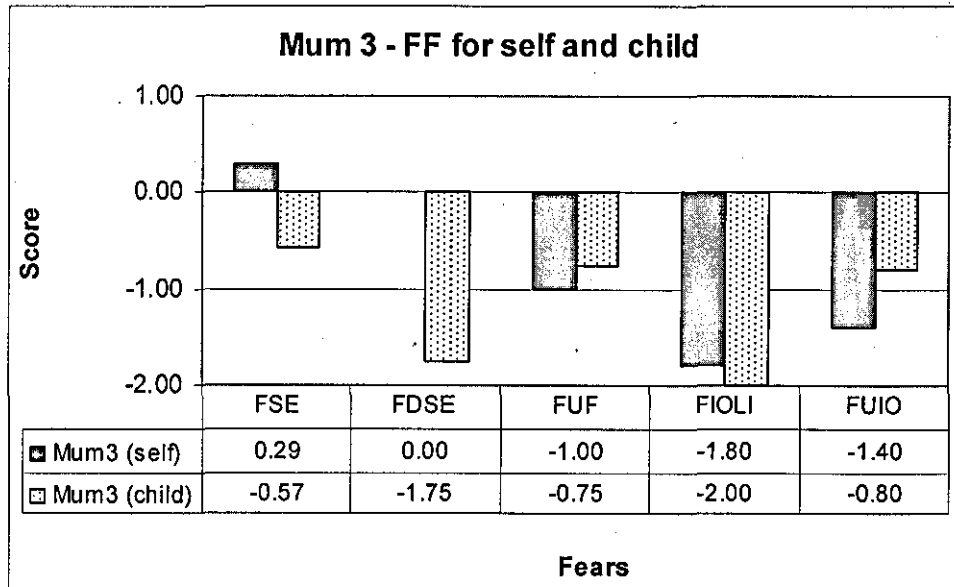
Figure 5.10: Family 3- mum's types and levels of FF for self and for Lisa
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI results for parental fear of their own failure (see Figures 5.10 and 5.11) showed that mum's highest fear was of shame and embarrassment followed by fear of devaluing self-estimate (see Figure 5.10). Mum's level of fear of devaluing self-estimate was much greater for her own failure than for Lisa's failure. Similarly, mum's fear of shame and embarrassment was also much greater for her own failure than for Lisa's failure. Indeed, mum revealed in her interview that she fears people's negative judgment of her when she fails and finds failure embarrassing. Both mum and Lisa reported high levels of fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment when they fail. Mum's level of fear of her own failure was nearly as high as Lisa's fear of her failure. Accordingly, it is reasonable to suggest that mum transmits her fear of shame and embarrassment to Lisa (also see section 5.8.3.3 'parental expectations').

Dad's PFAI results (see Figure 5.11) showed that his overall fear of the consequences of his own failure was slightly lower than mum's overall fear of her own failure. Dad's greatest fear was of devaluing self-estimate. The level of this fear was higher for his own failure than for Lisa's failure. Although his level of fear of uncertain future was low for himself, it was slightly higher for Lisa's failure.

Dad 3 - FF for self and child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
☐ Dad3 (self)	-1.43	0.00	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00
☐ Dad3 (child)	-1.29	-0.50	-0.50	-1.20	-0.80

Fears
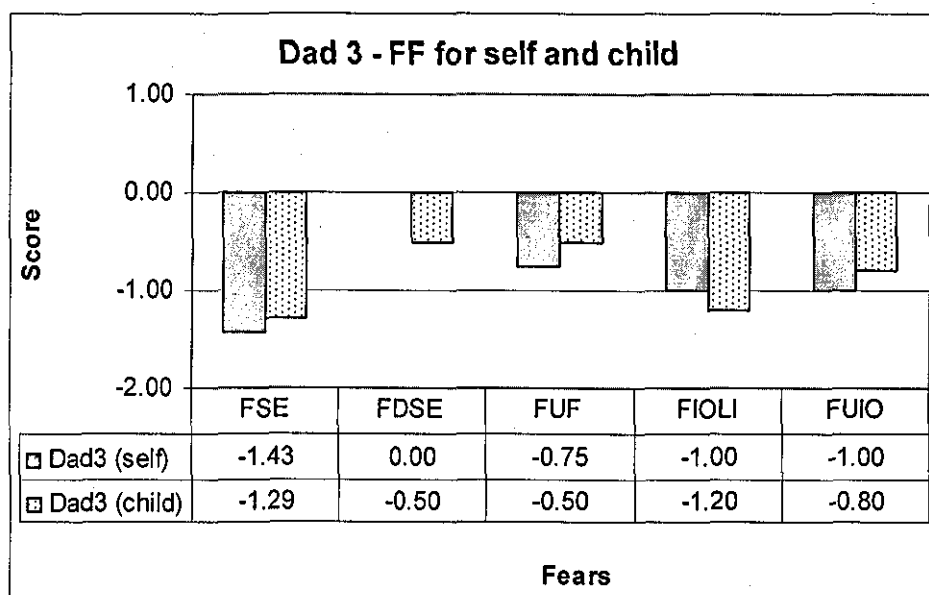
Figure 5.11: Family 3- dad's types and levels of FF for self and for Lisa
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In summary, the PFAI results showed that Lisa's greatest fear was of experiencing shame and embarrassment upon failure, followed by fear of uncertain future, followed by fear of upsetting important others. The PFAI results for parental fear of Lisa's failure showed that both mum's and dad's overall levels of fear of Lisa's failure were low. Although both dad and Lisa feared uncertain future after her failure, Lisa's fear was greater than dad's. Dad's fear of devaluing self-estimate after Lisa's failure was greater than Lisa's fear. Although both mum and Lisa feared shame and embarrassment after Lisa's failure, Lisa's fear level was much higher than mum's. The PFAI results for parental fear of their own failure showed that dad's overall fear of the consequences of his own failure was lower than mum's overall fear for her own failure. Dad's greatest fear was of devaluing self-estimate while mum's greatest fear was of shame and embarrassment. When comparing parental FF for self with their fears of Lisa's failure, the findings showed that dad's fear of devaluing self-estimate was higher for his own failure than for Lisa's failure. Mum's fear of shame and embarrassment was greater for her own failure than for Lisa's failure.

Interestingly, however, both mum and Lisa reported high levels of fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment when they fail. Accordingly, it is possible to suggest that mum transmits her fear of shame and embarrassment to Lisa.

5.8.3.3 Mechanisms of Fear of Failure Transmission
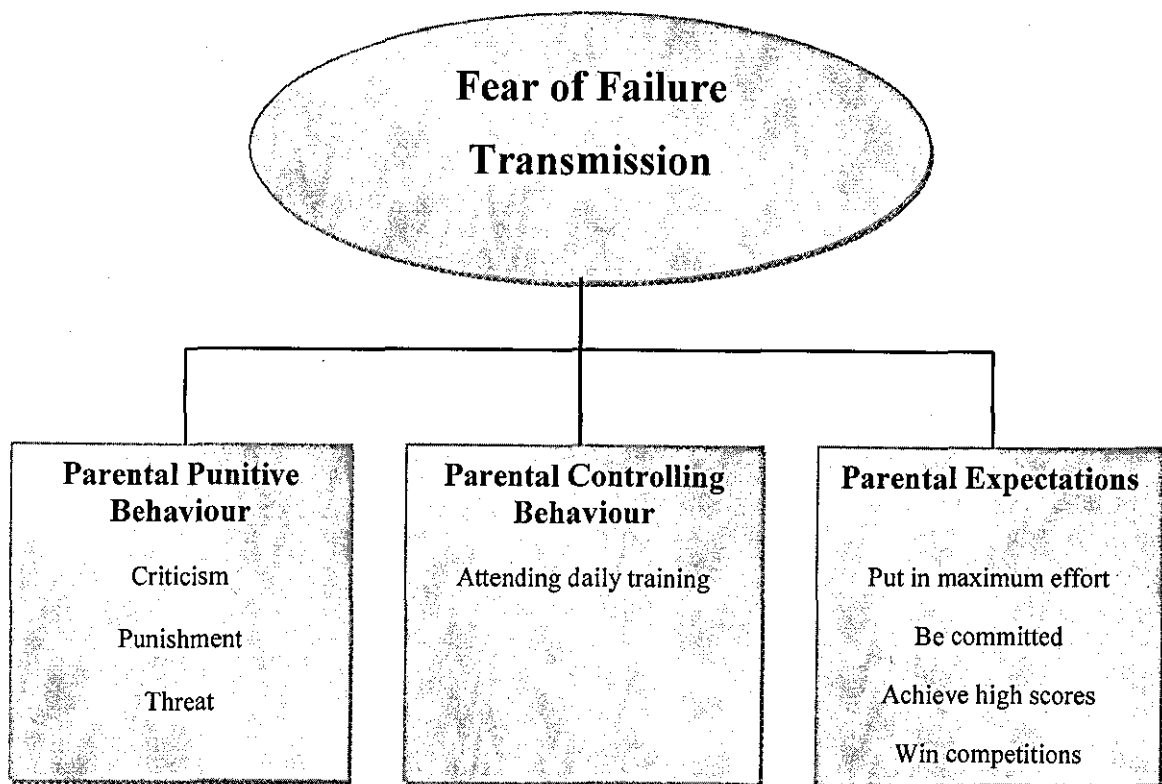
Figure 5.12: Family 3- mechanisms of FF transmission from parents to athlete.

Fear of failure was transmitted from parents to child through parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations (see Figure 5.12). I will examine each mechanism separately below.

- **Parental Punitive Behaviour**

Fear of failure was transmitted through parental punitive behaviour, which encompassed criticism, punishment (love withdrawal), and threat. Each will be examined here separately.

Parental criticism

Parental criticism included criticism for lack of effort in competitions. Lisa revealed

that after losing in competitions her parents usually criticise her for lack of effort:

> "I think they [parents] feel a bit angry sometimes if I don't skate good.... 'cos they say I didn't try.... they telling me it makes it kind of a lecture and I just get annoyed.... The main reason I get told off is if they say I didn't try, even when I do try. So I don't like it.... They think I make mistakes 'cos I don't try".

It appears from Lisa's quote that her parents attribute her not performing well and failure to lack of effort and, accordingly criticise for not putting effort in her performance. Their criticism, or "lecture", as she refers to it, annoys her. She revealed how she feels when they criticise her: "It's just like, aaaaahhhhhh *(sigh)*, I've heard it before.... I wish that they wouldn't lecture me and tell me what I'm doing right and wrong". Lisa talked about a recent competition when she had lost and was criticised by her parents: "I was just having a really bad day and I didn't feel too good and they [parents] said I didn't try hard enough, even though I did.... and we had a little argument.... but after they'd thought about it, they realised that I was actually quite ill".

Both dad and mum justified criticising Lisa for lack of effort. Dad stated, "If she didn't try hard I expect her to be criticised by her coaches and by me or Julia [mum].... If she's not tried we just tell her that she wasn't trying. She'd obviously say she was trying". Similarly, mum stated, "I do get down on her about her effort.... generally she doesn't particularly like it and thinks that we are wrong. We don't tend to make any comments about like technique, 'cos we don't have the technical ability, so we leave it for the coaches.... So it's just about her effort". Thus, it appears from Lisa's and her parent's disclosures that the discrepancy in how they view her performance and her level of effort causes arguments between them. Indeed, mum revealed, "I think at times it does come across to her as a criticism, and there are times where I felt I could have handled it better. And yet there are times that I feel that I did handle it well, and yet we still had the arguments and the same defensive response from her". Thus, Lisa disagrees with her parent's criticism.

It appears from Lisa's and her parents' accounts that Lisa does not like her parents' criticism and she argues and gets annoyed with them. Indeed, in reply to my question, "what would you like to change about your parents?" she stated, "I want my mum to stop lecturing me all the time about my skating.... They [parents] should not criticise me as much. Maybe like once in a while but not all the time... not so much because it just makes me feel like I want to tell them to go away, and it creates more problems". Lisa also revealed that sometimes before competition she thinks, "if I try harder and get the results

[win] then she [mum] won't lecture me". Thus, indicating that before competitions she

fears mum's criticism for lack of effort and for not winning. Accordingly, Lisa associates

failure with parental criticism, arguments and getting annoyed and, thus, perceives parental

criticism as an aversive consequence of her failure and fears it.

Parental punishment

Parental punishment after failure came only from mum. She employed a practice such

as breaking off communication with Lisa on the day of her failure, which I classified as

love withdrawal. Lisa talked about how it makes her feel:

> "When they're [parents] disappointed with me my mum kind of don't talk to me as much,
> and she seems really disappointed, and she says 'I'm disappointed'.... I feel tension a little
> bit.... It's just one night and then she's ok the next day.... My dad is different, he's not as
> strict as my mum. He still asks me to try my hardest, but he'll still talk to me normally and
> stuff, but my mum kind of only talks when she really needs to ask me something
> important...but it's not like usual.... [I feel] upset really because my mum's angry with
> me".

Thus, mum's withdrawal of love from Lisa for a day communicates to Lisa that mum is

angry and disappointed in her for failing. This makes Lisa feel tension in their relationships

and she does not like it.

Mum also talked about the tension in her relationships with Lisa after failure:

> "There is tension afterwards sometimes.... It's normally just for that period of time, it's not
> something that we drag on.... It's over by the day.... Lisa doesn't tend to sulk, but she's
> more like closing in. She'd rather just disappear to her bedroom. I guess that could be
> classed as sulking... Lisa just goes into her room and keeps a low profile and just keeps out
> the way of everyone".

It appears, therefore, that after mum criticises Lisa for failure, Lisa feels upsets and isolates

herself in her bedroom and stays away from the rest of her family. Accordingly, it is

possible to suggest that Lisa perceives mum's disapproval, withdrawal of love, and tension

in their relationships as an aversive consequence of failure and fears it. Thus, mum's

punitive behaviour of love withdrawal is the mechanism of FF transmission.

Parental threat

Lisa revealed that her parents attribute her failure to lack of effort and threaten to stop

funding her skating. She revealed,

> "They [parents] get angry sometimes if I don't skate good and if they think that I don't try
> my hardest, and then they get disappointed and they say it's kind of a waste of money if I'm
> not training properly and working hard .... They say that if I carry on not trying that they'd
> stop my skating all together 'cos it's just a lot of money and if I'm not trying the money is
> wasted.... I get really upset when they say it and it just makes me think about my whole life

and how it would be without skating, and I just get back on the ice the next day and work really hard... 'cos I'm scared they'll stop my skating.... I feel that if I don't work hard they're going to stop my skating, and that I've got to work hard no matter what so that they are happy.... It puts pressure on me a little bit that they would [stop my skating].... I hope they don't, but maybe, probably they will if I don't [work hard].... I worry about them stopping my skating kind of before my career has been started".

It appears, therefore, that Lisa perceives that her parents want her always to work hard or else they will not invest the money in her skating, which in effect means that she will lose her place in the academy and her status as an elite athlete. Thus, she perceives the possibility of her parents stopping to fund her skating as a threat to her future career and to achieving her aspiration to become an Olympic skater. This threat is a source of her worry as she fears that her parents will carry out their threat. Lisa also perceives that by working hard and trying her best all the time she will please her parents and they will not stop her skating. Accordingly, she associates not working hard and trying her best with the threat of being pulled out of skating and fears it. Dad explained, "I'm not happy about her attitude sometimes.... you put everything into it and she's not, 'cos sometimes you feel as though she's not trying and you think 'well, is it time to pack it [skating] in?'". Thus, dad believes that they should stop Lisa's skating if she does not put as much effort into it as they do. Mum also offered an explanation:

"We said to her 'you need to make a decision and a choice as to whether you're committed to this seriously... depending on what you want to get out of it and what's your long term vision.... This [elite] level is the serious road in respect of everything that comes with that.... The way that we've sort of approached skating, this year in particular since she joined the academy, is as a long term sort of vision.... So she can either become a social skater and, therefore, the time commitment and the finance will be on a social level, or to go with that at elite [level].... It's about if you go into the [ice] rink and don't warm up and you just do 30%, then the output is you won't perform well in competitions. We said to her that the end of this year we will need to assess it".

It appears from mum's quote that, if Lisa does not put her best effort into training and does not achieve good results in competitions, they will consider not investing and committing to her skating. In other words, the consequence of Lisa not succeeding in competitions could be that her parents will stop funding her skating at elite level. Although mum says that Lisa can carry on skating on a social level, it is, nevertheless, a threat for Lisa since she can only attain her aspiration if she remains at the elite level. Accordingly, not training and competing at the elite level is a consequence of failure that Lisa perceives as aversive and fears.

In summary, parental punitive behaviour (such as criticism, punishment, and threats) towards Lisa for not performing well and losing is a mechanism by which they transmit

their FF to Jenny. Their punitive behaviour upsets and worries Lisa and she does not like it, perceiving it as an aversive consequence of failure and fearing it. Associating failure with parental punitive behaviour contributes to the development of Lisa's FF.

- **Parental Controlling Behaviour**

Parental controlling behaviour involved only dad's behaviour. He attends Lisa's daily training sessions in the academy and his comments pressurise her to avoid making mistakes during practice. She explained,

> "My dad brings me down [to the academy] and sits all day and watches me [train] and then he takes me home.... When I fall he says 'why did you fall on that one?', 'what happened?' And even if it's a really hard jump that I'm just trying to learn.... even if it was a really good attempt and I still fell.... It [dad's questions] puts pressure on me to try and land it [not fall]. It annoys me when he says 'why did you fall on that?'.... He's not as bad now as he used to be when I first started jumping and falling, that's when he used to be the worst... but it's still now quite a lot.... It annoys me 'cos it's not constructive, it's kind of just criticism.... He says it like, why did you fall on that 'cos like you shouldn't have fallen on it, kind of way.... It's not really helping me, it's just making it worse".

Lisa perceives dad's questioning as criticism of her making mistakes and not performing the jumps well. It annoys her and puts pressure on her to avoid making mistakes. She does not like dad attending her daily training, as she stated,

> "I'd like him to be less involved.... that he wasn't here [academy] as much.... like for the last week he wasn't here and without him here watching me I didn't feel so pressurised when I'm training.... I got a lot of work done and I could just relax and not worry about what he was going to say afterwards and things like that".

Thus, when dad did not attend her training practices she did not feel pressurised by him to avoid making mistakes. Dad explained, "I find it quite frustrating when she's falling on things that she does in her sleep". Hence, he feels frustrated because he expects her not to make mistakes in practice. Dad justified his daily attendance by saying: "I have to be here [academy] everyday 'cos she needs obviously transport to get here and back [home].... I get here about quarter to eight till about quarter to three". Dad pressurising Lisa into not making mistakes constitutes a controlling behaviour that she does not like. It makes her feel unrelaxed in training as she worries about making mistakes and being criticised by dad, which in turn, leads to her making more mistakes; or as she stated, "It's not really helping me, it's just making it worse". Dad's controlling behaviour is, therefore, contributing to the development of Lisa's FF.

It appears that, unlike dads 1 and 2, both of Lisa's parents do not get involved in Lisa's pre-competition preparations. Dad explained, "I don't get involved with coaches 'cos that's

their job to coach and I wouldn't butt in and say 'I want her to do this or that'.... I don't

understand it [skating] and it's not my place to interfere in what they're [coaches] doing.

They do what they do and that's what they get paid for". Similarly, mum stated, "We don't

have the technical ability so we leave it for the coaches".

- **Parental Expectations**

Parental expectations also served as a mechanism of FF transmission. It appears that

mum's and dad's expectations are a source of worry for Lisa, contributing to the

development of her FF. Parental expectations comprised expectations for Lisa to put

maximum effort and commitment into her training and competitions, and to achieve high

results and win competitions. Examples from each theme are presented and discussed

separately below.

Parental expectations for maximum effort and commitment

Lisa revealed that her parents expect her to put maximum effort into both her training in

the academy and her performance in competitions. She stated, "They [parents] want me to

work hard really.... to do my hardest.... If they think I didn't try hard then it's a really big

thing and they don't accept not trying hard". Indeed, dad revealed that he and mum were

disappointed when Lisa did not achieve a high score in a competition "because she needs to

do what she can do and not just do enough". Thus, they were disappointed because they

perceived that she did not put maximum effort into her performance. Mum explained,

> "I always want my kids to do well in whatever they do.... To always do the best they
> can.... Some of the frustration of watching her [Lisa] in training is her behaviour... it looks
> like she gives up instead of fighting for a jump or fighting for her programme [skating
> routine]. For me it's about always trying and giving your very best".

> "I expect to see consistency in her delivering in the work ethic. So from a training
> perspective, for example, and from competitions, that we don't have a really good day and
> then a bad day. There are times where it's not a good day because her effort levels aren't
> there.... What could potentially be the outcome of her not being consistent in training and
> competitions is a long term future effect that she'll not be elite skater, so she'll be another
> social skater... these are kids that are at the upper levels but actually will never go any
> further in skating".

Thus, mum expects Lisa to always put maximum effort into her performance both in

training and in competitions. Mum also expects Lisa to consistently perform well and

achieve good results. It is also evident from mum's quote that her expectations of Lisa to

put maximum effort, perform well, and achieve good results in competitions are

underpinned by her fear that Lisa will not progress at the elite level and, consequently, will

no longer be able to skate at this level. In other words, mum perceives Lisa not progressing at the elite level as an aversive consequence of Lisa's failure and fears it.

Mum also expects Lisa to be fully committed to her skating. She stated,

> "For me if she wants to be at elite [level] she has to have commitment... motivation and the drive and the passion.... and the hard work.... The ingredients now are all going towards the elite [level]".

> "The commitment back from her [Lisa] is that she's got to want to do her side, otherwise why would we want to do it?".... We pay the [skating] costs, we're doing the drive to the academy every day... So, if I feel she doesn't show commitment and work ethic I tell her that I'm disappointed in her.... I tell her 'you do have to be committed to it [skating] because you are giving up other things in order for you to progress through the skating career.... That's not just about skating that's about everything you do in life'. For both my kids my expectation is about doing the best that you can do and being committed to something you do. I think that's about the way that you're brought up and the standards that you have".

Thus, it appears that mum's expectation of her children is tied up with her core values and belief that one should put maximum effort and be fully committed to a task that they have undertaken. However, mum's perception of maximum effort differs from Lisa's perception and this discrepancy often leads to arguments between them after failure in competitions and to their getting annoyed with one another (as described above in section 'parental criticism'). Mum attributed the discrepancy in their perceptions of effort to differences in expectations. She explained,

> "It's because there could be a difference in expectation. And quite rightly, I think my expectations sometimes may be too high.... I'm not really thinking sometimes about the whole picture.... Like on the odd times when I've been down there [academy] and sometimes the effort doesn't seem to be there, but then I don't always take into consideration the rest of her day, and on reflection I can think 'well, maybe she's tired' or whatever".

Thus, mum acknowledges that her expectations of Lisa always to put maximum effort are too high.

Parental expectations to achieve high results and win

It appears that Lisa's parents also expect her to achieve high results (scores) and win competitions, and when she does not meet their expectations express their disappointment to her. Lisa stated, "They [parents] told me to get a good place at the British Championship and to go into internationals", and "They're [parents] happy with me especially when I'm skating good and winning everything". Indeed, dad expressed his disappointment at Lisa not meeting his and mum's expectations to achieve a higher score at the British Skating Championship, stating, "She came sixth, and we were disappointed because she could have

possibly come higher.... We expected better than that". Lisa was aware that she had let her parents down, stating, "They [parents] expected me to get about third place.... They were disappointed in me". They were also disappointed with Lisa's results at a recent international competition, as dad stated,

> "It was just an average all round performance, because looking at who was out there [other competitors] she could have done really well, she could have done a lot better. She came 8th, but she could have come really high and she knows she didn't skate well....So it was disappointing for us".

Thus, in both of these competitions mum and dad expected Lisa to achieve a higher score and on both occasions she did not meet their expectations and they were disappointed with her achievements. Before going into these competitions Lisa knew that her parents had expected her to achieve higher scores and she was also aware that on both occasions they were disappointed with her results and for not meeting their expectations.

Both mum and Lisa talked about another major competition that Lisa was expected to win but lost. Mum stated,

> "We [mum and dad] and even she thought she was gonna win it. But I think she lowered her standard because she thought she was gonna win it easy, but she didn't, she came second.... The result was a disappointment, but it was more a disappointment in Lisa because she didn't do what she could, she's got the potential to win it easy.... if she'd concentrated and done what she's been trained to do she should have won it.... I didn't feel that she committed herself to it and she let herself down.... I was upset and disappointed... and I was cross with her.... and she got all defensive and she said 'what do you know about skating?'.... We carried on talking about it in the car and that's when she threw out the tears".

Thus, both parents expected Lisa to win the competition and both felt disappointed when she did not. Lisa revealed that afterwards, "I got praises from some people, because it [my performance] was quite good, but I didn't from everybody, like my coaches and my mum and dad because they said I didn't do my best.... my mum wasn't happy". Thus, despite her coming second in a major competition, mum and dad did not praise Lisa for her achievement and expressed their disappointment at her performance.

Mum also talked about Lisa not meeting others' expectations in competitions:

> "There were a lot of expectations that she'd go out and win it.... [expectations] from everybody in the country.... like other parents and other kids who are skating.... like people were saying 'Lisa Harris is going to win it this year', so it put a lot of pressure on Lisa.... and I felt the pressure too.... They all expected her to win it and she didn't".

It appears, therefore, that mum's expectation of Lisa to win was tied up with everybody else's expectations. In other words, as mum was aware of others' expectations of Lisa to

win she also expected her to win and this was the source of the pressure that mum felt. Thus, mum's pressure was underpinned by her fear of Lisa not winning and not meeting others' expectations. Indeed, mum further stated that people still expect Lisa to win and that this is a source of worry both for her and Lisa before competitions. She stated,

> "Now every time she's skating Lisa Harris has a reputation and every person in skating expects her to live up to that name and win.... I think if you are successful you live with lots of nerves and anxieties.... and I know I've also got them [nerves and anxieties].... I also recognise that there are things that drive me personally to want to be successful and be good at what I do, even thought I know I've got those worries and anxieties for me".

Mum indicates in this quote that Lisa, like her, also fears not winning and not meeting others' expectations. Moreover, mum disclosed that she also fears her own failure and not meeting others' expectations. In reply to my question, "What is your worst fear about your own failure?" she stated,

> "Letting others down.... if I commit to something then I like to follow it through, and that's important to me. I don't like to commit and then let people down.... If its a task that I've been given, and then I'm thinking 'oh my God', and I know I've got to deliver and then I'd make sure I deliver, but it's the worry that goes along with it, you know, it's the 'what if I can't deliver?'".

It appears that mum fears failing and not meeting others' expectations and letting them down. Thus, mum's fear of the consequence of Lisa's failure and of her own failure are identical in that in both cases she fears not meeting others' expectations and letting them down. Accordingly, mum transmits her FF to Lisa through her expectations of Lisa to meet hers and others' expectations. It is also interesting to note in mum's quotes that she applies her values and beliefs regarding commitment to a task and meeting others expectations, both to her and her children's endeavours (as she stated above) and, therefore, expects Lisa to be fully committed to her skating and to meeting other's expectations. Accordingly, I suggest that mum's high expectations are rooted in her values and beliefs and these expectations are the mechanism of FF transmission from mum to Lisa.

The impact of parental expectations and FF transmission

Lisa worries about not meeting her parents' expectations. She stated that before competitions she thinks "I hope I can do it, but it's really pressure on me". Thus, her parents' expectations for her to win and to achieve high scores are a source of pressure for her as she fears not meeting their expectations. She also disclosed how she feels when she does not meet their expectations:

> "I feel disappointed for me and my parents.... A bit upset for a short while, but then I'd be more determined to try to do it even better the next time... so they're happy with me.... It

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makes me more determined the next competition to win, and my parents, I just hope that they accept that and so they can move on.... they can like, forgive me for doing like that, and so the next competition it's alright".

Thus, Lisa dislikes not winning and not meeting her parents' expectations and associates winning with meeting her parents' expectations and pleasing them. In other words, she perceives not meeting their expectations and not pleasing them as aversive consequences of failure and fears them. Indeed, in reply to my question, "If I asked Lisa 'what worries you the most about failing' what would she say to me?" mum stated, "I think she'd probably say fear that she'd let us down.... or that she'd let herself down.... I'd say she would probably say she'd just feel for us being disappointed". Thus, it appears that it is important to Lisa to meet her parents' expectations and please them and, therefore, for her not meeting their expectation is likely to elicit fear.

Considering parental expectations and criticism of Lisa following her failures, it is not surprising that she feels anxious before competitions. Mum described Lisa's behaviour a week before competitions:

> "As Lisa's got into the higher levels she is obviously nervous, apprehensive and she can be a little bit edgy and I've found that I feel the same about it.... And you're seeing something in her behaviour.... like before some of the competitions she becomes a bit snappy, or a bit touchy.... she goes more quiet and just distant... for about a week before [competition].... We've tried to talk about it but she sometimes got upset... just a bit irritable.... We've had occasions... where 'I can't do it, I can't do this jump'.... I've tried to get her to explain how she's feeling and thinking, but she sometimes got upset... just a bit irritable.... and she went through a faze where she would give up in training... and say 'I can't do it', 'I'm stupid'.... Sometimes she said 'why do I have to be like this'.... so why is it happening to her, the way that she's feeling... and the way that it makes her behave.... But she can't articulate why she's feeling like this.... I tried to find out but she doesn't always open up so you can't get at how she's feeling [pre-competitions].... Sometimes she said she felt fine before [competitions] and yet her behaviour told you that she wasn't fine".

Thus, it appears that a week before competition Lisa's behaviour becomes erratic and she loses confidence in her ability to perform in training, gives up, and criticises herself. This pre-competition behaviour that Lisa exhibits maybe underlined by her FF and, accordingly, can be described as symptomatic of FF. It is interesting to note that mum stated that she also feels "apprehensive" and "edgy" pre-competitions. Therefore, it is possible to suggest the FF is transmitted bi-directionally, from Lisa to mum and vice versa, through exhibiting symptoms of FF.

In summary, parental expectations contribute to the development of Lisa's FF. They expect her to put maximum effort and commitment into her performances in training and competitions, and to win or achieve high scores in competitions. When Lisa does not meet

their expectations they feel disappointed and angry with her and criticise her performance. By expressing their anger and disappointment post-failure, they communicate to Lisa that she has not met their expectations and has displeased them. Lisa expressed fear of not meeting parental expectations and, consequently, not pleasing them. Accordingly, I suggest that Lisa's fear of not winning is mediated by her fear of not meeting her parents' expectations and, consequently, letting them down and feeling bad and disappointed in herself. Thus, her parents contribute to the development of her FF through their high expectations and by expressing their disappointment when she does not meet them. In short, Lisa's fear of not winning is underpinned by her desire to meet her parents' expectations and, thereby, to please them and not let them down. Lisa's following quote encapsulates her wish that her mother be satisfied with her competition results:

> "She [mum] should just want me to be happy instead of wanting results and stuff. Just want me to be happy even if that doesn't mean getting results or if it does".

5.9 General Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of the present study revealed three mechanisms of FF transmission: parental punitive behaviour, parental controlling behaviour, and parental expectations. Parental punitive behaviour after failure encompassed, in each family, criticism, punishment and threat; all have been implemented in the development of FF in children (e.g., Krohne, 1992; Putallaz et al., 1998; Sprea, 2005). Research has shown that children's concerns about parental negative evaluations after failure is a considerable contributor to their anxiety and FF (e.g., Brustad, 2003; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Passer, 1983). Children's sense of self-worth emerges from their perception of how significant others, especially their parents, view them, and it is contingent upon their approval (Mead, 1934; Harter, 1998). Therefore, parental negative feedback, disapproval and criticism post-failure can diminish children's perceptions of self-worth. They have also been associated with children experiencing negative emotions (e.g., feeling distress, shame, and sadness) and high levels of worry about others' perceptions of them (Harter, 1998; Rudolph et al., 2005). Thus, parental criticism has negative implications for children's well-being and sense of self-worth. Moreover, children learn to associate failure with parental criticism and, consequently, to fear failure. As, indeed, the findings of the present study showed that all the athletes disliked parental criticism and felt upset and worried by it and, thus, perceived

it as an aversive consequence of failure that they feared. In short, parental criticism post-failure is the mechanism of FF transmission from parent to child.

Love withdrawal after failure, which is a form of punishment, was a practice that all the parents employed, and which all the athletes perceived as an aversive consequence of failure. Such a practice has also been implemented in the intergenerational transmission of FF (Elliot & Thrash, 2004), as children can perceive it as banishment (Lundberg, Perris, Schlette, & Adolfsson, 2000). A child's need for parental love, support, and attention is powerful and lasts across the life span; therefore anything that threatens losing it is bound to have a strong effect on the child (Grolnick, 2003). The powerful effect of parental love withdrawal on children is grounded in their dependence and fear of abandonment. The threat of love withdrawal gives rise to strong feelings of fear and anxiety in children, as well as shame and guilt. The desire to avoid these strong feelings leads children to comply with their parents' wishes and demands (Grolnick, 2003). When parents withdraw their love from their child after failure, it can communicate to the child that failure is shameful and that s/he is no longer worthy of love and affection (Lewis, 1992). Thus, parental love withdrawal is the mediating variable in the transmission of FF from parents to child.

Parental controlling behaviour was also evident in each of the families studied. It included parents being over-involved in their children's sporting careers and attempting to control competitions' outcomes and career progression in order to ensure their child's success. Their controlling behaviours included spending considerable time attending the child's daily training sessions and competitions, pressurising the child to avoid making mistakes, being involved in competition preparations, and daily discussions of training and forthcoming competitions. Although these controlling behaviours arose from a parental wish to provide the best opportunity for their child and to assure that their child's talent is not being wasted (Grolnick, 2003), they were underpinned by the parents' FF. All the parents reported fear of their child's failure as well as fear of their own failure. Therefore, their controlling behaviours, although served to alleviate their FF, were the mechanism of fear transmission from parent to child.

The data also provided evidence to suggest that the parents typically perceived their children's successes as their own and their children's mistakes and failures as reflections on them (especially, in the cases of dads 1 and 2 and mum 3). Therefore, they experienced internal pressures to have their children perform well and be (both parents and child) perceived well by others. Fear of others' (coaches' and spectators') negative judgment was

a predominant source of FF for the parents and underpinned many of their behaviours, including their controlling behaviours. This fear was also a predominant source of FF for their children; thus indicating a transmission from parent to child. Researchers (e.g., Grolnick, 2003; Grolnick et al., 2002) have proposed that parents who are ego-involved in their children's achievement activities typically believe that how their child performs affects how others judge them as parents and that this impacts their own self-esteem. Therefore, they are highly motivated to protect their own self-esteem and, consequently, adopt controlling behaviours to ensure that their child performs well and achieves success and that others judge them positively as parents. Parents who use controlling behaviours do not act as neutral socialisers because their primary concern is (unknown to them) to protect their own position (i.e., needs, feelings, well-being) in their relationship to the child, rather than that of the child (Barber & Harmon, 2002).

All the participating parents greatly valued success and winning in competitions and transmitted these beliefs and values (outcome orientation) to their children, through both verbal and non-verbal communications. These parents can be described as being ego-involved in their children's sporting careers. Accordingly, they derive their own self-esteem from their children's achievements and, as a result, adopt controlling behaviours in order to ensure a favourable competition outcome (e.g., winning, high results); thereby they exhibit behaviours such as shouting criticism at the child from the sideline during performance, expressing frustration and disappointment with their child's failure, and pushing their child to perform well.

Sport, which typically emphasises competition and entails social evaluation, can be a source of pressure for ego-evolved parents as they can perceive it as a threat both to themselves and to their child (Grolnick, 2003). As a result, in order to reduce this threat, they will adopt controlling behaviours and will push their children to achieve positive outcomes. Adopting controlling behaviours helps the parents alleviate the pressure of the evaluation that they feel by transferring it into their controlling behaviours (Grolnick, 2003). The greater the evaluative threat (or pressure) the parents perceive, the greater their FF will be and the greater their controlling behaviour becomes (Grolnick et al., 2002). Accordingly, I propose that such parents will experience higher levels of fear of their child's failure before important competitions (e.g., international competitions, selection events,) and will demonstrate more controlling behaviours than they would before less important competitions, where failure presents less of a threat to their ego.

Parental controlling behaviour has also been associated with parents' proneness to shame (Mills, Freeman, Clara, Elgar, Walling, & Mak, 2007); shame is a self-condemning reaction that is at the core of FF (Atkinson, 1957; McGregor & Elliot, 2005). Accordingly, fear of experiencing shame upon their child's failure and fear of others' negative judgment (of them as parents and of their child as an athlete) underpinned the participating parents' controlling behaviours with their child-athlete. On the other hand, their FF encompassed other fears (e.g., of non-selection, of losing ranking, of non-attainment of aspiration, of upsetting important others, of uncertain future) and, I suggest, that it is a combination of all their fears of failure that underpinned their controlling behaviour.

Data analysis revealed that parental expectations were the third mechanism of FF transmission. Parental expectations comprised expectations always to put maximum effort and commitment into training and competitions, performing well, achieving success and high results, winning competitions, and reaching top national ranking. It appears that these expectations were a source of pressure for the athletes, contributing to the development of their FF. High parental expectations of their child's achievement activity have been implemented in the developmental origin of children's FF (e.g., Argyle & Robinson, 1962; McGhee, 1972; Schmalt, 1982; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Researchers in sport have reported that high parental expectations were a source of stress and pressure for young athletes, contributing to their reduced enthusiasm and enjoyment levels (Power & Woolger, 1994; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). Moreover, a desire to meet parental expectations is the most frequently reported source of stress by children (Scanlan et al., 1991). Children can feel shame and guilt when they do not meet parental expectations (Lewis, 1992) and may fear not meeting parental expectations and demands and, consequently, disappointing and upsetting their parents (Conroy, 2001; Conroy et al., 2002). Indeed, the findings of the present study support the findings of these researchers. All the participating athletes associated winning in competitions with meeting their parents' expectations and pleasing them. Accordingly, they perceived not meeting parental expectations and not pleasing them as aversive consequences of failure, which they feared. Thus, their fear of not winning was mediated by their fear of not meeting their parents' expectations and, consequently, letting them down and, in addition, feeling bad and disappointed in themselves. By expressing their anger and disappointment post-failure, the parents communicated to their children that they did not meet their expectations and displeased them. Thus, the parents contributed to the development of the athletes' FF through their high expectations and by expressing their disappointment when these were not met by the athletes. In short, parental high

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expectations were the mechanism of FF transmission from parent to child.

It was further evident from the findings that dads 1 and 2 projected their hopes and aspirations onto their children through their punitive and controlling behaviours, their expectations and their over-involvement in their children's careers. They possibly expected their children to aspire to achieve what they themselves could not when their athletic careers were cut short due to injuries. However, career fusion was more evident in the case of dad 1 than dad 2. In such cases, young athletes can become a substitute for parental aspirations and, subsequently, parental high expectations can be perceived by them as pressure to succeed. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to speculate that this contributed to dads 1's and 2's fear of their children's failures, which they transmitted to their children through their punitive and controlling behaviours and high expectations.

Parental FF influences the way in which they view failure and the way that they interpret and respond to their own and their children's failures (Elliot & Thrash, 2004). In their responses and behaviours towards their children, parents teach their children the meaning and values associated with different outcomes and actions (Eccles-Parson et al., 1982). Accordingly, when parents respond to their children's failures with controlling and punitive behaviours it can teach them that failure has negative and undesirable consequences that they are likely to appraise as threatening. Thus, such parental responses to failure establish an association between failure and threatening consequences and, subsequently the development of FF in children, because motive dispositions develop when certain events become associated with a particular affective experience (McClelland, 1985). In accordance with achievement motivation theorists, this study has shown that FF emerges from the recurrent patterns of parent-child interaction.

It may also be possible to suggest that intergenerational transmission of FF can be bi-directional. Thus, FF in athletes may be transmitted to their parents. However, further research is needed to assess the bi-directional influences between the fears of young athletes and of their parents. A difficulty that can arise when examining bi-directional transmission is that parents may underestimate the influence of their children with regard to FF and may indicate unnoticed influences on them. This can occur, for example, when small changes in children's attitudes accrue over time without the parents noticing them and their influence on them. Furthermore, parent-child relationships involve dynamic and interwoven processes, making it difficult to assess bi-directional transmission. This may be, therefore, a limitation of a research that examines bi-directional transmission of FF.

Parent-child relationships are multifaceted, comprising a diverse range of activities and interactions (Videon, 2005). Adolescence (teenage years) is a period of increasing autonomy striving and identity formation (Erikson, 1977) and a time when children typically distance themselves from their parents (and peers take on increasing importance), nevertheless, their attachment to their parents remains strong, and parent-child relations remain important influences on adolescents' psychological well-being; (Van Wel, Linssen & Abma, 2000). Moreover, the affective quality of the parent-child relations influences children's well-being into adulthood (Biller & Kimptom, 1997; Roberts & Bengtson, 1996). Thus, the influence of parent-child relations during the teen years is not transient. Indeed, research has contended that parent-child relations in adolescence underpin intergenerational relations later in life (Rossi & Rossi, 1990).

In conclusion, the present study answered its central research question: is FF transmitted to young athletes from their parents and, if so, how? The study provided evidence that FF is, indeed, transmitted from parents to young athletes through recurrent patterns of parent-child interaction. The findings showed that the transmission of FF occurred through three mechanisms: parental controlling behaviour, parental punitive behaviour, and parental high expectations. Following on from the present study, study 3 aimed to design an intervention programme to educate parents about the causes of and contributors to FF development in young athletes and thereby to reduce the FF of young elite athletes and their parents. Such an educational programme can help sever the transmission of FF from parents to young athletes.

Chapter 6: Study 3

Intervention Programme to Reduce the Fear of Failure of Young Elite Athletes and Their Parents

Chapter overview:

Following from study 2, study 3 aimed to design an intervention programme to reduce the FF of young elite athletes and their parents. The chapter begins with an introduction section, comprising the approach-avoidance achievement motivation model, and cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), which was employed as a framework for the intervention (section 6.1). This is followed by the study aims and rationale (section 6.2). The present study is divided into two intervention programmes: study 3a and study 3b, which were conducted concurrently. Each study is presented and discussed separately. Those studies are entitled as follows:

- Study 3a: Reducing young elite athletes' FF through parental education (section 6.3)

- Study 3b: One-to-one intervention to reduce the FF of a young elite athlete and her parents (section 6.4)

The chapter ends with a general discussion and conclusions of both studies (section 6.5).

6.1 Introduction

Fear of failure (FF) has been defined as the motive to avoid failure in achievement settings (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). Early and contemporary achievement theorists (e.g., Atkinson & Letwin, 1973; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; McClelland et al., 1953) have posited individual differences in this avoidance motivational tendency, suggesting that it typically prompts the adoption of avoidance based-goals and strategies (e.g., performance-avoidance goals, self-handicapping) that, in turn, exert their adverse effects (Elliot & Church, 1997). Elliot and Church's (1997) Trichotomous Achievement Goal Framework is a hierarchal model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation that accounts for both motivation and direction of behaviour. The model integrates the central constructs from two of the prominent

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traditions: the achievement motive approach (the "classical" achievement motivation research; e.g., Atkinson, 1957; McClelland et al., 1953) and the achievement goal approach (the "contemporary" achievement motivation research; e.g., Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984) into a single path (as shown above in Figure 2.1).

Achievement motives and goals are central to Elliot and Church's (1997) trichotomous model. The basic assumption of the model is that the goals that people pursue often emerge from their motive dispositions. The model suggests two achievement motive dispositions: the need for achievement and the need to avoid failure; these are referred to as competence-relevant motives. Achievement motives are conceptualised as affectively based motivational tendencies that energise, select, and direct (orient) behaviour through achievement goals. Achievement goals are viewed as cognitive-dynamic products that are underpinned by these two achievement motives. Thus, people adopt cognitively based goals that help direct their behaviour toward or away from specific outcomes (motive-relevant possibilities). Accordingly, achievement motives and goals work together in the motivational process to regulate and direct achievement behaviour toward specific end states. Achievement motives energise behaviour and indirectly (distal) influence outcomes by prompting the adoption of specific goals, whereas achievement goals direct behaviour and directly (proximal) influence outcomes. Mastery goals are focused on developing competence through task mastery, whereas performance goals are focused on demonstrating competence in relation to others. In short, achievement motives are antecedents of achievement goal adoption and, in turn, are direct predictors of achievement-relevant outcomes (Elliot & Church, 1997).

Central to the trichotomous model is the distinction between approach and avoidance motivation. Approach motivation entails the direction of behaviour with regard to positive stimuli (events, objects, or possibilities) while avoidance motivation entails the direction of behaviour with regard to negative stimuli (Elliot, 1999). Achievement goals mediate the relationship between motives and approach-avoidance orientation. The model divides performance goal orientation into separate approach and avoidance components and suggests three types of achievement goals: a *performance-approach* goal (focused on the attainment of competence relative to others; normative competence), a *performance-avoidance* goal (focused on the avoidance of normative incompetence) and a *mastery goal* (focused on the development of competence or the

attainment of task mastery). Mastery- and performance-approach goals are viewed as approach goals as they focus on a potential positive outcome (mastery/improvement and normative competence, respectively), whereas performance-avoidance goals are viewed as avoidance goals as they focus on a potential negative outcome (normative incompetence). Elliot and Church (1997) demonstrated that adopting performance-avoidance goal undermined performance in a college classroom, whereas performance-approach goals facilitated performance. Thus, performance-avoidance goals lead to negative outcomes, whereas performance-approach goals lead to positive outcomes.

Competence expectancies are conceptualised in the model as antecedents of achievement goals (rather than as moderator of their effects) and as independent of motive dispositions (Elliot & Church, 1997). Thus, competence expectancies, like motive dispositions, exert their influence on achievement behaviour indirectly, through their effect on achievement goal adoption. In other words, competence perceptions are antecedents of achievement goal adoption. High perceived competence orients individuals to the possibility of success and to adopting both forms of approach goals (i.e., mastery and performance-approach goals), whereas low perceived competence orients individuals to the possibility of failure and to adopting performance-avoidance goals.

Elliot and Church (1997) posited that individuals who are oriented towards achieving success (need for achievement) are likely to adopt mastery- and performance-goals that are focused on the attainment of positive outcomes. In contrast, individuals who are motivated to avoid failure are likely to adopt performance-avoidance and performance-approach goals that are focused on the avoidance of negative outcomes (i.e., approach in order to avoid failure). Performance-avoidance goals are suggested to be grounded in FF and low competence expectancies and are likely to elicit threat appraisal, evaluative anxiety, and attention to failure-relevant information, and to undermine intrinsic motivation and performance. In contrast, mastery goals are grounded in need for achievement and high competence expectancies, and facilitate intrinsic motivation.

In summary, Elliot and Church's (1997) trichotomous framework is a hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation, where mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance are conceptualised as forms of regulations that represent their underlying motive dispositions- need for achievement

and FF. The model has been employed within achievement motivation research in the education (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 1999; Thrash & Elliot, 2002) and sport and exercise (e.g., Conroy, 2004; Cury, Da Fonseca, Rufo, & Sarrazin, 2002; Ommundsen, 2001) domains. The research has supported the model's conceptualisation and usefulness within achievement motivation research.

The 2X2 Achievement Goal Framework

In subsequent work on the trichotomous achievement goal framework, Elliot and McGregor (2001) proposed a 2X2 achievement goal framework that incorporated an approach-avoidance distinction within both mastery and performance goals (see Figure 6.1). They explained that this extension of the model was needed because mastery goal measures in the trichotomous model focused exclusively on positive possibilities, whereas the 2X2 framework accounts for the broad spectrum of competence-based strivings. The 2X2 framework includes a mastery-avoidance goal in addition to the existing mastery-approach goal construct. Mastery-approach goals are focused on striving to develop one's skills and abilities (to master a task); thus focusing on self- or task-referenced performance standards. Mastery-avoidance goals are focused on avoiding self-referential or task-referential incompetence and entail striving to avoid losing one's skills and abilities or leaving a task incomplete (e.g., striving not to do worse than before, striving not to lose abilities, striving to avoid making mistakes); thus focusing on potential negative outcomes.

Mastery-approach goals are associated with need for achievement motive and high competence expectancies (high perceived competence) and with positive consequences (e.g., intrinsic motivation, positive affect). In contrast, mastery-avoidance goals are grounded in the FF motive and in low perceived competence and are focused on avoiding task- or self-referenced incompetence; thus FF motive orients individuals to adopt mastery-avoidance goals. Mastery-avoidance goals have been found to have a more negative set of antecedents (e.g., FF, parental negative feedback, worry) than mastery approach-goals (e.g., need for achievement, self-determination, competence valuation) in education (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

DEFINITION

	Absolute/ Intrapersonal (mastery)	Normative (performance)
Positive (approaching success)	Mastery- approach goals	Performance- approach goals
Negative (avoiding failure)	Mastery- avoidance goals	Performance- avoidance goals

VALENCE

Figure 6.1: A 2X2 Achievement goal framework
(Elliot & McGregor, 2001)

Elliot and McGregor (2001) conceptualised competence as an antecedent of mastery-avoidance goal and viewed it as the core of the achievement goal construct. They differentiated competence (and therefore achievement goals) according to how it is defined and according to how it is valenced. They defined competence by the standard in which it is evaluated, and identified three evaluative standards: an absolute standard (i.e., relative to the requirements of the task itself), an intrapersonal standard (i.e., relative to one's past or potential attainment), and normative standard (i.e., relative to others' performance). Absolute and intrapersonal competences were grouped together as they shared conceptual and empirical similarities. Thus, competence can be defined in absolute/ intrapersonal terms or in interpersonal terms, and the two types of achievement goals that an individual adopts will be in accordance to the type of competence that s/he commits to in an achievement situation.

Competence is valenced according to whether it is focused on a negative possibility that one would like to avoid (avoiding failure; incompetence) or on a positive possibility that one would like to approach (approaching success; competence). Negatively and positively constructed possibilities (or events or objects) are associated with avoidance and approach motivational tendencies, respectively. Accordingly, competence goals may focus on a positive competence-relevant possibility to approach or a negative competence-relevant possibility to avoid. Therefore, competence valence and definition are fundamental in the conceptualisation of achievement goals. Crossing these two core dimensions yields the four goals of the 2X2 framework and, thereby, Elliot and McGregor (2001) proposed, the model fully accounts for the types of competence-based goals that individuals adopt in achievement environments. The four achievement goals

that the model offers are: mastery-approach (focused on attaining absolute or intrapersonal competence; e.g., striving to master a task), mastery-avoidance (focused on avoiding absolute or intrapersonal incompetence; e.g., striving to not do worse than one has done previously), performance-approach (focused on attaining normative competence; e.g., striving to do better than others), and performance-avoidance (focused on avoiding normative incompetence; e.g., striving to avoid doing worse than others).

The 2X2 model has been intended to be applied across all types of achievement contexts. To date, it has been employed in education (e.g., Moller & Elliot, 2006; Cury, Elliot, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006) and sport and exercise (e.g., Conroy & Elliot, 2003; Conroy, Elliot, & Hoffer, 2003; Wang, Biddle, & Elliot, 2007) research and its validity and application in achievement motivation research has been supported. Sport contexts typically involve competition and normative evaluation and, therefore, the 2X2 framework was considered appropriate for the present study as it considers normative evaluation at the core of the performance goal construct.

In summary, the 2X2 achievement goal framework is an extension of the previous trichotomous achievement goal framework (Elliot & Church, 1997). It comprises four achievement goals in that individuals can strive for competence or avoid incompetence: mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance. The performance-mastery crosses with the approach-avoidance distinction. The performance-mastery distinction represents how competence is defined (according to normative standard or task-based or intrapersonal standard, respectively) and the approach-avoidance distinction represents how competence is valenced (according to positive or negative possibilities, respectively). The validity and application of the 2X2 framework in achievement motivation research in sport has been supported by researchers.

6.1.1 Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) was deemed an appropriate framework for the present study that aimed to design an intervention programme to reduce FF. Fear of failure involves appraising threat in evaluative situations with the potential for failure because those situations activate cognitive beliefs associated with the aversive consequences of failing (e.g., experiencing shame and embarrassment, others losing interest; Conroy et al., 2002). The stronger one's belief about the likelihood of aversive consequences of failure, the greater the level of fear that will be experienced (Conroy et

al., 2002). Thus, beliefs and perceptions provide the basis of FF. Cognitive-behavioural theory considers cognitive processes as mediators of behaviour. The core assumption of the theory is that humans respond primarily to their perceptions of their environments. The theory has led to therapeutic techniques that integrate behavioural and cognitive components to bring change in people's perceptions and behaviour, and has become known as CBT. This form of psychotherapy combines theories of behaviour, cognition, and learning with treatment techniques that are derived from cognitive and behavioural approaches. As CBT assumes that cognition, emotions, and behaviours are functionally interrelated, treatment aims to identify and modify people's maladaptive thought processes and problematic behaviours through cognitive restructuring and behavioural techniques.

The origins of CBT

The behavioural element of the CBT has its origins in the work of the psychologist J. B. Watson in the early 1950's. Watson is known as the founder of behaviourism, which placed a great emphasis on learnt behaviour, stimulus-response, and Pavlovian conditioning. However, by the early 1970's behaviourists (e.g., A.T. Beck, B.F. Skinner, J. Wolpe) moved away from stimulus-response analysis and began to engage with inner cognitive processes (introspection) and to apply their ideas and theories to therapeutic techniques. Behaviour therapy applies principles of learning to eliminate symptoms and modify ineffective (maladaptive) patterns of behaviour. The therapy treats emotional and behavioural disorders as maladaptive learnt responses that can be replaced by healthier ones with appropriate training. Thus, the focus of the therapy is on behaviour itself and the environmental factors that reinforce it (McLeod, 1998).

The cognitive element of CBT is derived from cognitive therapy, which views people's thoughts as central to their daily activities and behaviour. It focuses on mental processes and assumes that these mediate the relationship between stimulus and response; this was a break from behaviourism that regarded people's actions as determined by their interaction with their environments. Malfunction in the process of interpreting and evaluating experiences is seen as contributing to psychological disturbance. Accordingly, cognitive therapy seeks to correct faulty information processing and to modify beliefs and assumptions in order to reduce further psychological disturbance (Moorey, 1996).

Aaron Beck, the founder of cognitive therapy, taught people to identify and modify

their dysfunctional thought processes. Beck (1976) asserted that negative thoughts (negative 'internal dialogue') are underlined by beliefs and assumptions that need to be restructured in order to prevent further emotional disorders. He identified a number of cognitive distortions and classified them as 'over-generalisation' (drawing all-encompassing conclusions from limited evidence), 'dichotomous thinking' (seeing situations in terms of polar opposites) and 'personalization' (attributing events to one's actions; usually one's shortcomings). Albert Ellis (1962), the founder of Rational-Emotive Therapy, drew attention to the role of irrational beliefs in human behaviour and sought to change them. He defined irrational beliefs as cognitive distortions that rise from rigid views, which he referred to as 'absolutistic' (i.e., views in terms of 'musts', 'shoulds', 'all-or-nothing'), and 'catastrophising' thinking about life that lead to emotional problems. Both Beck's and Ellis' approaches are 'rationalist' as they asserted that irrational or distorted ways of viewing the world led to psychological disturbance (Moorey, 1996). Their approaches are consistent with constructionist assumptions that assert that people take active roles in constructing their own world and realities. Or as Kelly (1955) proposed, people give meaning to the world and construct reality through a process of experimentation.

An overview of CBT

Cognitive-behavioural therapy is the most recent (early 1980's) addition to cognitive therapies. It integrates features of behaviour modification approach into traditional cognitive restructuring approach. The core assumption of CBT is that maladaptive thinking patterns leads to maladaptive behaviour and emotional responses, therefore, treatment focuses on changing maladaptive thoughts in order to solve psychological problems. Treatment aims to change clients' unhealthy behaviour through cognitive restructuring (by examining assumptions and beliefs behind the thought pattern) and through the use of behaviour therapy techniques. The key aspect of CBT is to help people gradually feel safe to change their beliefs and test their fears and assumptions and, thereby, change their behaviours.

The central tenet of CBT is that emotions depend on how people evaluate events. Events do not produce negative emotions, but rather the way in which they are appraised. Thus, CBT assumes that interpretations of experiences are beliefs rather than facts and, as such, may be correct or incorrect. Moreover, an emotional upset will result when people hold unrealistic beliefs about themselves or their experiences. If this

negative thinking is extreme or persistent it may lead to emotional disorder (e.g., depression can result if people holds false beliefs such as their life is pointless and they are worthless) (Trower, Casey & Dryden, 1988).

Two aspects of thinking are important to CBT: ordinary fleeting thoughts and images, and underlying beliefs and assumptions that give rise to thoughts and images.

Thoughts and images- Beck (1976) referred to thoughts and images as 'automatic thoughts' that occur involuntarily during conscious state. He advocated that negative and unrealistic thoughts and images can lead to an emotional disorder. Thus, the creation of emotional disorders depends on the content of thoughts. For example, thoughts that focus on danger or threat may produce anxiety, and thoughts that focus on loss may result in depression.

Underlying beliefs and assumptions- Ellis (1962) examined the role of beliefs in emotional disorders. He defined rational or adaptive beliefs as flexible beliefs that are expressed in relative terms and that describe one's preferences and wishes. In contrast, irrational beliefs are typically evaluative in nature and are harmful as they are expressed in demanding terms (e.g., must, should) and can hinder individuals from achieving their goals. For example, an irrational belief such as, 'I should be perfect, if I make mistakes it shows that I am useless', can be harmful since it can make people feel upset and anxious when they make mistakes and blame other people in order to avoid admitting a mistake (Trower et al., 1988). Ellis contended that humans have a biological tendency to think irrationally and, thus, to acquire psychological disturbance. Nonetheless, environmental variables contribute to the tendency for people to make themselves disturbed by their irrational beliefs. For example, people who have been treated harshly by their parents are more likely to make demands on themselves and about uncomfortable life conditions than those who were treated well by their parents. Thus, humans become psychologically disturbed through their experiences and their ability to make themselves disturbed by their irrational beliefs (Dryden, 1990).

Ellis (1962) identified three major irrational beliefs:

1. *Demands about self-* 'I must do well and win people's approval or else I'm worthless and it's awful'; such beliefs often lead to anxiety, depression, shame and guilt.

2. *Demands about others-* 'people must treat me well and justly or else it's awful and I can't stand it and they should be blamed and punished'; such beliefs often lead to anger,

rage, passive-aggressiveness and violent acts.

3. *Demands about the world/ life conditions*- 'life conditions must be the way I want them to be and must give me all that I want quickly and easily or else its terrible, poor me'; such beliefs often lead to feelings of self-pity and hurt, and self-discipline difficulties (e.g., procrastination, addictive behaviour) (Dryden, 1990).

Ellis contended that these irrational beliefs can lead to three common "self-defeating thinking" in individuals with emotional disorders: 'I'm worthless because...', 'it is awful that...', and 'I can't stand it that...' (Trower et al., 1988). Furthermore, irrational beliefs lead to irrational conclusions that take the form of '*awfulising*' (i.e., 100% bad), '*always and never thinking*' (i.e., I will always fail and will never be approved by others), '*I can't stand it*' (i.e., envisage not enduring the situation, not having happiness), and '*damnation*' (i.e., damning self, other people, and life) (Dryden, 1990).

Ellis distinguished between appropriate and inappropriate negative emotions. For example, concern vs. anxiety: concern is associate with the belief 'I hope that this threat does not happen but if it does, it would be unfortunate', whereas anxiety is experienced when one thinks 'the threat must not happen and it would be awful if it did'. Disappointment vs. shame/ embarrassment: disappointment is felt when people believe that they act stupidly in public, but they accept themselves, whereas shame and embarrassment is experienced when people believe that they need others' approval and they predict that the watching audience will think badly of them. Experiencing shame and embarrassment often also involves self-criticism (Dryden, 1990).

Ellis (1962) devised the A-B-C theory of personality functioning to explain the relationship between thoughts and emotions. In the model 'A' refers to the event that Activates emotional and behavioural consequences, 'B' refers to the person's Beliefs about the event, and 'C' refers to the emotional and behavioural Consequences of the event. Ellis proposed that 'A' does not cause 'C' because 'B' comes between them. Thus, the emotional and behavioural consequences of events are determined by one's belief about the event and not by the event. In short, beliefs about the event mediate the emotional and behavioural consequences.

The therapeutic process

Cognitive-behavioural therapy seeks to bring change through client action. It is an education-based treatment where therapists teach clients to modify their maladaptive

thoughts, which are viewed as a habit that clients are only semi-aware of their existence (Trower et al., 1988). Clients are also not fully aware of the build-up of negative emotions and become fully aware of them when they feel extremely upset. Therefore, the first step of therapy is to teach clients to become more aware of their thoughts and feeling and of the situations that trigger negative thoughts. Therapists can then teach the clients to identify maladaptive thinking and to understand the way in which such thinking leads them to experience emotional and behavioural problems. The next step is to teach the clients how to modify their maladaptive thinking. Therapists show them that such thinking is false and lacks evidence by asking them to gather evidence that will disprove their unrealistic and self-defeating thinking and, thereby, will lead to changing it. Thus, replacing beliefs that contribute to self-defeating behaviour with beliefs that are more self-accepting and lead to constructive problem solving. Finally, clients are asked to continually challenge their negative thinking and to behave in a way that contradicts their negative thinking in order to make a change in the way that they feel and behave.

Therapists adopt a constructionist perspective and, as such, pay particular attention to the language that people use to construct their realities, create meanings, and develop beliefs about themselves and others (Trower et al., 1988). Therapists seek to help clients become more aware of their language and to change it in an attempt to generate solutions to psychological problems.

In summary, CBT involves steps to teach clients to:

1. monitor emotional upsets and activating events;

2. identify maladaptive thinking and beliefs;

3. understand the links between thinking, emotions, and behaviour;

4. test out maladaptive thinking and beliefs by examining the evidence for and against them; and

5. replace maladaptive thinking with more realistic thinking (Trower et al., 1988).

Techniques and methods of CBT

Cognitive-behavioural therapy is delivered through a structured programme that seeks to bring change through client action. The modification of maladaptive thinking can be achieved through a range of methods. The most powerful approach is assigning

clients with tasks that test out or contradict their beliefs. Techniques often included in therapy are: challenging irrational beliefs, reframing the issue, rehearsing the use of different self-statement, using different self-statements in real situations, scaling feelings (e.g., scaling anxiety level on 0-100 scale), thought stopping, systematic desensitization (replacing anxiety response by a learnt relaxation response), and homework assignments (tasks to practise new behaviour and cognitive strategies between sessions) (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Head & Gross, 2003; McLeod, 1998; Newman, 2003).

The aim of CBT is to help individuals manage their difficulties and acquire effective coping strategies to deal them by reframing their maladaptive thinking. Specifically, it aims to modify clients' underlying maladaptive cognitive processes and, thereby, alleviate symptoms and resolve problems (i.e., helping clients uncover their dysfunctional and irrational thinking and build more adaptive functional techniques for responding). For example, by modifying maladaptive/ irrational underlying assumptions and beliefs that are rigid (e.g., I can only be happy if I'm successful at everything) and that lead to feeling emotional distress to more flexible beliefs, psychological disturbance or distress will be reduced. Finally, CBT seeks to teach clients skills that they can use when the problem (e.g., distress) occurs (Moorey, 1996).

Cognitive-behavioural concepts and methods have made a large contribution to the field of psychological treatment and counselling since the 1980's. This approach is often viewed by practitioners as straight forward and practical as it emphasises action (McLeod, 1998). The effectiveness of CBT in a wide rage of psychological conditions and settings has been established in abundant research literature, especially in anxiety-based disorders (e.g., fears and phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety, eating disorders). In sport, practitioners have also reported positive results when applying cognitive-behavioural techniques to enhancing athletes' sporting performance (e.g., Cohn, Rotella, & Lloyd, 1990; Jones, 1993) and motivation (e.g., Beauchamp, Halliwell, Fournier, & Koestner, 1996), and reducing anxiety (e.g., Maynard, Smith, & Warwick-Evans, 1995).

In summary, CBT has grown out of behavioural and cognitive psychology. Ellis' and Beck's cognitive approaches were integrated and introduced dysfunctional thought processes and irrational beliefs to CBT (McLeod, 1998). Cognitive-behavioural therapy focuses on people's thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours, and is underlined by three main

assumptions:

1. emotions and behaviours are determined by thinking;

2. emotional disorders result from negative and unrealistic thinking; and

3. emotional disturbance can be reduced when altering negative and unrealistic thinking.

Cognitive-behavioural theories and methods are seen to embrace constructionist thinking as they view life as involving a search for meaning and have been described as constructivist as they reflect the way in which people actively construct their realities. Accordingly, CBT aims to help individuals to manage and cope with their difficulties and acquire effective coping strategies to deal with them by reframing their maladaptive thinking.

6.2 Study Aims and Rationale

Researchers have implicated parents in the development of FF because of their primary caregiver role and attachment (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2004; Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Achievement motivation theorists have long asserted that the motive to avoid failure is socially learnt during childhood (McClelland et al., 1953). Study 2 (chapter 4), in line with previous research (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2004; McGregor & Elliot, 2005), showed that parents who feared failure responded negatively to their child's failure. This is not surprising as parents often project their fears, expectations, and hopes onto their children and view them as an extension of themselves (Crandall & Preston, 1961); and their children's successes and failures have an impact on their own self-evaluative judgment (Katkovsky, Preston, & Crandall, 1964). Parents high in FF, therefore, often respond to their child's failure and their own failure in the same way because the two outcomes are intertwined (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

The present study was designed to extend and apply findings from studies 1a, 1b, and 2 (chapters 4 and 5). These studies recommended the development of intervention programmes to educate parents about causes of, and contributors to, FF development in young athletes. Study 1b recommended the use of cognitive-behavioural techniques to challenge and reduce the strength of beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure, which provides the basis for FF, thereby reducing FF levels. Study 2 (chapter 4)

implicated parents in the development of FF among young elite athletes and revealed the mechanism of FF transmission from parents to child. Therefore, the primary aim of the present study was to intervene in parent-child interaction, in order to reduce FF levels among young elite athletes. For this purpose, an educational programme was designed to teach parents about FF and about their role in the development of FF in their child athlete, addressing issues of parental socialisation and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. It was assumed that such an educational programme would help parents improve the quality of their interaction with their children and thereby reduce children's levels of FF. Furthermore, over time, such an educational programme can help reduce the transmission and development of FF among young athletes. Accordingly, the primary aim of the intervention was to reduce young athletes' FF through parental training, and its secondary aim was to reduce parents' own fear of their child's failure.

The specific aims of the intervention (associated with studies 3a and 3b) were:

- to reduce parents' over-involvement in their child's sporting career;

- to reduce parental criticism, punishment and threat after child's failure;

- to modify parental high expectations of their child's achievement to more realistic expectations;

- to challenge parents' perceptions of the meaning of success and failure in sport (i.e., develop performance and mastery orientation rather than an outcome orientation);

- to teach parents favourable ways of reacting to their children's failure (i.e., praising and encouraging the child, controlling their own disappointment and emotions when the child fails or does not meet the parents' expectations, and putting failure into perspective); and

- to modify parental irrational beliefs about the consequences of failure, coaches' expectations, and others' negative judgment of their child after failure; thereby reducing parental fear of negative judgment, which study 2 revealed was parents' predominate fear.

The present study was divided into two parts, which were conducted concurrently:

- Study 3a: Reducing young elite athletes' FF through parental education

- Study 3b-: One-to-one intervention to reduce the FF of a young elite athlete

and her parents

Each study will be presented separately below.

6.3 Study 3a: Reducing Young Elite Athletes' Fear of Failure Through Parental Education

6.3.1 Method

- **Participants**

Ten British (of Caucasian origin) elite athletes aged 13-15 years and their parents volunteered to participate in the present study. The athletes were drawn from local sporting academies and were part of intact families (child and parents living together under the same roof; parents in their first marriage). The participants were divided into a control group (n=4) and a treatment group (n=6) (see Table 6.1) according to whether the parents could attend the educational seminar (i.e., the intervention) on the designated date or not. Those who could not attend the seminar were allocated to the control group. The control group included two tennis players (a male aged 13 years and a female aged 14 years), a swimmer (female aged 14 years), and a figure skater (female aged 14 years). The treatment group included two tennis players (a male aged 15 years and a female aged 14 years), three figure skaters (female aged 13 and 14 years), and a swimmer (female aged 14 years). Three of the athletes (numbers 1, 2 and 3) in the treatment group also participated in study 2 (chapter 5). All the participating athletes reported 1- 3 years competitive experience at international level, thus, competing at the elite level. Participants were selected through "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 2002); a sampling procedure was also used in studies 1a, 1b, and 2 and is explained above: section 5.7.

Group	Athlete identity number	Gender	Sport	Age (years)
Treatment Group (n=6)	1	Male	Tennis	15
	2	Female	Tennis	14
	3	Female	Figure Skating	14
	4	Female	Figure Skating	14
	5	Female	Figure Skating	13
	6	Female	Swimming	14
Control Group (n=4)	7	Male	Tennis	13
	8	Female	Tennis	14
	9	Female	Figure Skating	14
	10	Female	Swimming	14

Table 6.1: Participants' description (*Note.* athletes 1, 2, and 3 also participated in study 2 and were assigned the same athlete identity number in both studies).

- **Procedure and design**

The study was cleared by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee. Participants' recruitment involved two stages:

Stage 1- recruiting participants. Access to the athletes was obtained through local sporting academies in the Midlands region of the United Kingdom. My initial contact with the directors of the academies was by telephone, explaining the aims and the nature of the study. Following this, the directors were asked to send a copy of my letter to families that fitted the selection criteria (intact families of elite athletes aged 12-15 years), asking them to contact me directly should they wish to participate. The letter explained the requirements, aims, and procedures of the study and assured the volunteers complete confidentiality and anonymity (i.e., information would not be passed on to the academies' coaching staff or others). I contacted directly the three families (in the treatment group), who also participated in study 2, by telephone first and then by letter.

Stage 2- Building rapport and obtaining consent. Seven parents telephoned me expressing a wish to participate in the study. During this initial conversation I explained the aims of the study and answered their questions regarding the study. Following this telephone conversation, I visited the academies in the evenings over a period of a week in order to meet these parents and their children athletes for the first time (meetings with each family lasted 60-85 minutes). During that week I also met the three families who

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participated in study 2 and who volunteered to participate in the present study. At these meetings, which took place in a quiet room in the academies, I reiterated the aims of the study, answered the parents' and athletes' questions and concerns regarding the study, and ensured that the parents and athletes volunteered of their own accord. In addition to explaining this to the parents and child together, I also discussed it separately with the child, answering their questions and ensuring that they understood the nature and aims of the study, and agreed to participate in the study of their own free will. Finally, I asked the parents to sign a consent form for their and their child's participation in the study.

The intervention (see Figure 6.2) in the present study involved four phases:

Phase 1- Pre-intervention data collection (interview and questionnaires). After obtaining from the parents a signed consent form for participation, I conducted an interview with both parents together and with the athlete individually. The interview focused on parent-child interactions pre- during- and post-competition. Following the interview, I asked the parents to complete the *Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory* (PFAI; Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002) and the athletes to complete the PFAI and the *Achievement Goals Questionnaire for Sport* (AGQ-S; Conroy, Elliot, & Hoffer, 2003). This phase provided baseline data.

Phase 2- The intervention. This comprised an educational seminar that I delivered in an evening to all six pairs of parents in the treatment group (the control group was excluded from the seminar) a week after meeting and interviewing them (phase 3). The seminar lasted 3.5 hours and was divided into two parts: a Power Point presentation (70 minutes) and a round-table discussion. The presentation (see appendix 3) began with a brief introduction to sport psychology, sporting pressure on young elite athletes and their parents, and young athletes' athletic and social development. This was followed by an examination of the fears of failure of young elite athletes and their parents, consequences of failure that young athletes and parents fear, and the impact of FF on young athletes' sporting performance and well-being. The final part of the presentation examined the development of FF in young athletes and focused specifically on the parental role in such development (e.g., parental transmission of beliefs and attitudes, parental over-involvement, parental criticism, parental threat and punishment, and parental high expectations).

		PHASE 1 *(Pre-intervention data collection)*	PHASE 2 *(intervention);* PHASE 3 *(post-intervention data collection 1)*				PHASE 4 *(post-intervention data collection 2)*		PHASE 5 *(follow-up 1)*		PHASE 6 *(follow-up 2)* *(post-intervention data collection 3)*
				Week 1	Week 2	Weeks 3 - 9	Week 10	Weeks 11-13	Week 14	Weeks 15-17	Week 18
STUDY 3a	**Control group**	Interview; PFAI; (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)					PFAI (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)				
	Treatment group	Interview; PFAI; (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)	Intervention (parents seminar)	Interview 1 (parents)			Interview 2; PFAI (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)				
STUDY 3b	**One-to-one group**	Interview; PFAI; (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)		Weekly one-to-one session (parents)	Weekly one-to-one session (parents)	Weekly one-to-one session (parents, athlete)	Weekly one-to-one session; Interview 2; PFAI; (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)		Follow-up 1 session (parents, (athlete)		Follow-up 2 session PFAI; (parents, athlete) AGQ-S (athlete)

Figure 6.2: Study 3 intervention design (*Note.* Study 3b will be presented and discussed separately in section 6.4 below)

Following the presentation and a coffee break, the second part of the seminar commenced, which was an informal round-table discussion. The discussion revolved around the issues that I had raised in the presentation. The parents revealed their views and beliefs, their experiences of their child's sporting success and failure, and their interactions with their child pre- and post-competition. For example, one father disagreed with me that parental punishments and threats are not beneficial to young athletes' sporting achievement and motivation. He believed that children are lazy and, therefore, parental threats and punishments are needed to "push" them to achieve and succeed. Most of the parents, however, disagreed with him and challenged his views. He further stated that parental close involvement in the coaches' work is vital in order to get children to succeed. This was immediately challenged by another father who stated that he was happy to leave the coaching to the coaches as they understood the sport and coaching better than him and are better qualified to help develop his daughter's sporting career.

At the end of the evening I felt that the seminar was successful. All the parents were very attentive during the presentation and some took notes. The round-table discussion was very vibrant as all the parents were involved and the interaction between them served a valuable vehicle of learning (as some of the parents later revealed). The parents found the seminar helpful, stating that they identified with the issues and with the fears of the parents that I had presented and discussed. Some also stated that the presentation and the discussion were thought-provoking. Each parent was given a handout pack that included a copy of the Power-Point presentation, "Tips on how to help reduce your child's fear of failure", and examples of young athletes' quotes on their fears of failure, on parental criticism, and on the effects of FF on them (see appendices 3 and 3a).

Phase 3- Post-intervention data collection 1 (interview). A short post-intervention telephone interview was conducted three days after the educational seminar with each of the parents who attended the seminar (the treatment group). Questions revolved around the seminar's learning outcomes and changes in their interaction with their children that the parents intended to implement in the following ten weeks.

Phase 4- Post-intervention data collection 2 (interview and questionnaires). Ten weeks after the seminar I met the parents and the athletes in the treatment group in the academies for an interview. This interview aimed to ascertain what changes the parents had implemented in their interaction with their children since the seminar and the usefulness (or otherwise) of these changes. Following the interview I asked the parents to complete for the

final time the PFAI (Conroy et al., 2002) and the athletes to complete the PFAI and the AGQ-S (Conroy et al., 2003).

The parents and athletes in the control group were not interviewed during this stage but were asked to complete the PFAI (parents and athletes) and the AGQ-S (athletes only) questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to them by post with a stamped addressed envelop for postal return.

• Data collection

Interviews design and structure

A pre-intervention semi-structured interview was conducted with each pair of parents together (lasting 30-40 minutes) and with each athlete individually (lasting 20-30 minutes). This was assumed to facilitate a free and more open disclosure of information from the athletes and their parents that perhaps they might have in a family group interview. Thus, the privacy of an individual interview was expected to facilitate a more in-depth disclosure than a group interview. Moreover, an individual interview can ensure that the issues discussed and raised in the interview do not disrupt the dynamics of the family, thus serving an ethical purpose.

A pre-designed interview guide was used as a flexible framework for the interview and was based on key questions most relevant to the study (see appendix 4). The interview questions revolved around parents' and athletes' typical behaviour and interaction pre-competitions, parents' and athletes' behaviour and reaction during competitions when not performing well (e.g., when behind in the score, when making mistakes) and when performing well, and parents' and athletes' typical behaviours, reactions and interactions after winning and losing in competitions. The interviews with the three families, who also participated in study 2, served to ascertain any changes in parents' and athletes' behaviour and interaction since the previous study some months earlier. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Post-intervention interview 1 (lasting 10-20 minutes; phase 3) was conducted on the telephone between two to three days (depending on parents' availability) after the seminar with each of the parents in the treatment group who attended the seminar. This interview aimed to ascertain what the parents had learned from the seminar and what changes in their interaction with their children they intended to implement in the following ten weeks (see appendix 5). All interviews were audio-recorded.

Post-intervention interview 2 was conducted with the parents and the athletes in the treatment group ten weeks after the seminar (phase 4). This interview was conducted with each pair of parents together (lasting 20-30 minutes) and with their child athlete (lasting 10-15 minutes) individually in a quiet room in the academies. This interview aimed to ascertain what changes the parents had implemented in their interaction with their children over the ten weeks since the seminar and, of these changes, what they and their child found useful. The questions to athletes also revolved around parental changes in parent-child interaction and their usefulness (see appendix 6). All interviews were audio-recorded.

Measures

Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI)

The *Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory* (PFAI; Conroy et al., 2002; see appendix 2) was administered to assess the types and levels of FF of the athletes and their parents. The PFAI is a multidimensional measure of cognitive-motivational-relational appraisals associated with FF. It contains twenty-five items that measure five aversive consequences of failure: experiencing shame and embarrassment (e.g., "when I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it"); devaluing one's self-estimate (e.g., "when I am failing, I blame my lack of talent"); having an uncertain future (e.g., "when I am failing, it upsets my "plan" for the future"); important others losing interest in me (e.g., "when I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me"); and upsetting important others (e.g., "when I am failing, people who are important to me are disappointed"). Each one of these subscales comprises five items. Participants' responses are on a scale from -2 ("do not believe at all") to +2 ("believe 100% of the time").

All the participants (n=20 parents, n=10 young athletes) in both of the groups (control and treatment) were asked to complete the PFAI pre-intervention and ten weeks post-intervention. The athletes were asked to complete the original PFAI version that measured their FF and the parents were asked to complete an adapted PFAI version that examined their fears for their child's failure. By changing the stem of each item (for example, changing "when I'm failing…" to "when my child is failing…"), I was able to measure parental fears for their child's failure.

Achievement Goals Questionnaire for Sport (AGQ-S)

The *Achievement Goals Questionnaire for Sport* (AGQ-S; Conroy, Elliot & Hoffer, 2003; see appendix 7) was completed by the athletes in both groups (control and treatment;

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n=10 young athletes) before the intervention and ten weeks after the intervention. The AGQ-S is a revised version of Elliot and McGregor's (2001) original 12-item 2X2 Achievement Goal Questionnaire, which was designed for use in the academic domain. Conroy et al. adapted the items from the original mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, and performance-approach scale directly to the sport context. Items from the original performance-avoidance scales were adapted directly for the sport context and revised to make them more explicitly focused on normative incompetence.

Each of the 12 AGQ-S items describes a different way in which participants can strive for competence or to avoid incompetence (generally in their sporting performance). It measures four achievement goals: mastery-approach (MAp; e.g., "It is important for me to master all aspects of my performance"); mastery-avoidance (MAv; e.g., "I worry that I may not perform as well as I possibly can"); performance-approach (PAp; e.g., "It is important for me to perform better than others"); and performance-avoidance (PAv; e.g., "My goal is to avoid performing worse than everyone else"). Three items assess each goal. Participants respond on a scale from 1 ("not at all like me") to 7 ("completely like me").

Conroy et al. (2003) recommended applying the AGQ-S for intervention research that seeks to examine change processes associated with achievement goals. Accordingly, the AGQ-S was administered in the present study to assess the athletes' achievement goals adaptation over the course of the intervention.

- **Data analysis**

Following verbatim transcription of all the interviews, I listened to the entire recording again and examined the transcript for accuracy. An inductive-deductive approach was adopted to analyse the transcripts. The deductive portion of the analysis used concepts that were established in study 2 for creating broader categories, while the inductive portion of analysis employed principles of thematic analysis (Smith, 1995) and some principles of grounded theory analysis (e.g., open coding, constant comparison, mapping, writing analytical memos; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 1995) in order to identify common themes and sub-categories. A computer software package, QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002), was used to facilitate data analysis (e.g., organising, coding, categorising data).

The process of data analysis

I began the process of data analysis by reading each interview transcript several times, as each reading can generate new insights (Smith, 1995). During this reading and re-reading

I noted (in the page margins) things that the participant had said and which I deemed of interest or value to the research question. I also noted my initial thoughts and emerging themes and the links between them. This initial form of analysis allowed me to have the first interaction with the data and to ascertain a better understanding of what the participants had said and to draw on my own interpretive resources. Thus, this first phase of the analysis allowed me to study the data for the first time and to identify key themes and preliminary questions before moving the analysis to NUD*IST for a more comprehensive analysis.

Coding the data is the first analytical phase that begins to organise the data into meaningful categories (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The coding process involved creating codes as I studied the data, thus allowing for codes to emerge from the data and grouping together conceptually similar data to form a hierarchical structure of emerging themes and categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process of constant comparison of themes and categories also served to provide a form of trustworthiness as I was constantly re-affirming the meaning of the category. The deductive analysis occurred while labelling the broad categories, using concepts that were established in study 2. Data analysis is a dynamic process and using NUD*IST in this process is advantageous as the programme is designed to facilitate dynamic coding by allowing the researcher to move back and forth between coding and building categories. The programme also offered me an efficient way of managing qualitative data (i.e., storing, organising, displaying, coding, and searching data).

Trustworthiness, objectivity and credibility of data

A collaborative approach (with my supervisory team) was taken in the process of data analysis in order to enhance the trustworthiness, objectivity and credibility of data analysis and to reduce interpretive bias (Patton, 2002). Credibility of the analysis process was established through an audit trail (e.g., journals, memos), which is a record of the development of the analysis process that allows to verify rigour and minimise interpretive bias. My supervisory team acted as ongoing peer debriefers by going through the audit trail and raising questions of bias when necessary, as well as challenging my theoretical and analytical approach to data collection and analysis. Moreover, using QSR NUD*IST N6 (2002) allowed for maximising the transparency of the analytical process (Bringer, Johnson & Brackenridge, 2004). For example, journals and memos containing questions used to interrogate the data, and decisions about conceptual development of coding, themes and categories were easily accessed (through active links that the programme offers) by

members of the supervisory team and facilitated discussions. Following this collaborative effort in the process of interpretation and reconstructing participants' meanings (e.g., coding the data, establishing themes and categories and links between them), the data were verified and contextualised. In short, the procedures I undertook to establish trustworthiness, objectivity and credibility of data involved ensuring rigour in data collection and analysis by keeping an audit trail of the process of data collection and interpretation and by controlling interpretive bias through an ongoing peer debriefing (refer to chapter 3 for a more comprehensive explanation on trustworthiness and credibility of data, and on the use of NUD*IST in data analysis; sections 3.4 and 3.5)

6.3.2 Results and Discussion

This section is divided into two parts:

Part 1: Post-intervention results I. This part presents the results ascertained from interviews 1, which were conducted with the parents (in the treatment group) two to three days after the seminar (phase 3, post-intervention data collection 1). It presents the seminar learning outcomes, and the changes that the parents considered implementing after the seminar.

Part 2: Post-intervention results II. This part presents and discusses the results ascertained from interviews 2, and from the PFAI and AGQ-S measures used with the parents and their child-athlete (in the treatment group) ten weeks after the seminar intervention (phase 4, post-intervention data collection 2). The results of each family are presented separately. The results of the two measures (PFAI and AGQ-S) for one of the families in the control group are shown below, whereas the results of the rest of the families in this group are shown in appendix 8.

In this section, I refer to the parents and athletes by pseudonyms or by an identity number that I have assigned to each athlete (as specified above in Table 6.1). The three families that also participated in study 2 are given the same pseudonyms and identity numbers as in that study (i.e., family 1, 2, and 3).

Part 1: Post-intervention results I

The results ascertained from post-intervention data collection 1 (interviews conducted only with parents; phase 3) are presented here in two parts: seminar outcomes, and changes that the parents considered implementing after the seminar.

- **Seminar outcomes**

The parents stated that they found that the seminar was useful, informative, contributed to their knowledge, increased their awareness, and helped them to reflect on their interaction with their children and to understand its impact on their children. For example:

> "It was a good seminar, and it made me review things and look at things very differently. As you were going through it, and afterwards, I thought 'oh yes, what of this can we apply to our family?'.... It was a very informative seminar and very helpful, very, very helpful" [mum 1].

> "I feel a lot of it [seminar] I sort of tried to use in the past myself. So it just sort of re-iterated a lot of what sometimes I felt myself the way it should be.... I've read all the [seminar's] handout and it's useful.... It was nice to see the comments of the children.... and to go through the handout and just look back and bring a few points out of it .... I think it [seminar] made Jim [dad] think about everything" [mum 2].

> "The seminar was really appropriate and there was a lots that you could take from it. I think it made you look at yourself because you're so involved.... I think sometimes you can be pretty blind to the way, because you're feelings that what you do and say you're looking for the child's best interests, but perhaps it isn't. So it (the seminar) made you look at yourself in a little bit more depth, on the way that you're actually addressing things.... And because everybody's life in the family is involved, and it's so driven by the sport, that you can lose focus sometimes on what really is important in all that, which is the child, your relationship with the child, your relationship with the family, and what really comes first. So there was a lot from the seminar that said what is really important. And you start looking at the impact that my actions have to either the benefit or the detriment of the way she's developing... everything you do is always with the best intentions, and perhaps you've just got to look at yourself a little bit more" [dad 2].

> "It really was an interesting and thought provoking evening.... There were parts to the seminar that I could relate to past situations with both [daughters] that will now help me think about how I will consider things in the future, particularly when faced with difficult situations, behaviours. And now understanding further our own behaviours and thoughts, and ideas about how we should react in difficult situations, and how it affects both the girls.... We've [mum and dad] been thinking about it a lot this week, we definitely took a lot from it [seminar], it was very useful" [mum 3].

> "We all thought it was a very good evening and we all learnt from it.... we discussed it on the way home, and we just didn't realise that we did that to her [daughter] and that we can damage it for the kids rather than help them.... After the seminar I just felt like crying 'cos I just felt 'what am I doing to her?' I felt this is what I'm doing to her and I felt so bad for Caroline [daughter] 'cos I realised when you finished talking what I've been doing to her. So the seminar was a learning thing for us... we both really learnt from it so much" [mum 4].

"Now we understand more why you do or not do things with a child. So the seminar was good for awareness and for making us understand how we should act, and what we do may affect Kate [daughter] .... Knowledge, knowledge, that was a big thing for us.... We all thought it was very helpful and we took quite a lot from it" [dad 5].

"We did take a lot out of the seminar, and we talked about it a few times since the seminar. I think it made us think more about what we're doing and that maybe we need to change a few things" [mum 6]

"It made us both think about it more and I think what we want to do differently" [dad 6].

The parents also talked about specific outcomes from the seminar:

Finding a life-sport balance: Three parents stated that they learnt about the need for parents to find a balance between life and sport and about the importance of incorporating leisure time into the schedules of young elite athletes. For example, mum 1 stated:

"We leant that we need more free time for Alan [son] so that he can see his friends, go to the cinema, go out shopping. So we need to see him more as a whole child, not just as the tennis player. That he should be given that leisure time and it's structured into his timetable. Fred [dad] stressed that Alan should go to the cinema more, he should have more contact with his peers. That's something that he picked from this evening [seminar]... which is something that he's focusing on now.... So time to enjoy being a child and a child with his peers or with his brother, which is different from a child always on the tennis court or with parents".

Mum 2 stated, "I try for her [daughter] to have a normal childhood, you know, I try to make sure she can still see her friends.... I try as much as possible for her to be a child, you know, for her to enjoy her childhood, but it's not always easy.... So the seminar re-iterated what I try to do". Similarly, dad 2 stated,

"We've [parents] got to also put in the fun element for her [daughter]. So we've got to make an effort to try and achieve for her that social life, whether it's one day a week for her to do what ever she wants.... Also, if she makes international [reaches professional level], or whatever, it's fine as long as it's not to the detriment of her personal development.... You said 'the child [development] comes first' and I think that's actually kicked me into gear, and it's what I picked in the seminar and what I'd like to achieve".

Parents 2 also learnt that they needed to find a balance within the family, as mum stated, "We've not had a proper fortnight holiday away from tennis for five years.... It [tennis] does rule our life, but now we've got to say 'we're having a family holiday'. So like you said, I think we've got to balance it". Similarly, dad stated:

"What we've done in the past, which is so frustrating, is gear our holidays around her [daughter] tennis.... There's always something [competition] that we've got on that they [the academy] want her to do. But perhaps now we've got to enforce it and say 'regardless whether this [competition] is important or not it's more important that she and the family has a holiday'.... and there's more to life than just tennis. So, I got that from that evening [the seminar]" [dad 2].

Understanding young athletes' perspectives, behaviours and pressures: Five parents
stated that the seminar helped improve their understanding of their children's perspectives,
behaviours before competitions, and the pressures of being at elite level sport. For example:

> "I've been concerned about if Alan [son] goes quiet before a competition, but after the
> seminar I'm not so concerned about it because I know now that it's probably Alan's way of
> coping with it, as you said.... that's him focusing and it's not necessarily he is worrying. I
> used to associate his quietness with 'oh he's worried, we need to get him out of himself, we
> need to talk to him more, we need to involve him more'. But now I know that it not him
> worrying. So I learnt from the seminar that his quietness isn't necessarily a negative thing,
> and I've got to view that in a different way now" [mum 1].

> "It was interesting listening to the children's thoughts, how they interpreted adults'
> reactions to things *(referring to athletes' quotes in the presentation and in the handout
> pack)*. It made us look at ourselves as parents and think about phrasing things differently....
> We now know that they [children] do get upset and it really makes you sort of appreciate
> them more in-depth and how they are feeling, and the pressure on them.... So it makes you
> actually think about things a lot more, where as we just get on this roller coaster and we just
> plod on and on and on and on. So it sort of makes you sit back and listen to it.... I think it
> was all useful because it just helps you look from a different perspective not just from your
> own perspective" [mum 2].

> "I identified that I interpreted things from her [daughter] behaviour differently, e.g., her not
> talking about the sport is not because she's not interested in the sport, like when she's
> seems reserved on the build up to competition. I can now relate it to what she going through
> in that situation and not 'oh she's being a pain' or 'she's been awkward'. Now I know that
> she's under pressure of the competition. I learnt that I need to listen more and go with the
> flow of what she's like and what she's feeling pre-competition.... Now I can understand her
> erratic behaviour [pre-competition].... Also, that these kids [athletes] are in a bubble, they
> don't have regular kid life and they perform and do things in public and we expect them to
> know how to do it and how to behave but they don't know.... And now I'm not expecting
> her 'cos I know now after your seminar about their pressures, so I can now put things into
> context much better than I did before" [mum 3].

> "It helped us both [mum and dad] now understand Lisa's [daughter] pressures and fears
> more and what it's like for children before they go to competitions.... It made us relate to
> past experiences that we had with her and it helped us understand it better and why she
> behaved how she did" [dad 3]

> "You don't know why she's not skating well sometime, but now I feel that I know more
> about her pressure and what she's going through, and the stress before competition. So I
> feel for her now 'cos I understand what she's going through, and I want to help her more. I
> know now I should just want her to do her best and be happy and not pressurise her" [mum
> 4].

Understanding young athletes' fears: Five parents talked about gaining a better
understanding of their children's fears of failing and of letting their parents down. For
example:

> "I think it's the letting down people that are close to him [son] that is a very big factor for
> him. Like, what will dad's reaction be if he doesn't win?... how will he perform?.... and
> what the repercussions will be after the failure. Because when he comes off [court] and he's
> not won it affects the whole family.... there's an atmosphere in the house....So it's like you

said, they [athletes] fear the consequences and letting us [parents] down" [mum 1].

"I feel that she [daughter] doesn't want to let her parents down, and I believe it's because we're all engrossed in it [tennis] 100% of the time.... I think the parent side we need to looking at seriously.... I think that her fear of failure is driven by, she doesn't want to let people at home down and the academy, and so she doesn't want to make mistakes" [dad 2].

"Because Caroline [daughter] always comes in the top 4, 5 we expect it from her now, and when she drops it's disappointing to us... 'cos we know she enjoys coming on the top so we expect her to come top 5 and so when she comes lower she probably feels that she's failed and let us down.... She used to bring the trophies, but not recently... I don't know why. She does well in training but not in competitions. Maybe it because what I do to her... maybe she fears letting me down. I'm always there in the academy and in competitions with her.... It [seminar] helped me understand her pressure and fear better and how she feels before competition.... So I learnt a lot from the seminar about what I should do now" [mum 4].

"I guess both of them [daughters skaters] may fear not pleasing me, possibly more than their dad. Maybe 'cos they're girls and they want to please their mummy, I don't know.... So, yeah, I can see that, like you said, they want our approval and they do want to please us and all that" [mum 5].

Understanding parents' fears: Five parents also gained a better understanding of their own fears of their children's failure. For example:

"I fear his [son] failure because I fear for him, because there's loads repercussions. Like if he didn't win at a competition he has to eat in another room, he's not allowed to eat with us [dad doesn't allow it]. We won't eat out at a restaurant but we'll come back home to eat, and then there's an atmosphere in the house.... These are things that I face when it [losing] happens, not just Alan [[son] faces it, so I'm aware of them. So yes, I do fear his failure" [mum 1].

"I realised that some of my reactions to her in the past were definitely underlined by my fear of her failure. Like, for example, at the National [competition] I feared that if she didn't do well she'd not be selected for the squad and that she won't impress the new coaches, 'cos she was new at the academy at the time. So, yes, I feared the consequences if she didn't do well in that competition" [mum 3].

"I'd like to try to watch her [daughter] at competition, 'cos now I'm too nervous to watch her, I feel sick, I'm really nervous. I understand now that it's probably my fear of failure for her.... I probably fear her not coming top 5... if she doesn't make top 5 that's the fear for me.... But I need to learn to handle my fear better.... I get nervous that she would lose if she doesn't compete well.... As she was getting higher on the rostrum and the competitions were getting harder and she was going up the levels, that's when I started to get nervous, because I want her to do well" [mum 4].

"I'm fearful of their [two daughters skaters] failure.... I want them to do well for themselves. I fear that they'll fall on the jumps, and when they fall they lose their timing and everything goes to pot. You just sit there and you live it with them, you go through it with them inch by inch, so you do fear their failure" [mum 5]

"I guess I'm fearful for them [two daughters skaters] 'cos there are consequences to their failure and I feel protective of them as their father" [dad 5]

Achievement orientation and realistic expectations: Four parents stated that they learnt to recognise their achievement orientation, and that they needed to modify their expectations

and goals. For example:

> "I learnt that you need to set realistic goals, not things that are wayward.... In the early days the goals we [dad and daughter] set between us... were quite stretching but she made them. Now I think that the goals have got to be realistic, like you said, and they've also got to be monitored regularly and reviewed with the child.... And also that her goals in tennis are really down between her and her coach to set" [dad 2].

> "I also got that I'm a mastery oriented parent whereas Lydia [mum] is more of an outcome" [dad 6].

> "I got that I'm outcome orientated parent. I'm like 'if you're not winning medals it's not right'.... I just go to her [daughter] competition and I suppose I do expect her to win, whereas Noel [dad] is more like looking at how she's swimming and what she's doing. I'd say he's mastery and I'm outcome orientated. I'm like 'she should be winning this'.... I learnt that I need to realise that her getting good times in the pool is more important than her winning and beating someone. So medals are not important now but her development as a swimmer is more important. So I got this from what you said.... Also that I need to be more realistic and more sensible about what she achieves" [mum 6].

> "I realise now that I shouldn't push her [daughter] to come top 5 and I should just let her do what she can do and just be happy with it and just want her to enjoy it instead of expecting her to come in the top 5" [mum 4].

Building young athletes' self-esteem: Three parents stated that they learnt about the importance of building young athletes' self-esteem. For example:

> "We need to build their [young athletes] self-esteem and motivation need to take the positives from things they do rather than the negatives.... So it's just a matter of, I think, of trying to help build her [daughter] as a confident person" [mum 2].

> "There's lots of it [seminar] that I need to take on board. There's lots of things there on how you can destroy a child's self-esteem by the way that you approach things, that I think is massively important for parents" [dad 2].

> "I can also apply quite a lot of it [seminar] to my other daughter, you know she's deaf. They were talking at her school about self-confidence and esteem and needing to build deaf children's confidence. So I learnt a lot about self-confidence from your seminar and self-esteem. So all this is useful for me with Lisa [athlete] and also with my other daughter" [mum 3].

Interaction and communication: Nine parents revealed that they learnt how to improve their interaction and communication with their children pre-, post-, and during-competition, and in general. They stated that they were now aware of their verbal and non-verbal communications with their children, of the importance of praising their children regardless of competition outcome, and of not conveying their disappointment to their child after failure. One parent [mum 4] also stated that she learnt that threatening her daughter was not a good practice. The following quotes illustrate these learning outcomes:

> "I particularly thought about non-verbal communications before the matches, during the matches, after the matches, and that we need to be much more aware of that.... We need to

talk less before a match…. The prepping of the athlete before he goes to the match, no, we shouldn't be doing that because he's preparing himself in his own mind, he's thinking about his strategies, and so we shouldn't impinge on that and just leave him. If he wants to talk to us about it then that's fine… but it shouldn't be coming from Fred [dad] before the match….When he's finished one [match] and he's going to another [match], he wants that space and we need to allow him that space…. We need to talk less after a match, less analysis, to allow the child to come to their own conclusions, and [it should] be at a time when he's ready to talk about it. So the post-match analysis in the car coming back from the match, whether he's won or lost, shouldn't happen then, it would be better the next day when Alan [match] is ready to talk about it…. The post-match analysis, we need much more positive reinforcement, so we should communicate much more 'that was a really good shot you used' at that particular time of the match. So we need much more to stress the positive side of things…. [During-match] Fred [dad] steps away from the rail, or bang the rail, or pull his coat across himself. These are all negative signals, which the child picks up very quickly that maybe dad is not pleased or not happy with that shot. So we've got to try to work on these non-verbal communications" [mum 1].

"The time for recovery in grieving, that's the closure aspect of the point that you make on page 20 [of the seminar handout], that's maybe the most positive thing that I took away. That maybe the discussion on the performance shouldn't happen on the day of the performance" [dad 1].

"The other thing that came from it [the seminar] is this fear of losing and the impact that parents have on their [athletes'] fear of losing. I think what's critical here for me is probably the way that I put things across, and if I approach it in a different way its better…. I think there are ways and means to put things across to her [daughter]…. like you said, don't discuss things straight away [after the match]…. I've put down here [wrote down] 'limit tennis [conversations]' and 'review tennis match after 24hrs' rather than on the spot straight afterwards…. I've also got to recognise that I don't have a good day in the office every day…. and for her it's just like a bad day in the office and everybody has bad days in the office. So I've got to probably be a lot more reasonable…. I get nervous when she's playing, I twitch and there's lots of… the sniggering and things of that nature and everything else…. So I've got to work lots on that, and I will…. She phoned from France last night and first thing I said 'how did you get on?' Well, it's shouldn't be 'how did you get on?', but it's 'how are you?' really, isn't it? So there's a lot about communication that I can think about…. The emphasis to the child or, like you say, the way the child perceives it, it's coming across really firm that it's result driven, isn't it? Which is what you were saying in there [in the seminar]" [dad 2].

"It [seminar] made us look at ourselves as parents and think about phrasing things differently. Like for instance, I pick her up from the academy and I'll say 'how did you get on today?', but I've been trying since then [the seminar] to say 'have you had a nice day?' and things like that, instead of asking her about what she did or what she didn't do. It's just a matter of re-phrasing how we say things…. I can at the end of the day ask her has she had a good day, rather than, I mean, not be outcome orientated, you know, try and take any pressure off her" [mum 2].

"*We need to support her more after competitions….We need to reduce the hype of the* competition for her so that she doesn't feel nervous before the competition. So we need to try to lead a normal life 2, 3 weeks before the competition…. I suppose I should just let her go out there and enjoy it instead of being all hyper around her and, like you said, pass my fear to her, 'cos I'm very nervous before her competitions and I'm like 'don't forget what [coach's name] said about doing' such and such, and 'don't forget your music', and 'what are you doing about your hair and make-up?', and I always tell her 'prepare two music tapes in case one breaks down'. So I'm all over the place with my anxiety and I guess, like you said in the seminar, the kids feel our [parents] anxiety and it makes them also nervous.

So I know now that I shouldn't mention her skating before competition and not so much hype about it for her own sake. So I learnt a lot from the seminar about what I should do now.... I also realise now that the threats are not good. I have said to her [daughter] in the past 'if you don't do well we'll pull you out of skating', but I didn't realise how bad it's for her until I heard you talk about it. Or like if she'd said 'I'm tired to go to practice', or if she'd had a bad practice I'd say 'all the money we're paying and you're not putting effort into it'. So you don't know how damaging it is for her, until I heard you talk about it" [mum 4].

"What I took from the seminar is that its like mind over matter, we should just take a step back a bit [pre-competition] and let them [daughters] get on with it and get prepared and ready for it [competition] and not be fussing before they go on ice, like I normally do.... I learnt how not to react to failure and watch out what I say and what comments I give her [post-competition]. I didn't realise just how much our reaction affects the kids, but now we know. Afterwards [the seminar] we were saying that we need to be more careful, and be more thinking about what we say to them when they come off ice [post-competition]" [mum 5].

"I learnt not to poke my nose in it too much [pre-competition] (laugh), to encourage them [daughters].... I learnt not to pick on the negatives and praise them [post-competition] regardless of the results of the competition.... I need to be less judgemental of their performance when they come off ice.... I know now that it would be better for me to take a step back and have a perspective on things and think carefully before I make comments to them, and what I say to them before they go on the ice and when they come off the ice. So I'm going to do it differently now" [dad 5].

"I learnt what to say after swimming, how to behave.... After swimming in the car I question her about her swimming, but now I think that maybe I shouldn't, so I learnt that and maybe I should just leave it to the coaches.... I need to think more about how I question her and what I say to her after competitions and training, and I should concentrate on the positives of her performance. I'll now question her less.... So when she hasn't performed well I should not say much and I should be more relaxed about the whole thing" [dad 6].

"I need to be more realistic and more sensible about what she achieves. I do feel disappointed when she doesn't win and maybe she can see it from my body language, like you said, the non-verbal communication" [mum 6].

Learning from interacting with other parents: Seven parents revealed that they benefited from meeting the other parents and listening to the experiences and views that were expressed in the seminar. They learned that parents share common issues regardless of their child's chosen sport, and also learned to recognise good and bad parental approaches and styles and to reflect on their own. These parents stated:

"It was nice to see that it isn't just tennis (laugh). It's across the board how parents are and everybody has the same sort of feelings. Obviously we know how tennis parents are, you know, they're the same. But it seems that other sports, whatever the sport is, it's very very similar for every parent, and it's how individuals deals with it" [mum 2]

"We recognised that it's not just us in the situation but it's sport in general.... It was clear that everybody has different styles with their kids.... It was useful to meet the other parents and see their different approaches to how they deal with their kids. The discussion at the end was very useful for us, its was very interesting, and its was also good to see that other parents are in similar situation as us and have all these difficulties that we have and that it's

not just us. So, that was also very helpful" [mum 3].

"I get very nervous, sick, before competition, and I learnt on that evening [seminar] that I wasn't the only one and that other parents also felt nervous and that I wasn't on my own.... Also it was useful to meet the other parents and see what they do and how they deal with these issues of having a child in sport and dealing with competitions and pressure.... We [parents 4 and 5] were talking afterwards [the seminar] in the car park that we, the parents, should do things differently. And Sandra [mum 5] and I said that we'll phone each other and keep checking on each other that we're doing the right things by the girls" [mum 4].

"In that seminar, I personally, am not like the tennis dad [dad 2], who thought that his way is better and that you got to put them [children] under pressure. Me personally, I agreed with most of what you said" [dad 4].

"I don't think we're as pushy as that man [dad 2]. My God he's something else! So pushy, I feel sorry for his son. For us it's like if they [daughters] want to skate great and if not then it's also fine" [mum 5].

"That dad [dad 2] was so pushy, I feel sorry for his child. I told Neil [husband], 'no wonder his other son dropped out of swimming'. I'm surprised this child is staying in tennis. I guess I can see now how difficult parents like this can put so much pressure on their kids and make them not want to do it anymore, like you were saying" [mum 6].

"I don't think I'm as bad as some other swimming parents, or that man [dad 2] in the seminar.... It was very useful to see how the other parents in the seminar do things and the issues in their lives. And what I got from it is that all parents go through the same kind of issues regardless of the sport. I thought that man [dad 2] was very stubborn in his views and I think it must be hard in his son. I can see now how parents like him can be detrimental to their child's success and career, like you were saying, but I got the feeling that he didn't see it like that. So it was useful for us to see the other parents' behaviours and what they think and it made us realise that we don't want to be like him" [dad 6]

- **Changes the parents considered implementing after the seminar**

When asked "what will you be doing differently now with your child based on what you learned in the seminar?" the parents generally replied that they would implement what they had stated as their learning outcomes. For example, mum 3 said:

"I'm gonna work on it now to try not to react, not to blow up and react unwisely.... I'll do things differently and react differently now 'cos I feel that I understand more about the pressure of competition. I've been thinking about it a lot this week and also Jim [dad] was.... I understand now that these kids are under pressure and I'll definitely adopt a different approach from now on in the future.... We will both definitely be looking at how we can improve our communication and interactions with both our children in general".

Mum 4 said, "I'll definitely try to do things differently with her [daughter] from now and just be happy with what she can achieve as long and she's happy and enjoys it. I shouldn't really put any pressure on her and expect her to get top 5. I guess as long as she's done her best and she's happy it should be fine". Thus, mum would reduce her expectations

of her daughter to achieve high scores in competitions and instead would accept her daughter's achievements, thereby, reducing the pressure on her daughter.

Dad 2 stated that he would "'limit tennis [conversations]' and 'review tennis match after 24 hours' rather than on the spot straight afterwards". Thus, father-daughter conversations would revolve less around tennis, and he would wait for 24 hours after a competition before discussing the performance with his daughter, rather than doing it immediately afterwards. He also said that he would improve his interaction with his daughter during her performance; "when she's playing I twitch and there's lots of sniggering and things of that nature and everything else.... So I've got to work lots on that, and I will".

Finally, mum 6 revealed "Noel [husband] and me said that we shall have a chat with her [daughter] about what she wants us to do and how she wants us to behave. We'll tell her what we learnt from the seminar and ask her if she wants us to do things differently 'cos we want to do what's best for her and what's gonna help her. So we'll learn from her what she wants us to do differently". Thus, they decided to have an open dialogue with their daughter and to consult her about the changes that they should implement.

Three parents disclosed that they implemented changes within days of the seminar. For example, mum 1 revealed that dad incorporated leisure time into his son's schedule, allowing him and his younger brother (Andrew, aged 11 years, who plays tennis but not at the elite level yet, and who is not a participant in the present study) more autonomy. She stated:

> "Before [the seminar] he [dad] always made Alan [son] practice in the [tennis] club on his weekends off, but yesterday he told Alan 'what would you like to do on the weekend? Do you want to go out with your friends? Do you want to go to town with your [older] brother?' So he's now asking Alan and getting from Alan what he wants to do. So there was a choice Alan.... I know it may sound a little thing but that's a big difference now because it's putting Alan as the decision maker.... Fred [dad] now sees a clear need that Alan needs to be involved with his own age group or with his brother and not just tennis all the time. He told me 'Alan needs to go out... bowling with his brother, or' this or that.... So that's possibly the biggest change in Fred after the seminar.... Now he's [dad] saying to Andrew [younger sibling] 'do you want to go to your tennis?', and not "Andrew you've got tennis, you have to go". So he's also actually giving Andrew more say in the matter and letting Andrew select if he wants to.... So he's more listening to the child and getting it from the child.... So maybe what Fred [dad] is learning now for Alan will have some benefit for Andrew too, hopefully .... That's directly changed in Fred [dad] after the seminar. I noticed that difference".

Mum 3 stated that she and dad incorporated leisure time for the entire family. She stated, "We all went swimming yesterday together and did other things, and we had a good

time together, you know, leisure time. And we really want to do more of that in the future…. It was a good idea that we picked up from you".

Finally, mum 5 revealed that, in the preparation for a competition that took place a day after the seminar, she was less involved than usual and, as a result, she felt less anxious. She stated:

> "Funnily enough, we [mum and dad] went to a competition with them [two daughters] on the very next day [after the seminar] (laugh) and I felt much more relaxed before they skated, and afterwards I didn't feel as exhausted as I normally feel (laugh). I just stepped back, I guess I took a step back, and didn't get as involved, like normally I'd fuss a lot before the competition, you know, 'did you do your hair?', 'are you getting your make up', 'have you warmed up?', have you this, that, and the other, you now, just fussing too much, and this probably, now I know, is making me and them nervous".

It appears from the data collected from the parents in this phase (phase 3) that the seminar achieved its objectives. That is, the parents learnt about the fears of failure of young elite athletes and their parents, the consequences of failure that young athletes and parents fear, the impact of FF on young athletes' sporting performance and well-being, and the role of parents in the development of FF in young athletes (i.e., parental over-involvement, criticism, threat and punishment, and high expectations). The seminar taught the parents new skills, which they intended to implement in order to improve their interaction with their child-athlete.

Part 2: Post-intervention results II

This part presents the results of interviews 2 and the PFAI and AGQ-S measures used with the parents and athletes (in the treatment group) ten weeks after the seminar intervention (phase 4, post-intervention data collection 2). Interviews with the parents examined changes that the parents had implemented in their interactions with their children over the ten-week period since attending the seminar, and the usefulness of these changes. Interviews with the athletes explored what changes the athletes noticed in their parents' behaviour since the seminar and whether they like or disliked those changes. In this section, I will present the results for each family separately, except for family 2, which comprised the one-to-one group and, therefore, their results will be discussed separately in study 3b (section 6.4 below). The results of the two measures (PFAI and AGQ-S) for family 7, who participated in the control group, are also included in this section (whereas the results of the rest of the families in the control group are shown in appendix 8).

Family 1

In this family only mum was available for an interview as dad and son were preparing

for an overseas trip and were not available to be interviewed. Mum revealed that she

noticed a change in dad's communication with their son [athlete 1, Alan] post-competition,

stating,

> "Since your seminar he's [dad] been different with Alan when he was playing. He was more positive with Alan and getting things from him rather than telling him things and forcing his opinion on Alan. He's [dad] been much better with him. He's [dad] more accepting of situations and much much less critical. He's asking Alan to analyse it [his performance] instead of giving his [dad's] analysis. And he's giving him time and space so it's not a match analysis straight away [after competition].... And I've never heard him [dad] say to Alan after a match 'do you want to talk about it now or do you prefer later or in the morning?'. I never heard this before the seminar *(laugh)*.... And even in the morning he'd say 'do you want to talk about it now or later?' And in the morning if Alan says 'I'm not ready now let's talk about it when I get back from the academy', Fred [dad] will accept that and will not pester him in about it.... So it's much much better now, and it's all thanks to you *(laugh)*.... especially, the time out [after competition] you suggested".

Thus, it appears that instead of discussing Alan's performance immediately after the

competition, as dad used to do before the seminar, he now took a "24-hour time out" (as I

recommended in the seminar) after the competition before discussing it with Alan.

Furthermore, dad now allowed Alan to choose a time, convenient to him, to conduct post-

match analysis, and was less critical of Alan's performance than before the seminar. Mum

has also noticed a change in dad's interaction with Alan's younger brother (Andrew, aged

11 years), who also played tennis (but not at the elite level yet, and who was not a

participant in the present study). She disclosed:

> "I think his approach to Andrew also has been very different since your seminar. He's a lot softer with him and it's 'what do you want to do?' and 'what do you think about' this or that.... So it's a lot more coming from Andrew rather than from Fred dictating.... And [post-failure] it's 'never mind Andrew next time'. So it's much more positive reinforcement. Now he's [dad] much much more positive than negative tone. It's a massive massive difference, it's a big difference in him [dad]".

It appears that dad was giving both his sons more autonomy by allowing them to express

their opinions and wishes. Thus, after the seminar dad has became less pushy, less

authoritarian and less controlling with his sons. He was also more accepting and less critical

of their failures. It appears, therefore, that dad improved his interactions with both his sons,

the athlete and his younger brother, and that the effect of the intervention extended to

benefit not just the elite athlete in the family but also the younger athlete, who is currently

participating at a lower level of competition.

The PFAI results (see Figure 6.3) showed that the level of athlete 1's (Alan) fear of

uncertain future remained similar to its level pre-intervention, and his fears of shame and embarrassment and of upsetting important others remained at the same level post-intervention. Hence, it appears that, despite dad improving his interaction with Alan post-failure, Alan still feared upsetting important others. This may have two explanations: first, it may be that a 10-week period is not sufficient to reduce his fear and, secondly, as "important others" also encompasses coaches, Alan may be also fearful of failing and upsetting his academy coaches. His fears of devaluing self-estimate and of important others losing interest increased a little and was close to a medium level post-intervention. The latter fear possibly relates to Alan perceiving that top coaches would lose interest in him post-failure.

Athlete 1- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	0.00	-0.75	-0.75	-1.00	-0.20
post	0.00	0.00	-0.50	-0.40	-0.20

Fears

Figure 6.3: Athlete 1 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The AGQ-S results revealed that athlete 1's achievement goals were overall similar pre- and post-intervention (see Figure 6.4), suggesting that his achievement goals did not change over the ten week intervention period. His MAp goals level remained very high and MAv goals remained at a medium level. His PAp goals also remained at a medium level and his PAv goals level remained low post-intervention. Overall, his approach goals remained at medium-high levels and his avoidance goals remained at low-medium levels. Elliot and McGregor (2001) proposed that avoidance goals (mastery and performance) are grounded in high FF and in low perceived competence; accordingly it can be assumed that athlete 1's perceived competence were at medium levels. Indeed, the PFAI results (Figure 6.3) showed

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that his overall FF was at the medium level post-intervention (i.e., between 0 and -1).
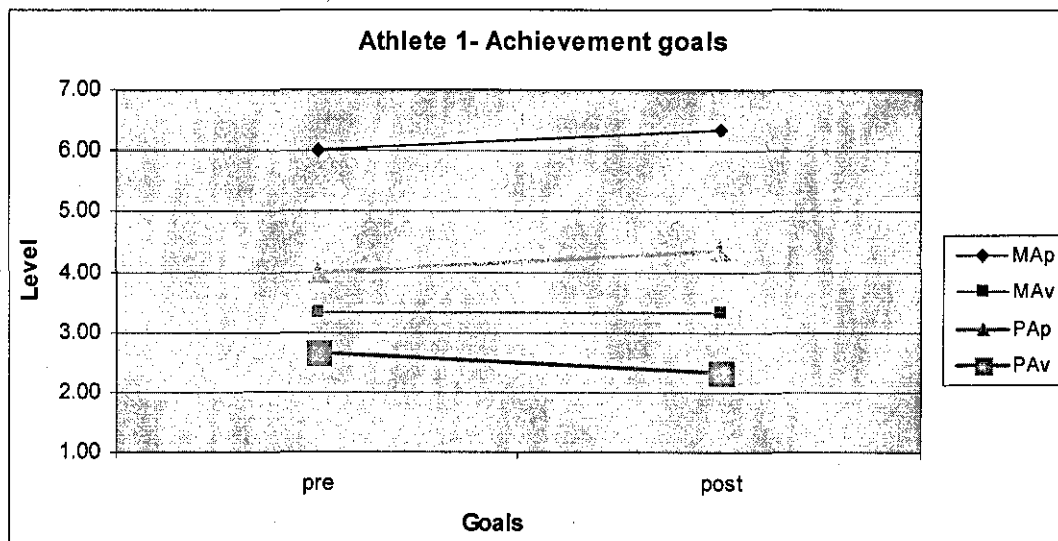
Figure 6.4: Athlete 1 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention (MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

The PFAI results showed that mum 1's overall fears of failure for her son (athlete 1) remained at similar levels pre- and post-intervention (see Figure 6.5). Fears of uncertain future, of important others losing interest, and of upsetting important others remained high post-intervention. Mum's fear of upsetting important others related predominantly to dad's reaction post-failure, as mum revealed in study 2. Thus, despite noticing a change in dad's interaction with Alan, mum still perceived that Alan's failure would upset dad, and feared it. Her fear of important others losing interest in Alan post-failure related to top coaches (as she revealed in study 2) and remained high.

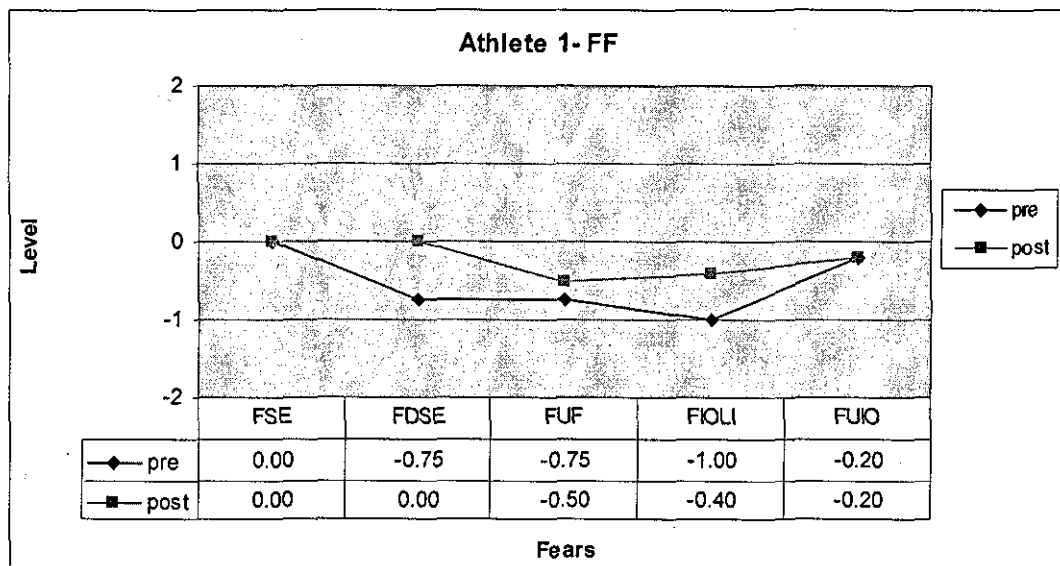|	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.29	-1.00	0.75	0.60	1.40
post	-0.57	-1.00	0.50	0.60	1.80

Figure 6.5: Mum 1 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

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Dad 1's PFAI results showed that his overall fears of failure for his son remained low and at similar levels pre- and post intervention (see Figure 6.6). Like mum, dad's highest fears were of upsetting important others and of important others losing interest. Thus, it appears that post-intervention, both mum and dad still perceived that failure would upset important others, who would lose interest in their son. The fear of important others losing interest was common to dad, mum, and Alan, and for all three it related to top coaches. This fear remained at a high level for mum post-intervention and at a medium level for dad and Alan (although a little higher for dad). Dad's fears of devaluing self-estimate and of uncertain future had been low pre-intervention and were even lower post-intervention.

Dad 1- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-1.00	-1.00	-1.50	0.20	0.60
post	-0.86	-1.50	-2.00	0.20	0.40

Fears

Figure 6.6: Dad 1 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In summary, the PFAI results indicated that the intervention seminar did not contribute to large reductions in FF levels of the athlete or either of his parents. Fears of important others losing interest and of upsetting important others were common between dad, mum, and Alan, and remained at high levels for both parents and at medium levels for Alan. Similarly, the AGS-Q also did not indicate meaningful changes in the athlete's achievement goals post-intervention, showing that his avoidance motivation goals remained at low-medium levels. The qualitative data, however, revealed an improvement in dad's interaction with his son post-intervention. Dad became less critical and more accepting of his son's failures, and allowed his son more autonomy (e.g., allowing his son to choose a convenient time to conduct post-match analysis). The benefit of the intervention appears to have extended to the athlete's younger sibling.

Family 2

The results of family 2 will be shown in study 3b below (section 6.4) as this family comprised the one-to-one group.

Family 3

It appears that the 10-week period post-intervention had been an unusually unsettled period for family 3, as both parents explained:

> "I've not seen her [Lisa; athlete 3] that much since then [the seminar]. I've been working away a lot recently and we're moving house, so it's been mad for us *(laugh)*.... But it [the seminar] did make me think about what we're [mum and dad] doing wrong and things like that. But I didn't have a chance to put it into practice yet. But I will when we move house and things settle down with my job and we're more together" [dad].

> "At the moment it's difficult for us with Lisa being away so much, and Jim working away, and I've had lots of changes at work, which has not been helpful, and we're getting ready to move [house]. So the last two months have been really unusual, unsettled for all of us. Life at the minute is manic" [mum].

It seems, however, that despite all the unsettling changes in their lives, mum and dad concentrated more on Lisa's needs outside skating, and skating became less of a focus for them than it had been (as was illustrated in study 2). Mum explained:

> "The main focus for me has been the conversations that we [Lisa and mum] have.... it's not been just about the skating but also about everything else she's doing.... We tried to step away from that [conversations about skating], and our main focus now is her well being and to make sure that everything is alright, that the school is going well. So she's also got different things to talk about as well.... I think now skating is not at the top, it's equalled itself more with the other things that she's got on. It's not been just about the skating but also about everything else she's doing.... Our [mum and dad] main focus now is her well-being and to make sure that schooling and everything is alright for her"

Thus, mum and dad were now balancing Lisa's schooling requirements with skating and her well being, whereas before the intervention their focus had been largely on Lisa's skating career. It appears that the focus of their general communication changed from conversations revolving predominately about skating to more general discussions. This may be a change that resulted from the seminar, which looked at the need to find a balance between the child's life and sport. Lisa, however, did not notice a change in her parents' behaviour since the seminar. She stated: "They're just the same *(laugh)*.... But I've been away quite a lot so it's hard to tell". Indeed, it is difficult to assess changes in parental interactions since the seminar because the family did not spend much time together and, therefore, it is difficult to assess the benefit of the intervention for this family.
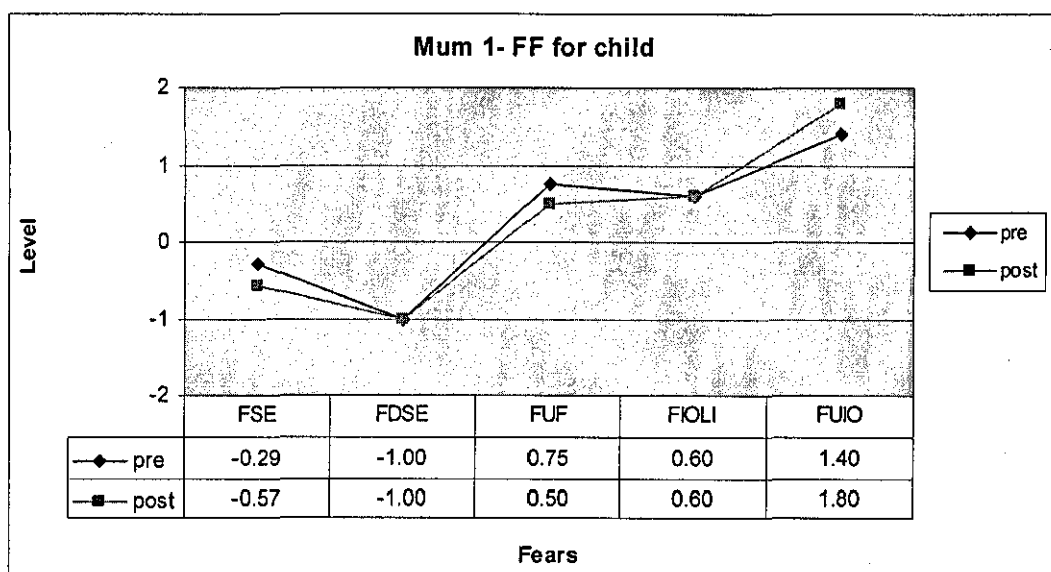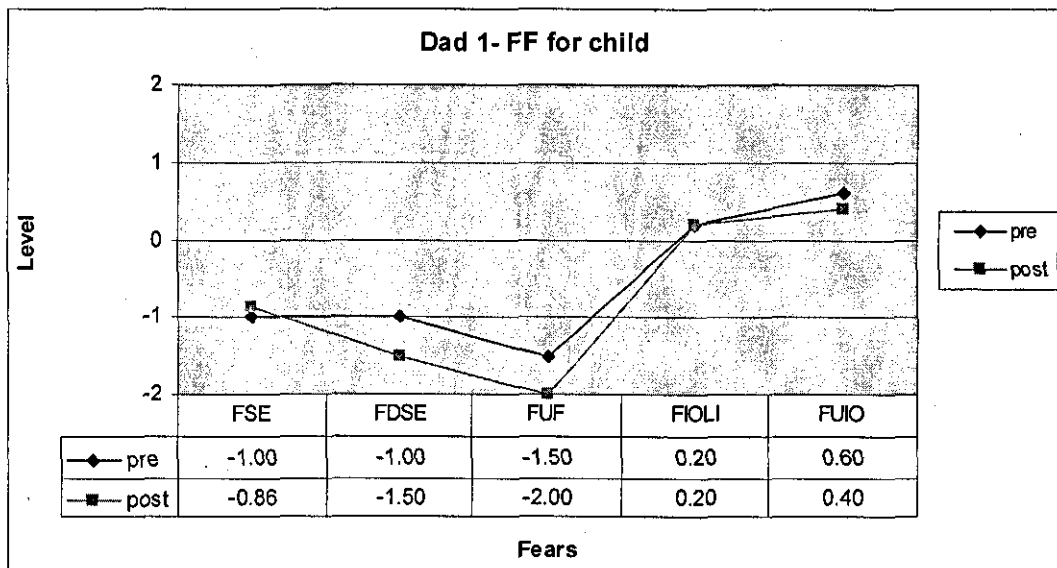
Figure 6.7: Athlete 3 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The PFAI results showed that athlete 3's overall fears had been at medium levels and remained at the same or at similar levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.7). Fear of shame and embarrassment remained her highest fear post-intervention. Fear of uncertain future, which had been her second highest fear pre-intervention, was the only fear that decreased markedly (from a medium to a low level) post-intervention. Fear of upsetting important others decreased a little, but remained her third highest fear post-intervention.

The AGQ-S results revealed that athlete 3's PAv goals remained very low post-intervention and her PAp goals increased post-intervention, but remained at a medium level (see Figure 6.8). Her MAv goals decreased slightly, but still remained at a medium level, and her MAp goals remained high post-intervention. Thus, her avoidance goals (mastery and performance) remained at low-medium levels post-intervention. As avoidance goals are grounded in high FF and in low perceived competence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001); accordingly it can be assumed that athlete 3's perceived competence was at a medium level. This is supported by the PFAI results, which showed that her overall FF was at the medium level post-intervention (i.e., between 0 and -1).
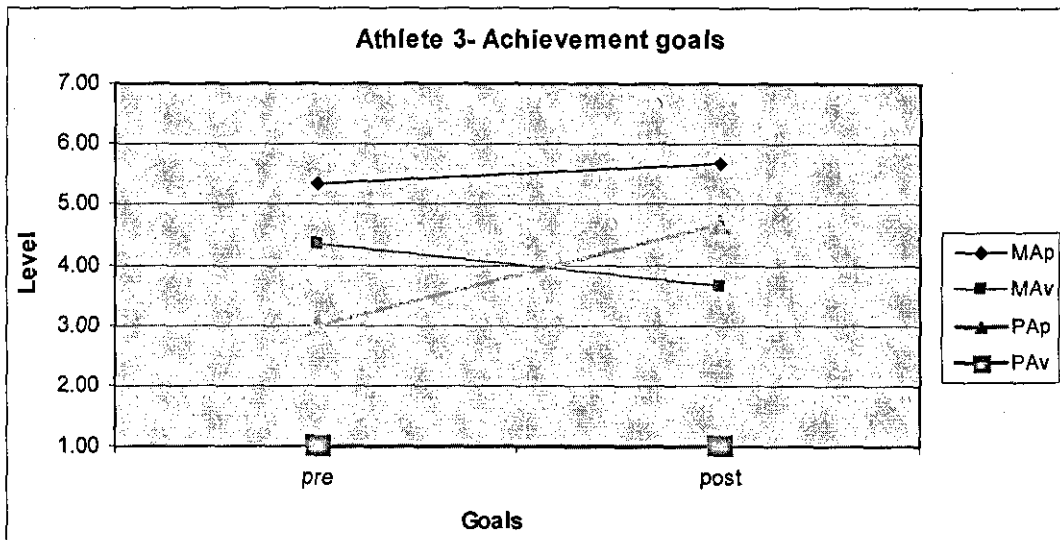
Figure 6.8: Athlete 3 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention (MAp=mastery-
approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

The PFAI results showed that mum 3's overall fears of failure for her daughter
remained at similar levels pre- and post-intervention (see Figure 6.9). Her fear of uncertain
future decreased slightly, but remained her highest fear post-intervention. Fear of upsetting
important others, which had been mum's second highest fear pre-intervention, decreased
markedly post-intervention, but remained her second highest fear.

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.71	-2.00	0.50	-1.20	0.40
post	-1.00	-1.50	0.00	-1.20	-0.60

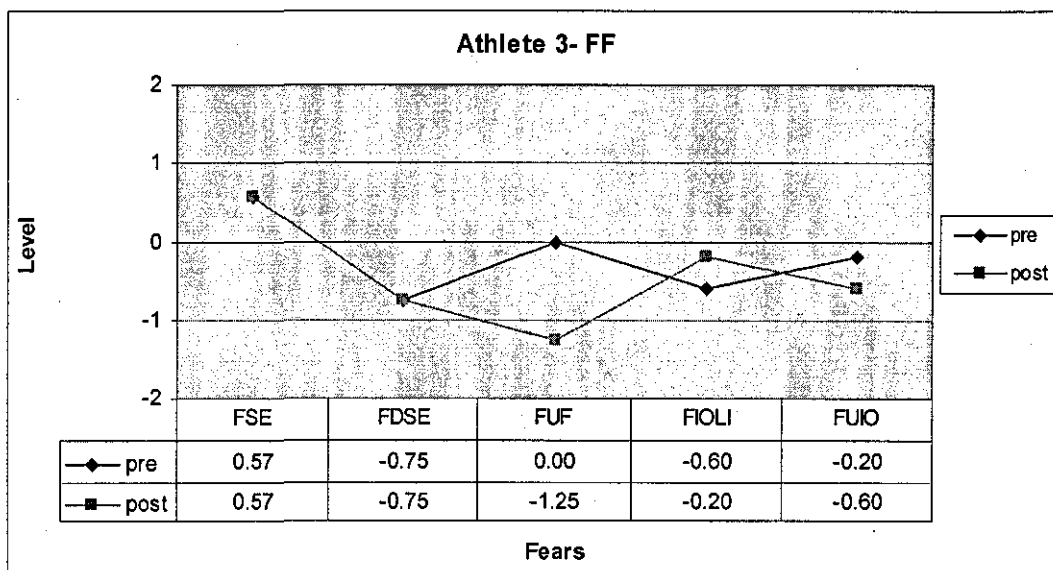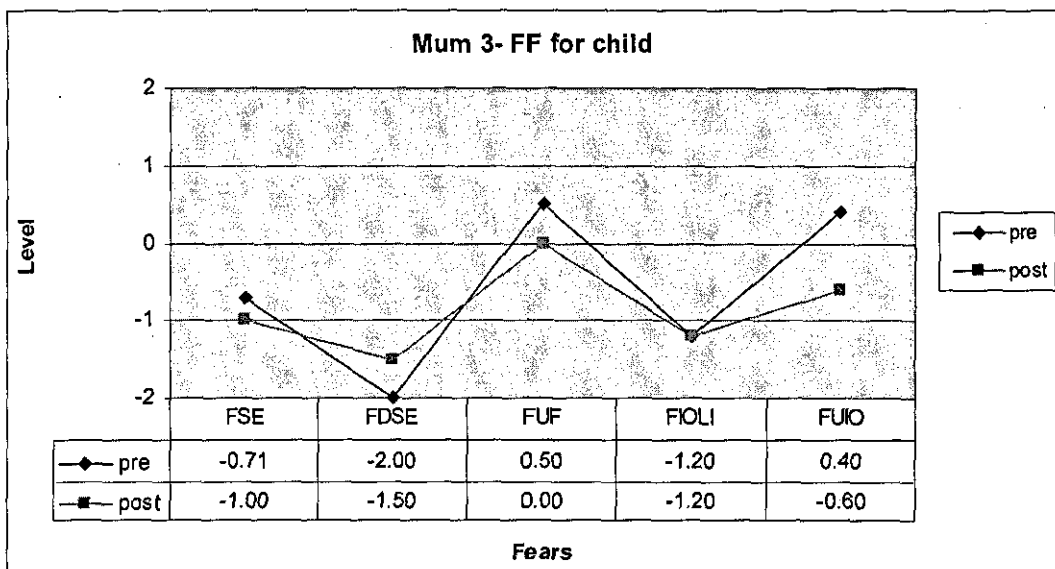**Figure 6.9:** Mum 3 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention. (FSE- fear of
shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of
important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

Dad 3's PFAI results showed that his overall fears of failure for his daughter had been
low and remained at similar levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.10). His fear of important
others losing interest increased a little post-intervention and his fear of upsetting important

others decreased slightly post-intervention.

Dad 3- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-1.14	-1.50	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80
post	-1.43	-1.75	-0.75	-0.20	-1.20

Fears
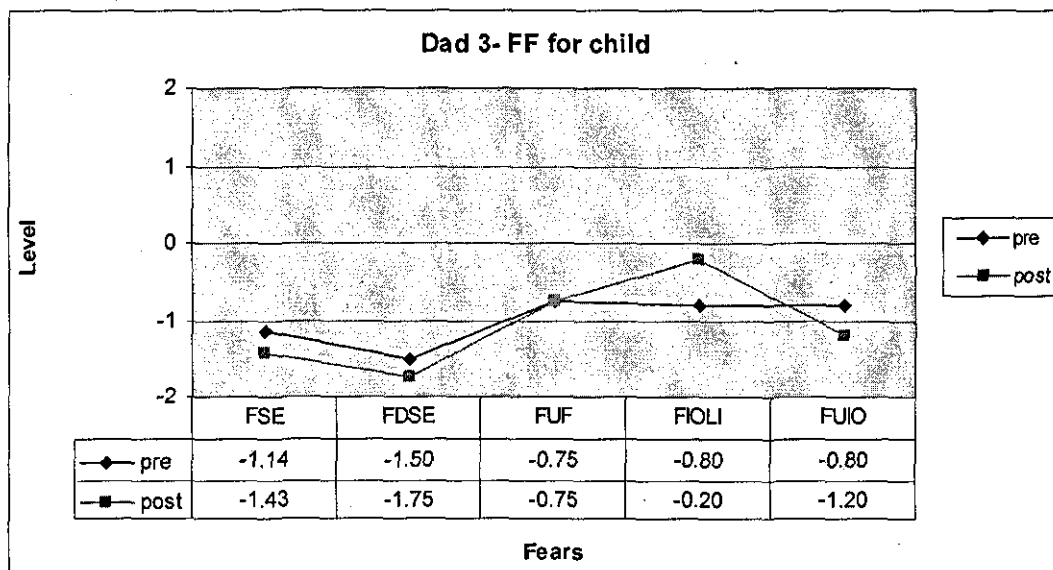
Figure 6.10: Dad 3 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

When examining the decrease in the common fears between mum, dad, and the athlete, the PFAI results showed that fear of uncertain future had been at medium levels both for mum and the athlete, and that the decrease post-intervention was greater for the athlete than for mum. The fear of upsetting important others had been greater for mum than for the athlete pre-intervention and, although decreased more for mum, for both of them it dropped to exactly the same level (medium low) post-intervention.

In summary, the PFAI results indicated noticeable decreases post-intervention in the athlete's and mum's levels of fear of uncertain future, and in mum's level of fear of important others losing interest. Dad's overall fears of failure for his daughter remained low. The AGQ-S results showed that the athlete's avoidance goals (mastery and performance) remained at low-medium levels post-intervention. The qualitative data revealed that the focus of mum's and dad's general communication with their daughter changed from conversation revolving predominately around skating to being more general. This change may have resulted from the intervention. However, it is difficult to assess changes in parental interaction because the family did not spend much time together during the 10-week period, and this makes it difficult to establish any benefit to this family from the intervention.

Family 4

During the 10-week period after the seminar athlete 4 (Caroline) performed in two competitions, of which mum attended one. Before the seminar mum stated that she usually felt nervous before Caroline's competitions and could not watch her perform. On this occasion, however, mum managed to control her emotions and watched her daughter compete. She explained:

> "When I went to watch her in London [competition] I just sat there and watched her, I actually sat there and watched her... and I didn't feel sick like I normally feel. I just thought 'you've got to sit here and watch your child and support her'.... I felt that it was nice for me to sit there and watch her skate.... I was fairly relaxed.... I think because we've been to the seminar, we listened to you and we look at your notes [the seminar handout pack] and thought 'right, got to remember what Sam said, got to do this, got to do that'. Just concentrating and remembering the things that you said, and the deep breathing.... I need to keep reading it [the seminar handout pack] to remind myself.... I think over the years we form habits, so you automatically gonna feel sick [during performance] because you've always felt sick when she skates, so it's a habit now.... I didn't get too involved with things before she went on [the ice], you know, I let her get on with things, like you told us, and I was fine really... I was relaxed *(laugh)* ".

Thus, by not getting involved with pre-competition preparation, and by following the guidance from the seminar and the handout pack, mum managed to control her emotions and was able to watch her daughter perform. Dad also found the seminar handout pack helpful, stating:

> "You just want to keep reading it to remind yourself and to keep jogging your memory of the things you told us, 'cos if you leave it it's so easy to forget things and fall back into your old behaviour .... So if you don't keep reading it and reminding yourself you'll just forget.... We've got it on the breakfast table to keep reminding us... and we've both looked at it a few times".

> "I personally now, in the time leading to her performance, I try to back off and not say too much, whereas before I used to say things like 'don't forget to do' this or that. I just back off now and don't say things like that.... I also didn't say anything to her afterwards [the performance], so it's back to what you were saying in the seminar.... When she was skating, 'cos I knew what she was doing wrong, at the time it annoyed me but I didn't say anything to her afterwards.... I mentioned it later, I think it was the next day, what I thought the problem was [with her performance] and I talked about it, but Caroline doesn't say a lot, and whether she's taking it in or not I don't know.... We [mum and dad] used to comment straight after competitions, but we don't now, it's one of the things that we remember from the seminar not to criticise them [children] and talk about it [the performance] straight afterwards.... I don't know if she noticed a change 'cos we've only been to two competitions since then [the seminar] but I made an effort not to say anything negative afterwards [post-performance], but whether she noticed it or not I don't know".

It appears from dad's last quote that, like mum, he also did not get involved with pre-competition preparation and with giving Caroline performance instructions. Furthermore, he did not criticise Caroline post-competition, despite noticing the mistakes she had made

in her performance and feeling annoyed about it. Instead, he took a "24-hour time out" (as I had recommended in the seminar) before commenting on her performance. Thus, dad improved his pre- and post-competition interaction with his daughter. Mum also changed her interaction with Caroline post-competition, stating:

> "Afterwards [the performance] I left her until she came to me to talk to me.... Normally I'd say to her straight away 'what do you think went wrong?', but I didn't this time in London. I actually sat at the back and I didn't say anything to her, I just left her. I wanted to, but I didn't.... Before [the seminar] we'd all [mum, dad, and Caroline] sit together and watch the video of her skate, and then we'd say, not to be critical, well, we didn't think we were critical, but we'd say 'oh your jumps need to be higher', or 'you need to get your leg higher' or 'you need' this and that. But now Caroline actually asked me that she wants to watch it on her own, and I agreed, because I felt maybe she wants her time on her own to watch herself rather than me standing there and giving marks".

Thus, mum and dad did not conduct a post-performance analysis with Caroline, respecting her wish to watch the video of her performance on her own; a departure from their usual post-performance behaviour. When asked if she thought that the changes that she and dad had made would work better for their family in the future, mum replied, "Because this was the only competition I've been to since then [the seminar], I really don't know, we'll need to try it again *(laugh)*".

Despite the changes that both mum and dad implemented, Caroline stated that she did not notice a change in her parents' behaviour: "I only skated twice [in competitions], and she [mum] came just to London, so I don't know how she felt". Thus, as Caroline only competed twice in the 10-week period since the seminar, it appears that it was not a long enough period for her to notice the change in her parents' behaviour.

The PFAI results showed that three of athlete 4's (Caroline) fears decreased post-intervention (see Figure 6.11). These were fears of devaluing self-estimate, of uncertain future, and of upsetting important others; the latter two fears decreased markedly. Pre-intervention, fear of uncertain future had been her highest fear (at medium level) and fear of shame and embarrassment her second highest fear (at low level). Post-intervention, however, fear of uncertain future had decreased (from a medium to a low level) and became her second highest fear, while fear of shame and embarrassment remained at the same level (low) and became her highest fear. Nevertheless, both of these fears were at low levels post-intervention. In general, the PFAI results showed that athlete 4's overall fears had been at medium-low levels pre-intervention and at low levels post-intervention.
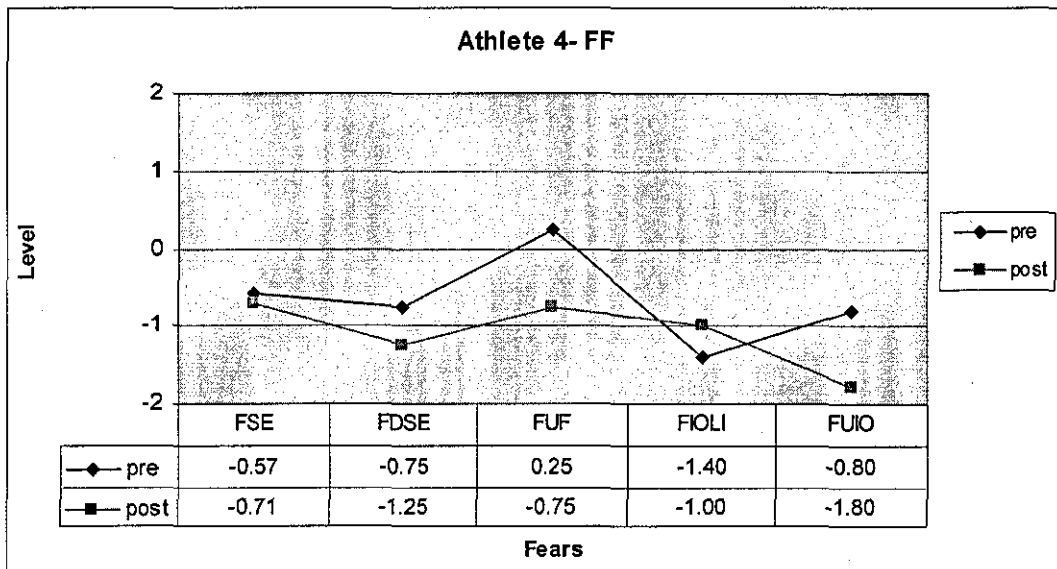
Figure 6.11: Athlete 4 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The AGQ-S results revealed that all of athlete 4's achievement goals decreased post-intervention (see Figure 6.12). Her PAp and PAv goals decreased slightly and remained low, her MAv goals also decreased a little and remained at a medium level, but her MAp goals decreased markedly (from a high to a medium level). Thus, her avoidance goals, performance and mastery, decreased post-intervention and remained at low and medium levels, respectively. As avoidance goals are grounded in high FF and in low perceived competence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), it can be assumed that athlete 4's perceived competence was at a medium-low level. The PFAI results, showed that her overall FF was at a low level post-intervention (i.e., between -1 and -2).

Athlete 4- Achievement goals
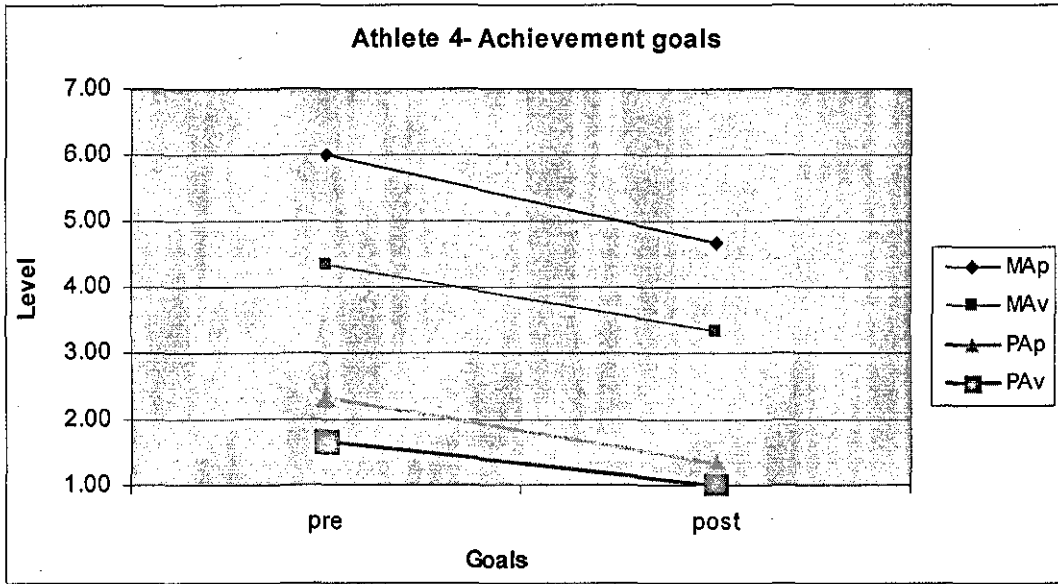
Figure 6.12: *Athlete 4 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention* (MAp= mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance- avoidance goal).

The PFAI results showed that all of mum 4's fears of failure for her daughter decreased from medium-low to low levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.13). Fears of upsetting important others, of important others losing interest, and of shame and embarrassment decreased markedly (from medium to low levels). Although fear of important others losing interest decreased markedly, it remained her highest, but at a lower level. Fear of shame and embarrassment, which had been her second highest fear pre-intervention, decreased from a medium to a low level post-intervention.

Mum 4- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	0.00	-1.25	-0.75	0.40	-0.20
post	-1.57	-2.00	-1.25	-1.00	-1.40
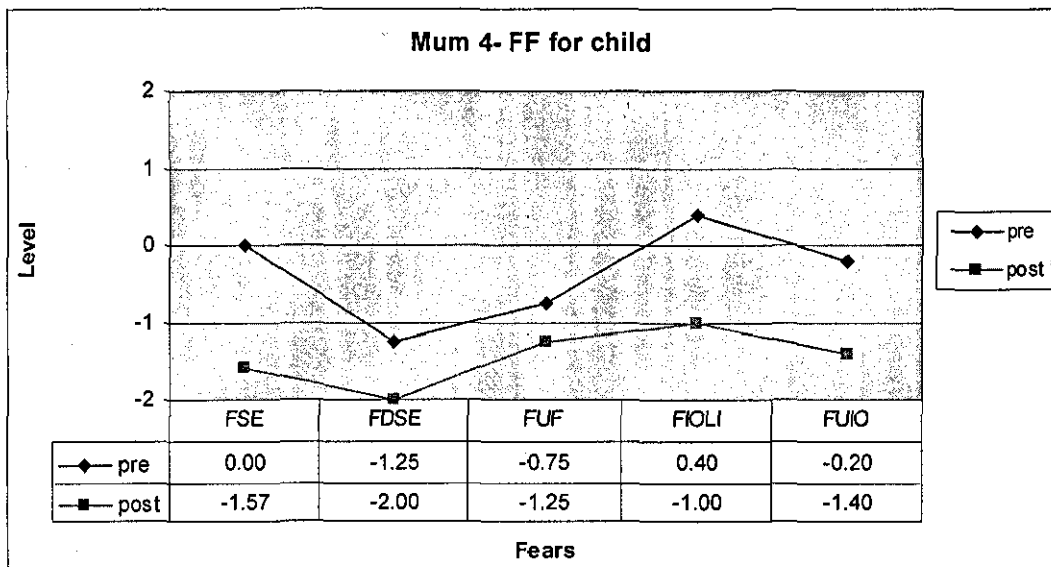
Figure 6.13: Mum 4 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

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The PFAI results also showed that most of dad 4's fears of failure for his daughter decreased post-intervention (see Figure 6.14). Fear of uncertain future, which had been his highest fear pre-intervention, decreased a little and remained his highest fear, although at a slightly lower level. All his other fears were low pre-intervention and decreased even lower post-intervention.

When examining the decrease in the common fears between mum, dad, and the athlete, the PFAI results showed that fear of upsetting important others decreased for all of them, but mostly for mum. Fear of uncertain future, which had been high (at a medium level) pre-intervention for dad and the athlete, decreased for both of them, showing a slightly greater decrease in the athlete's fear.

Dad 4- FF for child

|	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-1.71	-1.75	0.00	-1.00	-1.40
post	-1.86	-1.75	-0.50	-1.60	-2.00
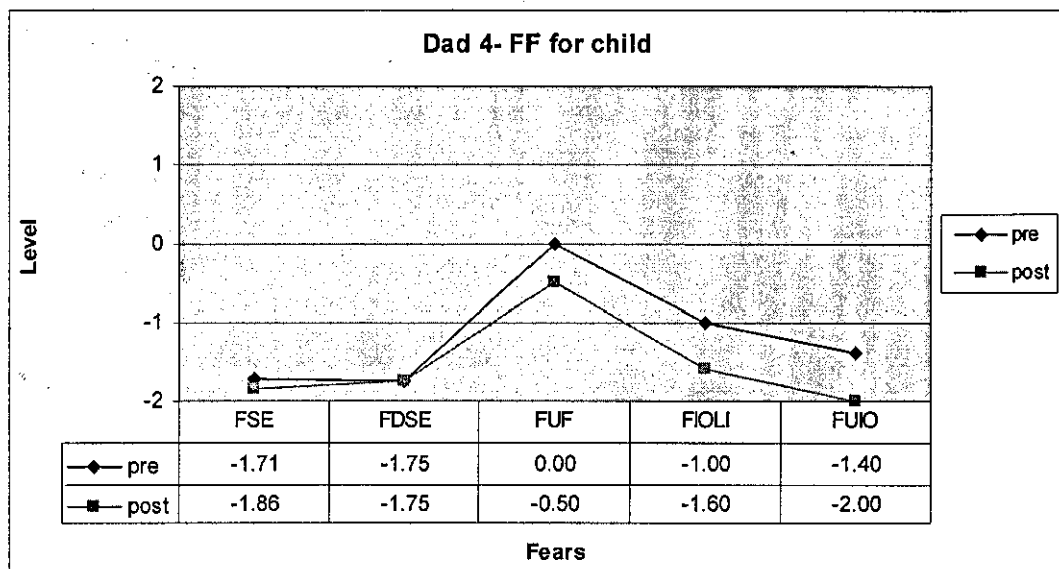
Figure 6.14: Dad 4 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In summary, the PFAI results showed a decrease in athlete 4's fears of devaluing self-estimate, of uncertain future, and of upsetting important others. The PFAI results also showed a decrease in all of mum's and dad's fears, with a greater level of decrease in mum's fears than dad's. The AGQ-S results revealed that all of athlete 4's achievement goals decreased post-intervention. Her avoidance motivation goals decreased and remained at low to medium levels. The qualitative data revealed that mum and dad improved their pre- and post-competition interactions with their daughter by not getting involved with pre-competition preparation and giving her instructions, by not criticising her post-competition, and by taking a "24-hour time out" before discussing the performance with her.

Furthermore, mum revealed that she was able to watch her daughter perform and to feel relaxed during the performance, something that she had been unable to do before the intervention. However, as Caroline only performed in two competitions (of which mum only attended one) during the 10-week period after the intervention, it is difficult fully to assess the benefit of the intervention for this family.

Family 5

After the intervention, both mum (Sandra) and dad (Eric) changed their interaction style with Kate (athlete 5) and her younger (aged 11 years) sister, who is also a skater at the same academy (but not at the elite level yet, and was not a participant in the present study). Dad stated that, pre-competition, "I just tell them now 'do your best and have a good skate'". Thus, he stopped giving them instructions regarding their performance pre-competition, as he used to do before the intervention. Mum revealed that changing her pre-competition interaction with her daughters helped her feel more relaxed before their competitions. She stated:

> "I realise now that all my fussing before [competition] is all about me being nervous and, like you said, it's shifting my anxiety over to them. So I didn't do it this time, instead, I just stepped back and let them [daughters] get on with it [pre-competition preparation] and as a result I didn't feel nervous before they skated and I wasn't as exhausted afterwards as I normally feel, and I really just enjoyed it [the competition]. So I guess I learnt that not fussing before helps me and them not to be nervous before they skate. So it was really good to have learnt that from that evening [the seminar].

Mum and dad also improved their interactions with their daughters post-competitions, as they both disclosed:

> "The comments now from us afterwards are 'you did your best?' 'cos there is no point in dissecting it [the performance] straight after they comes off [the ice], the coach will dissect it later....Sandra [mum] and I talk more now without including Kate [athlete], even if we feel disappointed and think 'she did better than the score she got' or 'she didn't get there [didn't get a high score] because she didn't perform on the day', or whatever it is. We don't discuss it with Kate now because whatever we say it's not gonna make any difference because it gone and finished, and she knows where she went wrong [in her performance], and the coach will discuss it with her.... So that's changed for both of us. Our attitude now towards Kate failing or succeeding is that if she did her best then wherever she comes [on the score] we can't ask for anything more" [dad].

> "When they [daughters] came off [the ice] we just congratulated them. We didn't discuss their performance, only a tiny bit the next day, but not really said much. Like you said, we left it for the coaches this time, and I think that, I agree with you, we should leave it to the coaches.... I learnt not to get involved with the coaching side... now we're more conscious of the fact to let the coaches get on with what they're doing. That's the main thing" [dad].

"I just take a step back now, so not to criticise or comment at all afterwards [the performance].... Before [the seminar] I used to say 'oh that wasn't very good' or 'you can do better than that'. Now I don't say anything afterwards *(laugh)*. If I didn't see anything good I wouldn't say anything now *(laugh)*.... So I let them [daughters] do what they need to do and I'll be there to support them, and they don't need more criticism if things don't go right for them [in the performance] .... Also in myself I try to be more relaxed about it and not get so involved in it, I mean, I'm not a coach so I shouldn't comment on it [the performance], like you said that evening [in the seminar], which I have done before [the seminar], but not anymore. I now leave it down to them and their coaches" [mum].

"When they [daughters] came off the ice I tried to give them equal support and praises and hugs, like you said, and I gave them affection and we didn't talk about their performance, 'cos you said leave it to the next day and keep it very brief, and leave it to their coaches. So we [mum and dad] really hardly talked about it even the next day. I suppose they know what was right and wrong and, like you said, the coaches are more qualified to discuss it with them, so we didn't say much at all, we said one or two things only. But it proved to be a good idea the 24hr time-out that you suggested" [mum].

It appears from mum's and dad's quotes that now they do not criticise their daughters for making mistakes during their performances but, instead, they leave post-competition analysis and comments for the coaches. On an occasion when they did comment on their performances, they waited until the following day and kept their comments brief. Thus, they implemented the "24-hour time out" that I had suggested, allowing for a cooling off period (i.e., taking time to get over the emotions that accompany a disappointment) before discussing the performance. Mum now views her role as providing her daughters with support after competition and, like dad, also leaves performance analysis to the coaches. These changes, both parents revealed, resulted from the intervention.

In her interview, Kate [athlete 5] revealed "Now if I don't do my jumps properly they [parents] are still nice.... before [the seminar] they used to tell me that I didn't do it very well, not normally, but if I didn't jump well... but now they don't". Thus, she noticed the change in her parents' behaviour post-competition in that they no longer criticised her for making mistakes in her performance. She stated that she liked this change in her parents and that she believed that post-competition comments and analysis "is the coaches' job not the parents' job".

The PFAI results showed that athlete 5's overall FF decreased post-intervention from medium to low levels (see Figure 6.15). Fears of shame and embarrassment, of devaluing self-estimate, and of uncertain future all decreased markedly; the latter two fears decreased from a medium to a low level. Her fear of shame and embarrassment had been at a very high level pre-intervention, being her highest fear. This fear decreased to a medium level post-intervention and was no longer her highest fear. Interestingly, her highest fear post-intervention was of important others losing interest, which increased from a medium to a

high level. Her fear of upsetting important others remained at a similar lever post-intervention despite her parents changing their interaction style with her pre- and post-competition, thus, suggesting that her fear of upsetting important others may relate to other people that she valued (e.g., her coaches) and feared upsetting.

Figure 6.15: Athlete 5 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The AGQ-S results revealed that athlete 5's achievement goals decreased post-intervention (see Figure 6.16). The largest decrease occurred to her PAv goals, which decreased from a high to a low level. Her MAv goals decreased slightly but remained at a high level post-intervention. Thus, the low level of PAv goals post-intervention may indicate that she was no longer focusing on avoiding normative incompetence, while the high level of MAv goals may indicate that she was still focusing on avoiding self- or task-referential incompetence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The decrease in her fears (of shame and embarrassment, of devaluing self-estimate, and of uncertain future) may explain the decrease in her avoidance goals as such goals are grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).
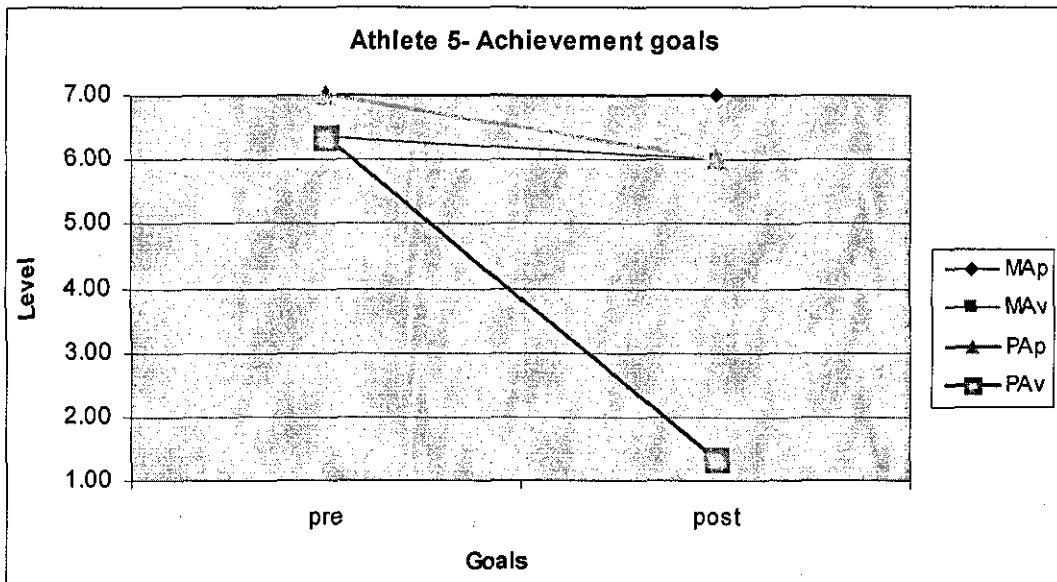
Figure 6.16: Athlete 5 achievement goals level pre- and post-intervention (MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

The PFAI results showed that all of mum 5's fears of failure for her daughter decreased post-intervention (see Figure 6.17). Her fears of shame and embarrassment and of upsetting important others had been her highest fears pre-intervention and both decreased a little post-intervention. Fears of uncertain future and of important others losing interest, although decreased slightly post-intervention, remained at medium levels and were her highest fears post-intervention.

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	0.57	-0.25	0.25	0.40	0.60
post	-0.29	-1.00	0.00	0.00	-0.20
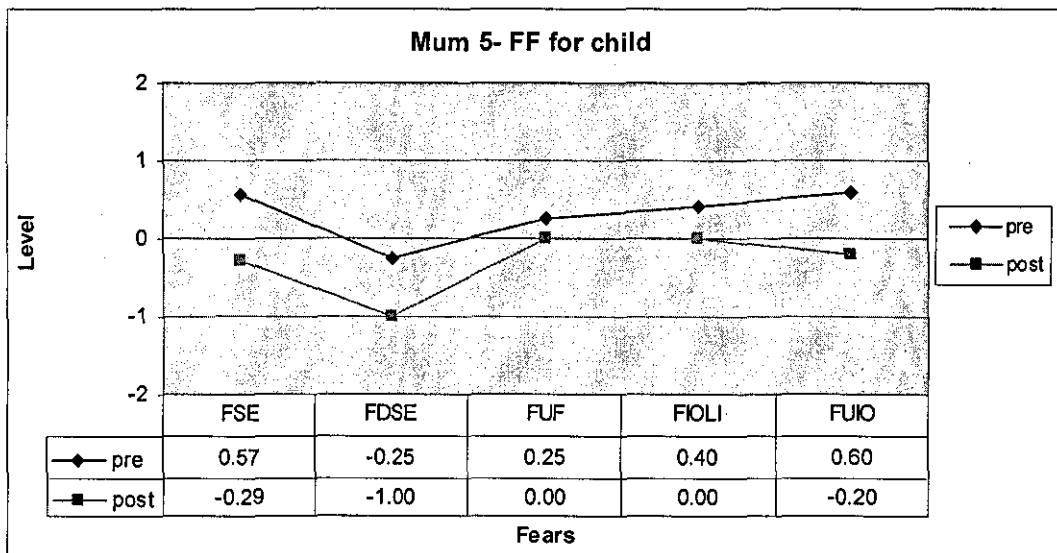
Figure 6.17: Mum 5 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

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The PFAI results showed that dad 5's fears of upsetting important others, of important others losing interest, and of uncertain future remained at similar levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.18). His fear of shame and embarrassment decreased markedly and his fear of devaluing self-estimate increased markedly. Overall, his fears pre- and post-intervention remained between medium and low levels.
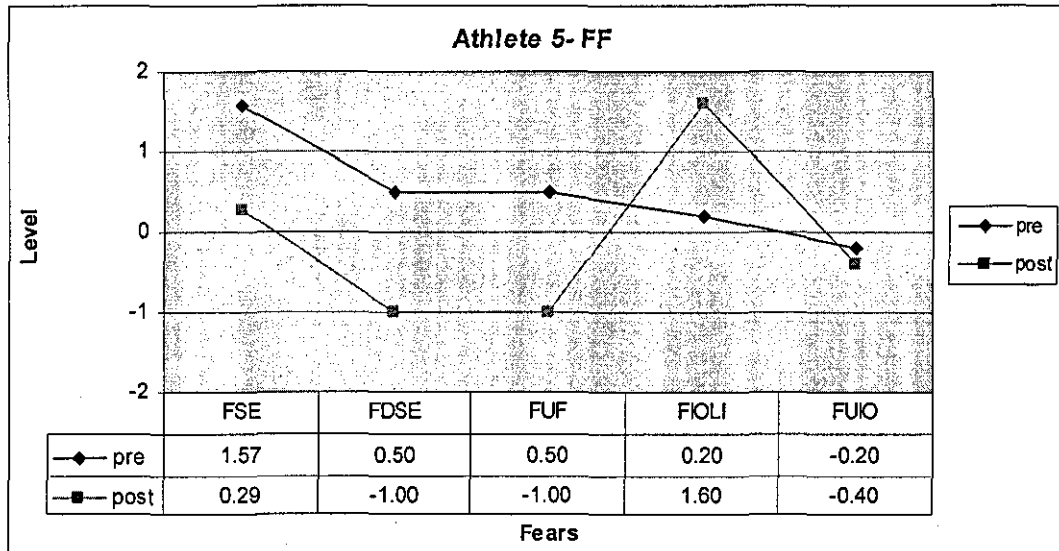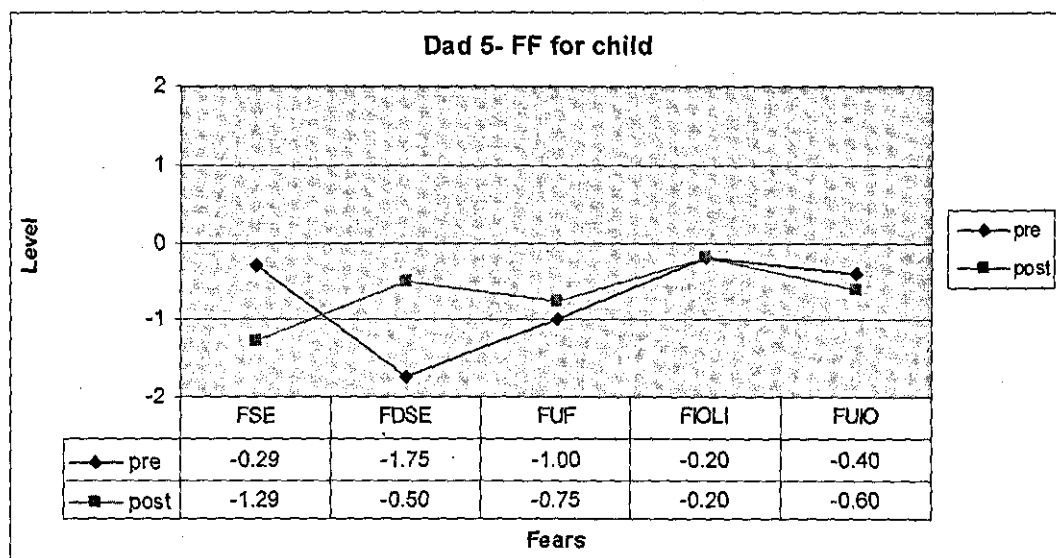

Figure 6.18: Dad 5 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

When examining the decrease in the common fears between mum, dad, and the athlete, the PFAI results showed that fear of shame and embarrassment decreased mostly for the athlete and equally for mum and dad. Post-intervention, this fear was at a medium level for the athlete and mum and at a low level for dad. Fear of devaluing self-estimate decreased more for the athlete than for mum and was at a low level post-intervention (at exactly the same level) for both of them.

In summary, the PFAI results showed that athlete 5's overall FF decreased post-intervention. Her fear of upsetting important others remained at a similar lever post-intervention despite her parents improving their pre- and post-competition interaction style with her, thus, suggesting that important others may also have included other people (e.g., her coaches) that she valued and feared upsetting. The AGQ-S results revealed that all of athlete 5's achievement goals decreased post-intervention. The largest decrease accrued to her PAv goals, which decreased from a high to a low level. The PFAI results showed that all of mum 5's fears of failure for her daughter decreased post-intervention. Fears of

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shames and embarrassment and of upsetting important others, which had been her highest

fears pre-intervention, decreased markedly post-intervention. The PFAI results for dad 5's

overall fears of failure for his daughter remained at similar levels post-intervention and his

fear of shame and embarrassment decreased markedly. The qualitative data revealed that

both mum and dad improved their interactions with their daughter pre- and post-

competition as a result of the intervention. Pre-competition, they stopped getting involved

with preparations, which helped mum to stop feeling nervous and to remain relaxed. Post-

competition, they stopped criticising Kate for making mistakes in her performance and,

instead, left performance analysis for the coaches to conduct. Kate stated that she liked her

parents not commenting and criticising her mistakes post-competition and leaving it for her

coaches. It appears that, with this family, like with families 1 and 3, the effect of the

intervention extended its benefit, not just to the elite athlete in the family, but also to the

athlete's younger sibling.

Family 6

After the seminar mum changed her outlook on achievement in sport and emphasised

need for enjoyment and improvement, rather than expecting and pressurising her daughter

to win. Thus, mum became more mastery- than outcome-oriented. She explained:

> "I think I tried to understand more where she's [athlete 6] coming from. I've tried to let her
> enjoy it more and not think of long term, because I was quite focused on her achievements
> and how other people see her achievements. You know, people think that it's a natural
> progression that she's gonna start here and finish there, but I've just sort of thought 'well
> she may not, she may give up swimming in a year's time, she might do all these other
> things, so I'm not just gonna think that she's gonna achieve it, and I'm just gonna let her
> enjoy it and do what she wants to do with it and not pressurise her'.... Because of the time
> commitment I used to think 'it's such a big commitment and we need to get something out
> of it, we need to be seeing her on a world stage at some time for our time and effort that we
> put into it'. You know, that we should be seeing this for our efforts at the end of it.
> Whereas now I think 'well, it is sport and if she continues to improve, in 6 months or 6
> years or whatever, then that's it, it is just a sport. So, I've changed my outlook.... I think
> I've become a lot better. I know I'm guilty of not behaving well after galas, but I've
> listened to what you've said that evening [seminar] and I've tried to change things.... I'm
> very positive about it now, I want her to succeed, I want her to do what she wants to do, but
> it's her success not mine and if she chooses it then it's fine, and if she doesn't it's also
> fine.... I think I've just become more realistic about what she can achieve" [mum 6].

It appears that mum's post-competition communication with her daughter (Emma,

athlete 6) also changed. Before the seminar, mum had typically expected her daughter to

win, and when she did not win, mum had expressed her disappointment. After the seminar,

in contrast, mum praised her daughter for her efforts when she lost. This further indicates

that mum changed her attitude and outlook regarding achievement and outcome in sport.

Mum *stated:*

"I said to her [daughter] 'you know, you did have a really good race and we're really proud of you, you don't have to come first all the time', and so and so [other competitor] 'is a lot older than you, so don't expect to beat her'.... I used to say I want her to get first and get a medal for it. But now I feel that if she gets this gala or competition out of the way that it doesn't matter, she's got another one, and that it isn't about medals, but her long term development.... I don't struggle with her not coming home with lots of medals. I mean, I used to if she came home with bronzes I used to be like 'oooooooowwwwww *(making an unhappy face)* why didn't you get the gold?' I didn't use to say it to her, but that's how I felt. But now I think 'hang on a minute, I can't swim the way she does, and there are hundreds and hundreds of other kids who can't swim as well as she does, so it's a real achievement in itself'".

"After galas and things...I used to think 'well you didn't try hard enough'. I didn't use to tell her this but my body language must have shown her that I wasn't pleased with her. But I really do try now not to do it.... My verbal and non-verbal communications were wrong before and now they are both better. I said to her recently, 'you did have a really good race and we're really proud of you'.... So, I think I've been much more positive.... I think I've become a lot better. I know I'm guilty of not behaving well after galas.... It was lots of non-verbal and verbal communications.... but I've listened to what you've said that evening and I've tried to change things.... I used to say things to her after races, not in a nasty way, but I understand now that it may have come very hurtful to her, but I don't say these things now. Now I'm very positive about it.... I said to her then [after the seminar] that I realise now that I did lots of things after competitions that perhaps put pressure on her and whether she felt that. She said that she felt that I was disappointed in her in how she did in the race".

It appears from mum's quotes that her attitude and approach towards her daughter's winning and losing improved and her expectations were modified and became more realistic. Mum became more accepting of her daughter's failures to win races, less condemning, and more positive, both through her verbal and non-verbal communications post-competition.

Dad also implemented changes in his communication with his daughter, stating:

"I pretty much agree with what you said in the seminar. I do tend to now question her less about what she's been doing [in training].... I don't ask her now after every single training 'what did you do?', but now I ask only every now and again, but not all the time.... Before [the seminar] I also used to say to her [pre-competition] 'remember about your turns' and I'd talk about tactical things, whereas now I just say 'go and enjoy it'.... After the races I just wait for her to tell me things rather than me go to her and enquire 'did you do this?' and 'what did you think about that?' I still do it a bit, but not as much as I used to do before [the seminar].... Telling from her body language, I think she prefers me now to leave her to talk about it [performance] when she wants to rather than me to tease it out of her".

It appears from dad's quote that he questioned Emma less about her daily training and about her performance after competitions. Dad also stopped giving her pre-competition instructions and projected to her a more relaxed approach by only telling her "go and enjoy it". Thus, his communications with Emma pre- and post-competition and training

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improved.

Emma noticed a change in her parents' behaviour during the 10-week period. She stated, "I noticed a bit of a change. Like if I didn't swim that well they don't ask me too much questions why I didn't, like they used to before.... I like it.... I prefer it now really".

The PFAI results showed that athlete 6's overall FF had been low pre-intervention and remained at similar levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.19). Fear of upsetting important others, which had been her highest fear pre-intervention, decreased the most (from medium low level) post-intervention. This decrease may have resulted from her parents' change in interaction with her pre- and post-competition; a change that she noticed and liked.

Athlete 6- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.71	-0.75	-1.00	-1.40	-0.20
post	-0.43	-1.00	-1.00	-1.20	-0.80

Fears

Figure 6.19: Athlete 6 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The AGQ-S results revealed that athlete 6's achievement goals were overall at similar levels pre- and post-intervention (see Figure 6.20), suggesting that her achievement motives did not change over the 10-week period. Her approach goals remained at medium-high levels. Her MAv goals decreased a little and remained at medium levels, while her PAv goals also decreased a little, and were at low levels post-intervention. The low-medium levels of her avoidance goals corresponded with her overall low levels of FF; reinforcing the claim that avoidance goals are grounded in high FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).
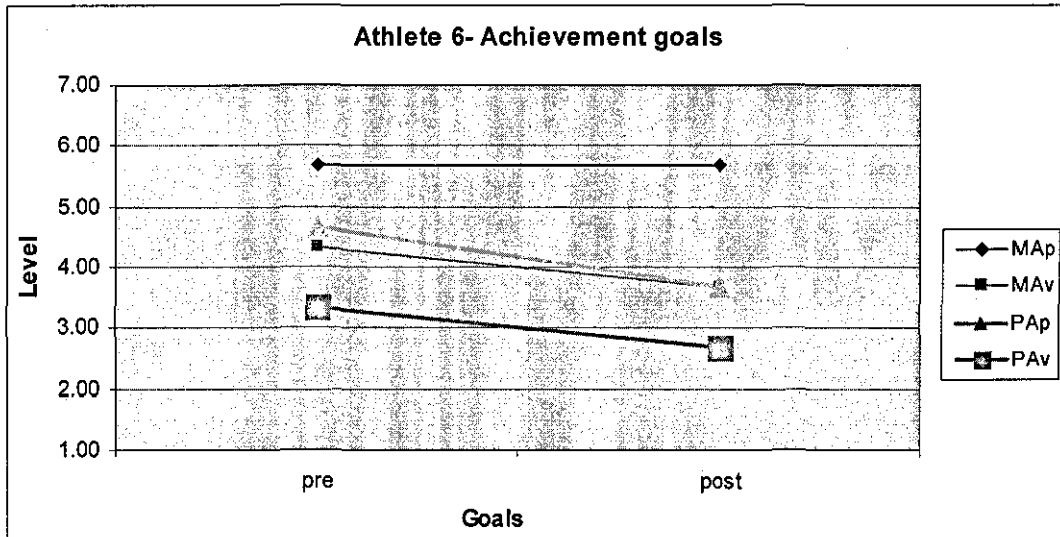
Figure 6.20: Athlete 6 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention (MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

The PFAI results for mum 6's fears of failure for her daughter showed that fear of uncertain future increased and remained her highest fear post-intervention (see Figure 6.21). Fear of important others losing interest, which had been her lowest fear pre-intervention, increased markedly and became her second highest fear post-intervention. Fear of upsetting important others, which had been her third highest fear pre-intervention, decreased a little, and fears of shame and embarrassment and of devaluing self-estimate also remained low and at similar levels post-intervention.

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.71	-0.75	0.00	-1.00	-0.40
post	-0.57	-1.00	0.75	0.60	-0.80
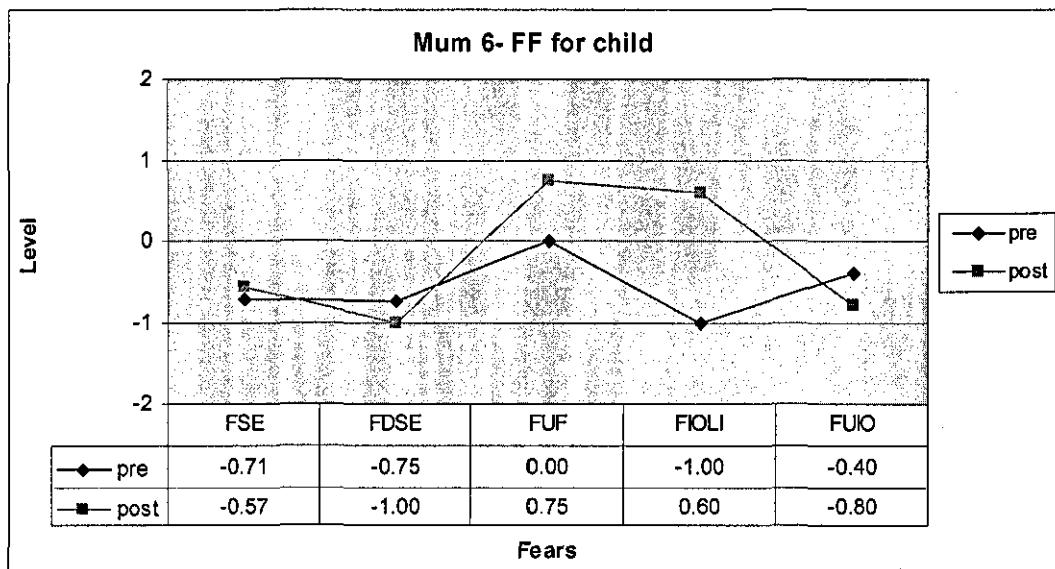
Figure 6.21: Mum 6 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

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The PFAI results showed that dad 6's overall fears of failure for his daughter remained at similar levels post-intervention (see Figure 6.22). His highest fears pre-intervention had been of uncertain future and of upsetting important others and both remained at the same level post-intervention. Fear of important others losing interest increased markedly and became his highest fear post-intervention.

Dad 6- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
—♦— pre	-0.57	-1.00	0.25	-0.20	0.20
—■— post	-0.57	-0.75	0.25	0.60	0.40

Fears

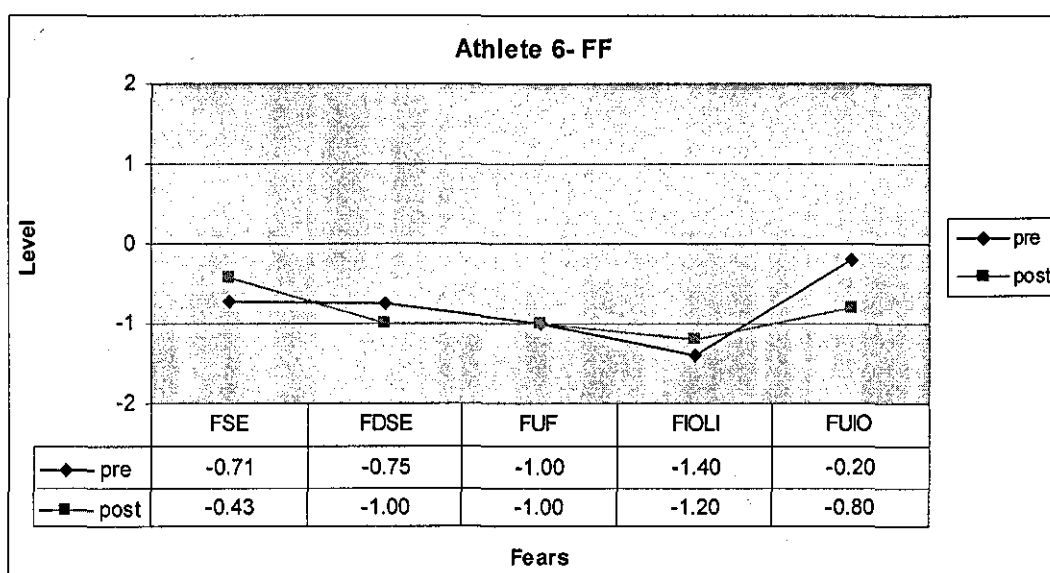**Figure 6.22:** *Dad 6 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention*
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

When examining the decrease in the common fears between mum, dad, and the athlete, the PFAI results showed that fear of upsetting important others, which had been at a medium level for all three, decreased the most (from medium to low level) for Emma post-intervention. This fear remained at a similar level (medium) for both parents post-intervention.

In summary, the PFAI results showed that athlete 6's overall fears of failure had been low pre-intervention and remained at similar levels post-intervention. Fear of upsetting important others, which had been her highest fear pre-intervention, decreased a little post-intervention, a decrease that may have resulted from her parents' change in interaction with her pre- and post-competition. The AGQ-S results revealed that athlete 6's achievement goals were overall at similar levels pre- and post-intervention. Her avoidance goals decreased a little, MAv remained at medium level and MAp decreased to a low level. The low-medium levels of her avoidance goals corresponded with her overall low levels of FF; reinforcing the claim that avoidance goals are grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The qualitative data revealed that both parents improved their interactions with their

daughter pre- and post-competition. Mum not only improved her verbal and non-verbal communications with her daughter but also changed her achievement orientation from an outcome to a more mastery orientation.

Control group

The data collected from the control group revealed similar levels of fears of failure (as measured by the PFAI) and of achievement goals (as measured by the AGQ-S) pre- and post-intervention both for the athletes and their parents. This is illustrated in the examples shown below from family 7 (see Figures 6.23-6.26; appendix 8 shows the results obtained from all the families in the control group). These results are in contrast with the results obtained from the treatment group that revealed that the levels of fears of failure of the athletes and their parents decreased after the intervention. Avoidance motivation goals also decreased for most of these athletes. The contrast in results obtained from the two groups suggests that the benefits of the treatment did not extend to the control group, as they did not receive the treatment.

Athlete 7 - FF

|	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.14	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00	1.60
post	0.14	-1.00	-2.00	-0.80	1.60

Figure 6.23: Athlete 7 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

Athlete 7- Achievement goals

Figure 6.24: Athlete 7 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention
(MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach
goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

Mum 7- FF for child

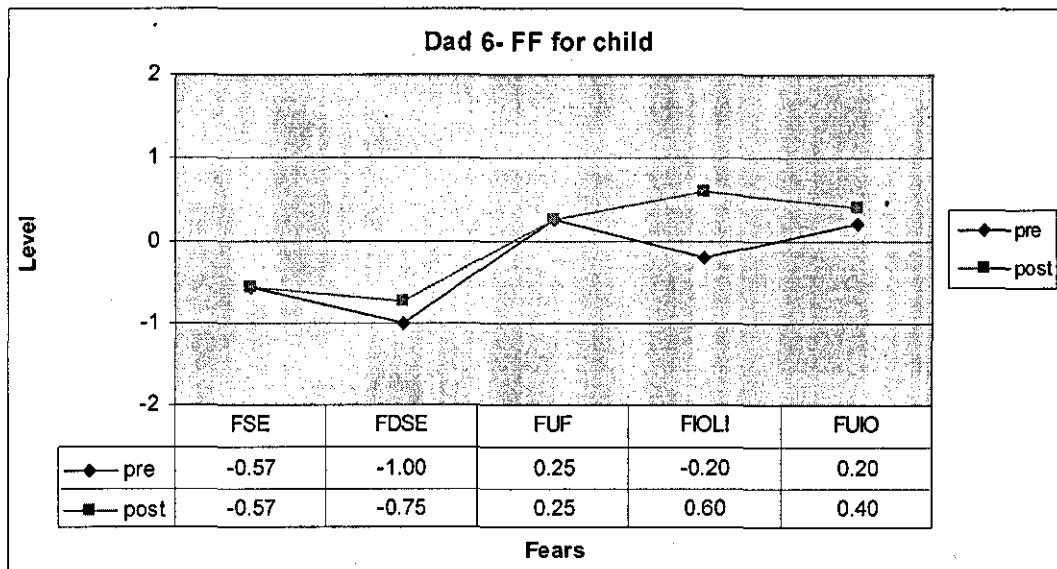|	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.43	-1.75	0.25	0.40	1.00
post	-0.14	-1.75	0.00	-0.20	0.60

Figure 6.25: Mum 7 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-
intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing
self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing
interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

Dad 7- FF for child

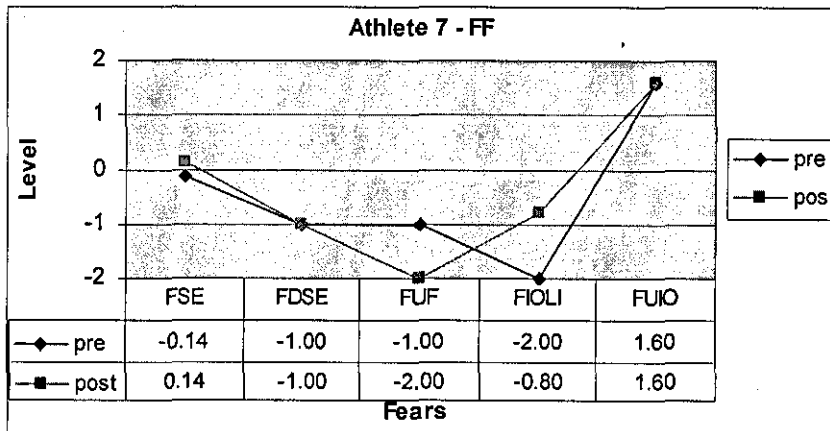|	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.14	-0.75	0.50	-0.40	-0.40
post	0.14	-0.50	0.50	0.00	-0.60

Figure 6.26: Mum 7 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-
intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing
self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing
interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

Summary of results:

Table 6.2 provides a summary of the changes ascertained from the PFAI, the AGQ-S, and the qualitative results post-intervention. It shows only decreases in fears of failure and in avoidance goals that were greater than 0.4 because avoidance goals are grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). As there are no norms available to base this decision, 0.4 was chosen as a conservative point. The qualitative results show the improvement in parental behaviour and attitude post-intervention.

	PFAI results			AGQ-S results (athlete)	Qualitative results
	Athlete	Mum	Dad		
Family 1	-	-	FDSE FUF	-	· Improved interaction post-competition · ↓ criticism (post-competition) · "24-hour timeout" (post-competition analysis) · ↑ autonomy to child · Effect extended to sibling
Family 3	FUF FUIO	FUF FUIO	FUIO	MAv	· Improved general communication (less sport-focused) · Effect extended to sibling
Family 4	FDSE FUF FUIO	FSE FDSE FUF FIOLI FUIO	FUF FIOLI FUIO	MAv PAv	· Improved interaction pre- & post-competition · ↓ involvement & instruction pre-competition · ↓ criticism (post-competition) · "24-hour timeout" (post-competition analysis) · ↓ Mum's expectations · Mum relaxed during-competition
Family 5	FSE FDSE FUF	FSE FDSE FIOLI FUIO	FSE	PAv	· Improved interaction pre- & post-competition · ↓ involvement & instruction pre-competition · ↓ criticism (post-competition) · "24-hour timeout" (post-competition analysis) · Effect extended to sibling · Mum relaxed pre- and during-competition
Family 6	FUIO	FUIO	-	MAv PAv	· Improved interaction pre- & post-competition · ↓ instruction pre-competition · ↓ criticism (post-competition) · take timeout (post-competition analysis) · ↓ Mum's expectations · Mum became more mastery oriented

Table 6.2: Summary of changes ascertained from the PFAI, AGQ-S, and the qualitative results for each family (*Fears:* FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important other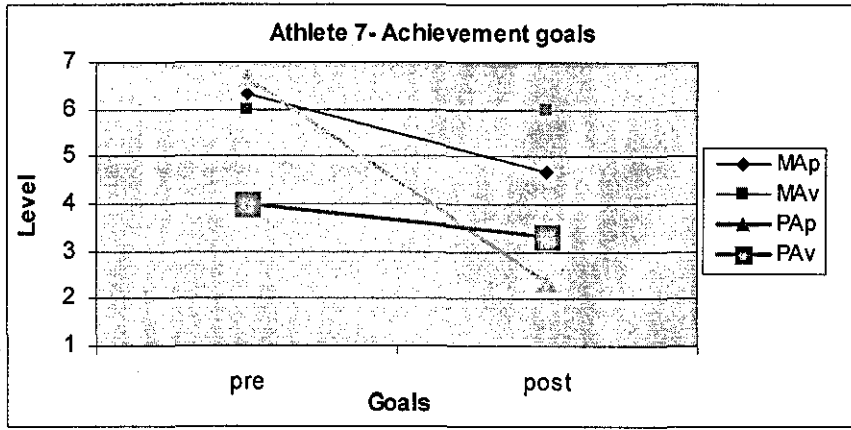s losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others. *Achievement goals:* MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

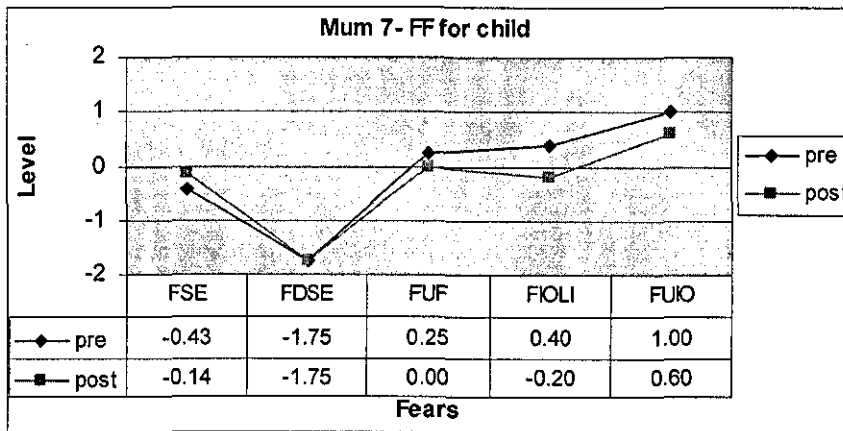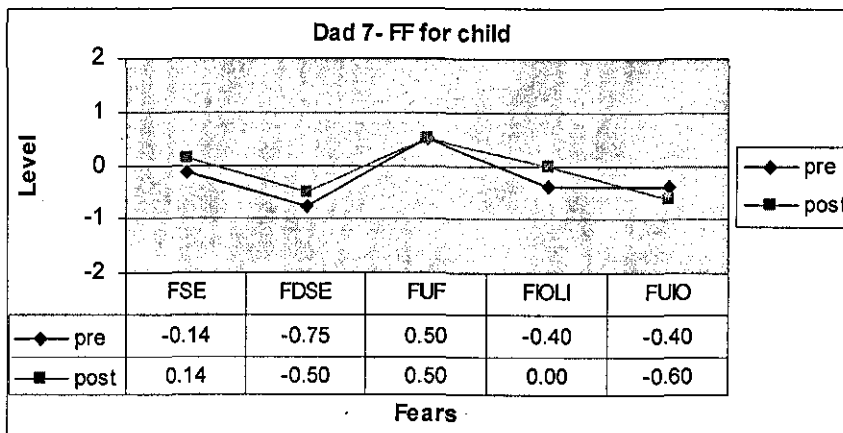## 6.3.3 Discussion and Conclusions

The primary aim of the present study was to reduce young elite athletes' FF through parental education, and its secondary aim was to reduce parents' own fear of their child's failure. Specifically, the study aimed to reduce parents' over involvement in their child's sporting career, to reduce their criticism, punishments and threat post child's failure, to modify their high expectations of their child's achievement, to challenge parents' perceptions of the meaning of success and failure in sport (i.e., develop process and mastery orientation rather than outcome orientation), and to teach parents favourable ways of reacting to their children's failures. It appears from the results that the study achieved most of its aims with most of the families. All the parents improved their interactions with their child-athlete pre- and post-competition. They all decreased their criticism of their child's performance and some took a "24-hour timeout" post-competition before discussing the performance with their child. Parents in three families (i.e., family 4, 5, and 6) reduced their involvement in pre-competition preparation and in giving their child instructions pre-competition. As a result, two mothers out of these three families felt more relaxed pre- and during-competition than they had done prior to the intervention. Finally, two mothers (mum 4 and 6) changed their approach and perceptions of achievement in sport and modified their expectations of their child's sporting achievements.

The results obtained from the measures (i.e., PFAI and AGQ-S, which were employed to ascertain types and levels of fears of failure and achievement goals, respectively) utilized in the study also reflected the benefits of the intervention for the families. Post-intervention, one to three fears were lower for each athlete and dad, and one to five fears were lower for each mum. Furthermore, in most of the families (i.e., family 3, 4, 5 and 6) common fears between parents and athletes were reduced. Avoidance motivation goals also decreased for most of the participating athletes. This may have resulted from the reduction in their FF as avoidance motivation is grounded in FF (Elliot &McGregor, 2001). Thus, by lowering the athletes' FF their avoidance motivation goals were also lowered.

When examining the overall benefits of the intervention, based on the results from the qualitative and the measures data obtained, it appears that family 4 benefited the most from the intervention, followed by family 5. Moreover, it also appears from the results that the effect of the intervention not only benefited the elite athlete in the family but also extended its benefits to their siblings (e.g., families 1, 3, and 5).

In conclusion, the present study demonstrated that the fears of failure of young athletes' can be reduced by educating parents. Moreover, it can also help reduce parents' own fear of their child's failure. Reducing parents' FF can help sever the transmission of FF from parents to child and, consequently, to reduce young elite athletes' FF and its development. The results of the present study were achieved through one educational session with parents; therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that regular delivery of educational sessions to parents can be greatly beneficial to young elite athletes and their parents, benefiting their relationships and reducing their levels of FF. Accordingly, study 3b aimed to examine the benefits of a 10-week one-to one intervention programme for reducing the FF of a young athlete and her parents.

6.4 Study 3b: A One-to-One Intervention to Reduce the Fear of Failure of a Young Elite Athlete and Her Parents

6.4.1 Method

• **Participants**

Of the three families that participated in study 2, I considered families 1 and 2 suitable participants to recruit for study 3b, the one-to one intervention. These families showed high FF levels and the dads in both families were over-involved in their children's sporting careers and had high expectations for achievement from their children. Both dads demonstrated controlling and punitive behaviours towards their children that contributed to the development of their children's FF. Therefore, prior to commencing the present study I offered families 1 and 2 the option to participate in both study 3a (the seminar) and study 3b (the one-to-one intervention), which aimed to teach parents effective ways of communicating and interacting with their child-athlete. Both families accepted the offer, although family 1 declined participation in study 3b, as dad felt (contrary to mum) that they did not need a one-to-one psychological intervention. In contrast, both parents in family 2 felt that they would benefit from weekly one-to-one sessions. Furthermore, when I spoke in private with their daughter, she told me that she welcomed her parents' participation and also agreed to participate in the study herself.

Family 2 was an intact British family (of Caucasian origin; children and parents living

together under the same roof; parents in their first marriage) with two adolescent children (a boy and a girl aged 16 and 14 years, respectively). The daughter, Jenny, was an elite tennis player at a national tennis academy. She started playing tennis at the age of 7 years and gradually progressed, reaching an elite level and entering a national tennis academy at the age of 13 years. At the time of the study, she reported four years experience of playing at national level competitions and two years at international level. She was ranked within the top ten players in the UK for her age category. She attended school on a special programme, which allowed her to attend classes around her training and competition schedule. She competed in tournaments on most weekends and also played for her local tennis club in the ladies first team. Her parents (mostly dad) typically took her to competition venues (national and international) and attended her competitions, except for rare occasions when she travelled with her academy coaches. They also attended her club competitions. Both her parents (Paula and Jim, aged 46 and 48 years, respectively) held full-time (five days per-week) professional jobs. Her dad was a tennis enthusiast and played tennis at club level. At a younger age, he had played football at a semi-professional level, until an injury terminated his career. Her mum and brother did not participate in sport.

- **Procedure and design**

The design of the present study was the same as that of study 3a from phase 1 to phase 4 (see above section 6.3.1 'procedures and design', and Figure 6.2). However, while the families in study 3a did not have any contact with me between phases 3 and 4 (i.e., 10 weeks), family 2, which participated in the present study (3b), had weekly one-to-one sessions with me between those phases. Furthermore, whereas study 3a ended after phase 4, the present study (3b) continued for a further eight weeks into phases 4 and 5, which comprised two follow-up sessions with the athlete and her parents.

One-to-one sessions- All of the one-to-one sessions with the family (mum, dad, and Jenny) took place at the tennis academy in a private and quiet room that the academy had offered for the purpose. I conducted weekly sessions with the parents together and with Jenny separately; usually on different days of the week and according to their availability. Jenny was not available (due to international competition and overseas training) for sessions during the first two weeks of the intervention and, as such, received eight sessions while her parents received ten sessions. The sessions with Jenny lasted 35-45 minutes each and with her parents 75-90 minutes.

As the sessions were not audio-recorded, I discreetly wrote down in my journal quotes from the participants that I deemed relevant for the study. After each session, I wrote down in my journal my thoughts and reflections on the session (e.g., what had been discussed, the dynamic of our interaction during the session) and ideas and approaches to incorporate in the following session.

Follow-up sessions- The two follow-up sessions (i.e., phases 4 and 5) aimed to find out if the athlete and her parents had been implementing what they had learnt from the intervention (i.e., the seminar and the one-to-one sessions) and, if so, how they were managing it. These two sessions also aimed to 'top up' their knowledge, to remind them of things that they may have forgotten and to encourage and motivate them to implement the changes that I had recommended. In addition, as the sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed, I also added my comments and suggestions to the transcripts before sending them respectively to the athlete and to her parents (see appendices 13 and 20 for examples of transcript extracts with my comments). Thus, the transcripts provided a further written resource for them to use.

- **The one-to-one intervention programme**

The one-to-one intervention commenced a week after the seminar that Jenny's parents had attended (see Figure 6.2). In this section, I will outline first the content of each of the ten sessions that I conduced with the parents and the two follow up sessions. I will then outline the content of each of the eight sessions that I conducted with Jenny and the two follow up sessions.

INTERVENTION SESSIONS WITH THE PARENTS:

Table 6.3 below shows a summary of each of the ten sessions of the intervention programme with the parents, including each session's topics and homework assignments. This is followed by a detailed description of each session.

Session	Topics	Homework
1 **(Week 1)**	Introduction to the intervention Establish interventions goals	*Start a 'reflection journal', writing down your thoughts, feelings, concerns, fears, ideas, etc.*
2 **(Week 2)**	Parental criticism	Think, reflect, and discuss between you (mum and dad) the issues examined in today's session. Use your journal regularly to *reflect.*
3 **(Week 3)**	*Eliminating parental criticism* Fostering autonomy in your child	1-Encourage Jenny gradually to take more responsibilities. 2- Take a "24-hour time out" post-competition. Keep match-analysis brief *(10 minutes maximum) and allow Jenny to lead it.* 3- Do not criticise her performance. Only communicate to her your positive feelings. Praise her for the positives in her performance regardless of match results. 4- Keep up your reflective journal and fill in an event sheet for each competition you attend.
4 **(Week 4)**	Eliminating parental criticism Reframing your language	1- Think, reflect, and discuss between you (mum and dad) the issues we examined in today's session. 2- Pay attention to the language you use in the next week and make a list of sentences that you think need to be challenged and reframed, and reframe them in your list. Also pay attention to each other's language in the family and reframe sentences that *you think are distorted and need to be reframed.* 3- Use your journal regularly to reflect.
5 **(Week 5)**	Reframing language and correcting distorted beliefs	1- Exercise 2 from previous session (as it was not done last week) 2- Mum to replicate the exercise we did in today's session with Jenny; list the 10 most important things in her life (3 minutes) and then reassess the list and make changes where she feels necessary (3 minutes). 3- Read and summarise the article on athletes' identity and retirement from sport for a 5-minute presentation each next week. 4 - Use your journal regularly to reflect.
6 **(Week 6)**	Athletes' identity and retirement from sport, avoiding identity *foreclosure* Fears of failure and establishing inner control	1- Read today's handout "Fears and establishing inner control" and complete the exercises. 2- Go over your list of fears and classify them as focusing on controllable or uncontrollable variables. Add to your list any other fears that you have.
7 **(week 7)**	Examining fears of failure	*Fill an event sheet for each of Jenny's competitions that you* attend this week and challenge your fears using the R.U.N principles.
8 **(Week 8)**	Irrational beliefs and fear of failure	1- Keep on filling an event sheet for each of Jenny's competitions that you attend this week and challenge your fears using the R.U.N principles. 2- Do "The 5 options exercise" in relations to Jenny's behaviour, coaches' behaviour, and other people's behaviour.

| 9 (Week 9) | Irrational beliefs

Relaxation techniques | 1- Keep challenging your distorted and absolutistic beliefs, using "The 5 options exercise". Also, begin to pay attention to Jenny's distorted and absolutistic beliefs and teach her how to change them by using "The 5 options exercise".

2- Practise relaxation techniques regularly and, especially, in days preceding competitions and during competitions when feeling stressed and anxious.

3- Put family's needs first, before tennis; family leisure activities, weekend away, etc.

4- Summarise each one of the nine intervention sessions. Include what we discussed in each session, what exercises we did, and what you learnt from each session. |
| 10 (Week 10) | Summary of the intervention programme | 1- Put into practice everything that you learnt from this intervention programme.

2- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.

3- Keep filling in an event sheet for each competition to help you monitor your thoughts and emotions. |

Table 6.3: Summary of the one-to-one intervention programme with the parents.

Session 1 (week 1)

<u>Session focus</u>: Introduction to the intervention

Establishing intervention goals

I began this session by explaining to the parents that my role over the course of the intervention would be that of an educator and, as such, I would be making suggestions and recommendations for them to implement in order to enhance their interactions with their daughter, rather than dictating to them what they should or should not do. It would be their decision which of my suggestions to implement, thus giving them a sense of autonomy in the intervention, rather than feeling that they would have to implement my recommendations against their wishes and that they were being controlled by me. I further explained that over the course of the intervention we would work together to find the best possible options to suit their family; thus giving them a sense of ownership in the intervention. Finally, I explained the purpose of homework assignments (i.e., to practice new behaviour and cognitive strategies between sessions) and that completing them for each session would help our progression.

For the first exercise of the intervention, I asked the parents to compile a list of their goals for the intervention, based on their learning outcome from the seminar. Their list included the following goals: improve communication with Jenny, help build Jenny's self-esteem and self-belief, help Jenny become more independent and assertive, help reduce Jenny's fear of losing, reduce dad's stress level during Jenny's performances, and reduce

dad's criticism of Jenny post-competition.

I explained to the parents that in order to achieve these goals they (especially, dad) would need to improve their interactions with Jenny. This would require them to change some of their behaviours, beliefs and approach to Jenny's competitions and career, and that we would work together towards achieving these goals in the following sessions. They agreed.

Homework:

Start a 'reflection diary' to include your reflections on today's discussion. Over the following weeks, regularly write down in the journal your thoughts, feelings, fears, concerns, ideas, etc. Use your journal regularly to reflect.

My interaction with the parents during this session was pleasant, as the following extract from my journal explains:

> "It was a nice session, they both seemed enthusiastic about doing the work and achieving their goals.... Dad insisted on telling me details about the tension between him and the coaches despite me telling him that it's not an issue that I would get involved in and that it's not related to our work together. I didn't like it that he still carried on talking about it despite my request not to. Mum said 'he just wants to get it off his chest', so I hope that he did and that he won't be telling me about it next week".

Session 2 (week 2)

Session focus: Parental criticism

I gave the parents a list of their quotes from the interviews that I had conducted with them during study 2, in order to illustrate to them their harsh criticism of Jenny's performance during-competition and post-failure (e.g., making mistakes, her reactions on court; see appendix 9). I also reiterated to them the negative psychological effects that their criticism could have on Jenny's social and athletic development and on her progression in sport (e.g., decreases self-esteem, decreases motivation, increases FF, increase self-criticism/ punitive action against the self) as I had explained in the seminar. I also explained that making mistakes and failing are a natural part of sport and learning, and that they need not be viewed as harmful and threatening to Jenny's progression as an athlete, or to the ways in which her coaches judge her. Moreover, at her age, the focus of the coaches in the academy is on the athletes' athletic development rather than on their win-lose record in tournaments.

Both parents stated that reading their quotes of criticism of Jenny made them feel "guilty" and "uncomfortable". Both acknowledged the importance of reducing their criticism of Jenny and of working towards achieving this goal over the course of the intervention. Dad stated that he had learnt that he needed "to encourage her more and not dwell on the negatives in her performance, like I do.... I've been too harsh with her sometimes.... I go on and on when I'm not happy with her performance.... I'm over involved".

Homework:

Think, reflect, and discuss between you (mum and dad) the issues we examined in today's session. Use your journal regularly to reflect on your thoughts, feelings, fears, concerns, ideas, etc.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflection on this session:

> "They still seemed enthusiastic about doing the work..... Dad talked again about the coaches but I put my foot down this time and insisted on not wasting time on something that is not related to our work together.... They didn't look too happy reading their quotes. Although at first dad tried to justify his behaviour he soon acknowledged that he needed to change his approach with Jenny and that his criticism is not helpful. He'll need to work hard to achieve this goal because he's been criticising her for years and is used to doing it. I hope that he'll try to make the change and won't give up when it gets tough for him".

Session 3 (week 3)

Session focus: Eliminating parental criticism

Fostering autonomy in your child

In this session I further discussed the possible harm of dad's criticism on Jenny and the need to eliminate it. As dad was accustomed to criticising Jenny from a young age, I anticipated that it would be a difficult behaviour for him to change. I therefore suggested implementing a "24-hour time out". This required dad to refrain from conducting match-analysis with Jenny for 24 hours post-competition in order to allow him to calm down and get over the negative emotions that failure typically elicited for him. I requested that dad implement this practice both post-success and post-failure, thus maintaining a consistent practice post-competition and treating success and failure the same. Dad agreed to implement it in the three competitions that Jenny was scheduled to compete in the coming week.

In this session I also recommended to the parents the need to foster autonomy in their daughter instead of adopting parental controlling behaviour, which I had identified in study 2 as a mechanism of FF transmission from dad to Jenny. I explained the benefits of fostering autonomy and suggested ways of implementing it when interacting with Jenny (see appendix 10 for this session's handout). Interviews with dad and Jenny in study 2 revealed that dad typically imposed his opinions and wishes on Jenny and did not seek her opinion about tournament entry, competition planning, match tactics, and post-match analysis. Therefore, the aim of this session was to encourage dad to seek and value Jenny's input and feelings and to encourage and endorse her independent opinion, thereby reducing his controlling behaviour and increasing Jenny's autonomy. Fostering autonomy can reduce Jenny's FF, increase her self-esteem, and contribute to her social and athletic development (Grolnick & Beiswemger, 2006).

Homework:

1- Encourage Jenny to gradually take on more responsibilities (see appendix 10 for a further explanation).

2- Take a "24-hour time out" after competitions regardless of the outcome. On the following day, match-analysis must be very brief (10 minutes maximum) with Jenny leading the discussion. Encourage her to reflect on her performance and allow her the opportunity to do so, and listen to her patiently without forcing your opinions on her. Be patient, praise her, and encourage her.

3- Communicate to her only your positive feelings and comments. Hence, do not criticise any aspects of her performance, but praise her for the positives in her performance regardless of match results (e.g., "you played that point very well", "you handled the double fault in the third game well", "your backhand was good", etc)

4- Keep winning and losing in perspective and treat them the same.

5- Keep up your reflective journal (thoughts, feelings, concerns, fears, etc) and fill in an event sheet (see appendix 10) for each of Jenny's competitions that you attend during the intervention period (starting from this week) to include your feelings, thoughts and the actions you take at that time.

The following extract from my journal illustrates the difficult interaction that I encountered with dad during this session:

"This was a difficult session for me. Today I saw the controlling Jim! I felt that he was constantly trying to control the session. He kept arguing with me and challenging what I said and kept wanting to talk about things that were not relevant to our work (the usual, complaining about the coaches and that he knows best, talking about tennis tactics, etc). He kept going off at a tangent when I asked him questions and when I brought him back to the issue at hand he wasn't happy, and eventually said, quite aggressively, 'you're very rude, you ask me a question and you don't let me answer'. He also tended to repeat himself. It was very frustrating for me today as I'm trying to help this family and I feel that he just wants to take over the session. He is also a very competitive person (by his and mum's account) and I feel that he was competing with me on who is in charge. He is typically very controlling in his approach with Jenny and generally at home (as mum revealed). So, I'm not surprised that he's trying to do the same with me, but I need to be firm and not let him take over these sessions or else we won't get any work done and won't progress. I think that there may be issues for him of power and control and not wanting to give it to me (or, possibly, finding it difficult to give it to me), which might explain his behaviour today.... This is the first time that he has worked with a psychologist and I guess it must be difficult for him to have a stranger questioning and poking into his parenting skills and his relationships with his little girl, whom I have no doubt he loves and wants to see succeed and achieve her aspirations in tennis, but I think that he believes that only he, and not the LTA, can help her to achieve it. I think that he's finding it quite difficult to let go and to allow the coaches take over Jenny's development as he has coached her and was in charge of her career until she entered the academy about 15 months ago.... I feel that he still wants (or needs) to feel that he's her coach and he's in charge, which creates tension between him and her coaches, and he keeps talking about it despite my telling him that it's not related to our work together.... The other frustrating thing was that he kept arguing and justifying his behaviour with Jenny and I felt that he wanted my approval for his behaviour and when he didn't get it he kept repeating himself. I guess that to agree with me (that his behaviour can be harmful to her) means to acknowledge that he's been unnecessarily aggressive and not treated Jenny kindly (albeit unknowingly) over the years. Therefore, by arguing and justifying his behaviour and rejecting my suggestions it helps him to feel better about *himself and his treatment of Jenny and, hence, to feel less guilty. In other words, his* argumentative behaviour with me may be his way of coping with his feelings of guilt.... I hope he turns up next week.... Mum is very pleasant and is very cooperative".

Session 4 (week 4)

Session focus: Eliminating parental criticism

Reframing your language

The session commenced by discussing last week's homework. Dad revealed that he had implemented the "24-hour time out" following Jenny's last three competitions despite "bursting to tell her what I thought *(laugh)*". However, it gradually got a little easier for him after the second and the third match. On the way back home they listened to football on the radio in the car and Jenny fell asleep. Although he managed to implement the "24-hour time out" last week he felt that it would be difficult to maintain it on occasions when they return from competitions that are far way and where they would have to spend more time in the car together. I suggested that he acquired audio books to play in the car, let Jenny sleep and listen to her Ipod, and discuss other matters. The post-match analysis, which took place

on the day after the competitions, lasted for five minutes where dad allowed Jenny to express her opinion about her performance and he "only added maybe 5% to what she said". This was a departure from dad's usual shouting and criticising Jenny and expressing his opinion on her performance without seeking her input. Dad stated that he was pleased with the outcome of the "24-hour time out" and was happy to carry on implementing it as he realised that "it reduced the heat of the discussion, so it's better to wait for a day and not [do post-match analysis] as soon as she comes off [court]".

We also discussed the events sheet (see appendix 10) that dad filled in for each of Jenny's three competitions that he had attended during the previous week. The sheet included a column for his feelings, thoughts, and the actions he took at that time. It appeared from the sheets that dad felt calm at the beginning of the match but became anxious when Jenny made mistakes or when she was behind in the score. He wrote that he gradually became more "anxious", "fidgety", "seriously annoyed". His thoughts were, "she's [Jenny] letting her [opponent] win", "she is not thinking", "her body language is crap, she is making the girl [opponent] more confident", and "she can do better, I know she can". Thus, it appears that thoughts of Jenny's possible failure (anticipating her failure) provoked dad's heightened negative emotions. His actions during those times, he revealed, were more subdued than usual as he remembered me saying in the seminar that displaying parental disapproval (e.g., shouting, raising arms and other non-verbal communications) during competition can have a negative impact on their child's performance. Nevertheless, he stated, "I only shouted 'c'mon! you can do it' once". He also revealed that he left the arena once because "I was annoyed and I didn't want her to see it. You said I shouldn't show her my actions…. Anyway, I also needed to go to the toilet". Hence, during that week, dad was beginning to be aware of his behaviour during Jenny's competitions and made some attempt to change his behaviour. This was an encouraging early outcome of the intervention.

During our conversation Jim stated "tennis is our life" and mum echoed his statement. I questioned their statements and challenged their perceptions that tennis was their life and asked what tennis actually meant to them. It appeared from their replies that they both viewed Jenny's tennis as the most valuable aspect of their family life and explained that tennis took priority in their family and that all other family activities revolved around Jenny's competition schedules. This provided the topic for the following session, which aimed to correct irrational beliefs and assumptions and reframe language, thus, examining

distorted language and the underlying thoughts.

Homework:

1- Think, reflect, and discuss between you (mum and dad) the issues we examined in today's session. Use your journal regularly to reflect.

2- Pay attention to the language you use in the next week and make a list of sentences that you think need to be challenged and reframed, and reframe them in your list. Also pay attention to each other's language in the family and reframe sentences that you think are distorted and need to be reframed.

3- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.

My interaction with dad during this session was difficult and, again, revolved around issues of control, as the next extract from my journal reveals:

> "This was another difficult session with dad, especially the second part of the session. I'm starting to see that for him it's about who's going to have the power and control in the session (i.e., me or him). I think he's trying to compete with me. He goes on and on with his stories and repeats things that mostly don't relate to my question or to the discussion. He keeps going off at a tangent and he doesn't like to be interrupted. He said in a very hostile tone "you have to let me finish what I'm saying" and carried on with his story. He doesn't like me leading the sessions and also me challenging his beliefs; and he gets impatient and angry with me.... He is probably not finding it easy to work with me as I keep challenging his beliefs and assumptions and, above all, I can see that he doesn't like not being in control, or "in the driver's seat", as mum once put it.... I need to explain to him next week that I value his stories but as we are constrained by time I have to stop him when he goes off at a tangent and that he shouldn't be offended or see it as a competition with me for who is controlling the sessions.... Will he turn up next week?"

Session 5 (week 5)

Session focus: Reframing language and correcting distorted beliefs

The aim of this session was to challenge the parents' distorted beliefs about tennis and its importance in their lives. Examining the language they used when talking about Jenny's tennis offered me an insight into their thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions and an opportunity to correct distorted and irrational beliefs that I considered to be provoking their (especially dad's) FF. In other words, by adopting a constructionist perspective, I drew their attention to their language, which they had been using to construct their realities, create meanings, and develop beliefs about Jenny's tennis. By making them aware of their language and its contribution to their FF formation, I sought to help them change it, in an attempt to reduce their fears.

The session began with an exercise that extended from dad's statement in the previous session, "tennis is our life". I asked the parents to compile a list each (in 3 minutes) of the ten most important things in their lives in order of importance to them (with 1 being the most important; see Table 6.4). We then discussed their lists (e.g., "tell me what you notice in your list") and the order of importance in which they considered things. Next, I asked the parents to re-assess their lists (in 3 minutes) and to change the order of the things in their lists where they felt it was necessary. This was followed by another discussion about the reasons behind their decision to re-order their lists. It was evident from their lists that they both valued their family the most and that neither of them had included Jenny's tennis or Jenny's career in their lists. Pointing this out to them surprised them. They concluded that they had neglected the important things in their lives stating, "We've got to re-assess our priorities" (mum), and "we now must put the family first because it is the most important" (dad).

Dad	Order 1	Order 2	Mum	Order 1	Order 2
Family	1	1	Family (husband and children)	1	1
Home life	2	2	My family (parents and siblings, etc)	2	2
Family health	3	3	Jim's family (parents and siblings, etc)	3	2
Friends (relationships)	4	4	Family life		3
			Family's health	4	4
Sport (playing and watching)	5	5	Family's happiness	5	5
Work	6	10	Friends	6	7
Fun/ enjoyment (leisure time)	7	6	Relationships (with people in general)	7	10
Holidays	8	7	Enjoyment of life	8	8
News	9	8	Holidays	9	9
Money	10	9	Watch and enjoy my children grow up	10	6

Table 6.4: Parents' list of the ten most important things in their lives.

This exercise illustrated to the parents that Jenny's tennis was not their life and, indeed, was not the most important thing in their lives. After which, they reframed the sentence to "tennis is controlling a large part of our life". This exercise helped them realise that they had been devoting too much of their time and energy to Jenny's tennis, which had not been

included in their list of the top ten most important things, and had been neglecting the family, which they had both deemed the most important thing in their lives. Thus, the exercise was valuable both for challenging their distorted perceptions and beliefs about the importance of Jenny's tennis, and for reassessing their commitment and involvement level in Jenny's tennis at the expense of the well-being of the entire family. Both parents stated that they enjoyed doing this exercise and that it was helpful.

Homework:

1- Exercise 2 from previous session (as it was not done last week).

2- Mum to do the same exercise we did in today's session with Jenny; list the 10 most important things in her life (3 minutes) and then reassess the list and make changes where she feels necessary (3 minutes). Don't interfere, let her make her own decisions.

3- Read and summarise in your own words the article section (taken from Miller & Kerr, 2002; see appendix 11) on athletes' identity and retirement from sport. Each to prepare a 5-minute presentation for next week; mum on retirement and dad on identity. Think about the key points and their relevance to Jenny.

2- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.

My interaction with dad was somewhat easier during this session than previously, as the following extract from my journal explains:

> "I started today's session by explaining my difficulty with dad's attempts to control the sessions, which slow down our progress, as well as my difficulty with his aggression. I also explained that I'm not forcing him to take on my suggestions and that I'm merely here to recommend that he tries these suggestions and recommendations for a while, and if then he's not happy with things that he can go back to his old ways.... He got very annoyed and said that I was wasting time talking about it, but I explained that it's important that we discuss it now in order that we can progress and achieve the intervention goals that they set up in our first session. It was quite difficult to confront him with this issue as he became hostile and aggressive and threatened to leave, but I felt that I had to do it or else he could sabotage the entire intervention and that it would be a waste of everybody's time. After this discussion, the session ran smoothly, he cooperated with me, and I felt that it was a productive and pleasant session. Perhaps the discussion made him realise that he doesn't need to compete with me over power and control and this, consequently, may have made him feel more relaxed to interact with me and to allow me to lead the session".

Session 6 (week 6)

<u>Session focus</u>: Athletes' identity and retirement from sport, avoiding identity
foreclosure

Fears of failure and establishing inner control

This session aimed to raise the parents' awareness of the downfalls of identity
foreclosure and of issues of retirement from sport. Based on the section of the article that I
gave them in the previous session, mum spoke about retirement from sport and dad on
identity development. They had both made written notes and demonstrated an
understanding of the topics they presented. They realised that it was important not to
compromise Jenny's identity development in pursuit of sporting excellence. They also
recognised that identity foreclosure can lead to stressful retirement from sport and that
retirement can be forced upon athletes at any age for a number of reasons (e.g., de-
selection, severe injury). Both parents showed an interest in the topic, discussed it with
enthusiasm, and revealed that they had not thought of it previously.

Following the exercise, I recommended that the parents encourage Jenny to interact
with her school peers outside school hours and to engage with them in various activities
(e.g., going out, parties, texting) rather than engage only with her tennis peers, as was the
case with Jenny. Jenny trained every day and competed on most weekends (on one or both
days) and her entire social group comprised of her tennis peers, with whom she trained in
the academy and attended school. They, according to mum, regularly texted and spoke to
each other on the phone in the evenings and on weekends, discussing mainly tennis and
competition results. I also recommended that the parents encourage Jenny to explore
diverse interests and activities and to engage in other hobbies (Jenny enjoyed maths, art and
painting). Finally, I recommended that they encourage Jenny to think from time to time
about possible alternative careers, as she might not become a tennis player; for example, to
ask her casually "what would like to do when you finish with tennis?" This would indicate
to her (and to her parents, especially to dad) that tennis will come to an end and that it is not
the only option for her.

This exercise was also aimed at dad, whose communications with Jenny revolved
predominately around tennis (e.g., competitions, training, tactics). I recommended that dad
discuss tennis less with Jenny and engage with her in conversations on other subjects; thus,
stopping tennis from being the focal of their relationship as it could lead to identity
foreclosure for Jenny. It was also important to make dad aware that tennis was not the only

career option for Jenny and that there were no guarantees that she would become a professional player (despite training at an elite tennis academy). My intentions were to make dad realise that tennis could be only a temporarily part of Jenny's life and, therefore, should not be placed at the centre of family life. Both parents needed also to consider Jenny's personal development. This, I believed, could help dad to prioritise the family well-being and the quality of their relationships, put winning and losing tennis competitions into perspective, adopt more rational beliefs about Jenny's tennis, and not to be wholly consumed by her competition results and the fears of her failure; fears that dad transmitted to Jenny (see study 2).

During this session, I gave each parent a graph and a list of their fears of failure (taken from the data collected during study 2; see chapter 4) and discussed it with them. I also gave the parents a handout titled "Fears and establishing inner control" (see appendix 12) and explained it to them. The handout focused on negative thoughts and self-talk that provoke fear; thoughts that focus on uncontrollable (e.g., the opponent, umpire decisions) vs. controllable variables (e.g., own reactions and thoughts); what fears are; and how to recognise and neutralise fears.

Homework:

1- Read today's handout "Fears and establishing inner control" and complete the exercises.

2- Go over your list of fears and classify them as focusing on controllable or uncontrollable things. Add to your list any other fears that you have and that are not there.

My interaction with dad was pleasant during this session, as the following extract from my journal explains:

> "Today was a really good session, very productive. Jim was pleasant and co-operative. It looks like our little chat last week was useful. He seemed more at ease today and allowed me to lead the session.... I hope he keeps up his pleasant behaviour with me next week too".

Session 7 (week 7)

Session focus: Examining fears of failure

In today's session we examined Jim's reactions during Jenny's performances and the underlying fears that contribute to his reactions. Jim had been filling in an event sheet (for his feelings, thoughts, and actions; see appendix 10) for each of the competitions that he

had been attending since our third session. These event sheets provided material for today's session. The following examples were taken from two different events (competitions) and were discussed during the session.

Example 1:

Jim revealed that he felt "calm" at the beginning of the match and "annoyed" at the end of it. During the match he thought that Jenny made "bad tactical decisions" and that he did not feel he could trust her judgement. These thoughts made him feel "anxious", "stressed", and "not happy with her". He thought that Jenny's negative body language on court was helping her opponent win points because she "was taking advantage of Jenny". He also thought "she [Jenny] should know that her body language is working against her". These thoughts made dad feel "annoyed". He stated, "I could see that she [Jenny] was going to lose…. It's probably why I felt so stressed". Thus, it appeared from examining dad's thoughts that he had been predicting and expecting Jenny's failure. He perceived Jenny's tactical mistakes and behaviour on court as threats to her winning the match, and it was these perceived threats that elicited his negative emotions. In other words, the threat of failure elicited dad's fear and his other negative emotions.

Example 2:

Jim revealed that he felt "calm" at the beginning of the match and "frustrated" at the end of it. During the match he thought that Jenny was exhibiting "an attitude of a loser" and "here we go again, she's self-destructing". This, he envisaged, would hinder Jenny's performance, encourage her opponent to play better and, consequently, would lead to Jenny losing the match. His thoughts, it appears, focused on predicting the future (i.e., Jenny's failure) and made him feel "frustrated" as he believed that Jenny would lose the match and, consequently, lose ranking and would not be selected by her coaches for the next tournament. Thus, it appeared that dad's fear was provoked by his prediction of the future (an imagined fear), namely losing the match, and by the aversive consequences that he had perceived of such an outcome.

Breaking down dad's reactions into components (i.e., emotions, thoughts, actions) in these exercises helped him understand that his thoughts and failure prediction during Jenny's matches provoked his negative emotions. At first, dad stated that he became annoyed about the way Jenny had been playing and not about the match outcome. Later, however, these exercises helped him realise that his negative emotions were underpinned by his negative thoughts and by his prediction of Jenny's defeat, and that he was, indeed,

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fearful of her losing the competition. Dad concluded "I need to do something about these thoughts, isn't it? *(laugh)*". We also discussed how he could neutralise his fears during a match (as had been explained in the previous session; see appendix 12).

I also challenged dad's absolutistic belief "you play sport to win", explaining that at Jenny's age learning, athletic development, and progression are more important to her coaches than winning competitions. While winning is nice, her coaches look for her to develop and progress as an athlete rather than expect her to win every match. I reminded dad of the occasions (which he had described in study 2) on which he had been annoyed with Jenny after losing, whereas her coaches had not minded it. This was an important discussion, as dad's fear of Jenny losing was also underpinned by his belief that coaches would judge her negatively after losing competitions (as was revealed in study 2)

Homework:

Fill an event sheet (see appendix 10) for each of Jenny's competitions that you attend this week and challenge your fears using the R.U.N principles (see appendix 12)

My interaction with dad was pleasant during today's session, as the following extract from my journal reveals:

> "Today's session was good. Jim was pleasant and co-operative. I think that he took in quite a bit of the session today. Hopefully he'll implement it and we'll see some changes in his behaviour with Jenny during her matches and in general".

Session 8 (week 8)

Session focus: Irrational beliefs and fear of failure

In today's session we examined Jim's irrational beliefs that rise from rigid, absolutistic views (all-or-nothing thinking). These are grounded in distorted beliefs and assumptions and contribute to his FF. We examined Jim's following irrational beliefs: "She should win this match", "She must win for the team", "She must focus and stay positive", "She must fight for the game not give it away", "She should know better", and "She should be able to play well even if she's tired and not show that she's tired". All of these beliefs are rigid and absolutistic as they view performance in terms of "should" or "must" and set Jenny high, and often unattainable, targets. As a result, they make dad feel angry and frustrated when Jenny does not meet these targets or expectations and does not live up to his beliefs and

assumptions. After challenging and discussing these beliefs, I recommended that dad reframe his beliefs by using terms such 'it is preferable' or 'it would be nice if' instead of "must" and "should". For example, 'It would be nice if she wins for the team', and 'it is preferable that she stays focused and positive'. This can make dad's beliefs and expectations less rigid and absolutist and, thereby, help reduce the anxiety and stress that he typically experiences before and during Jenny's performances. It can also help reduce his feelings of anger and frustrations that he typically experiences when Jenny makes mistakes, loses and does not meet his expectations.

I also discussed dad's distorted belief that "she should win" because "she is capable of winning it [the match]". Thus, dad believed and expected Jenny to win matches because he believed that she had the capability to do so but did not consider that athletes perform differently on the day, regardless of their capability. In other words, there are other variables that can prevent athletes from winning, and merely having the capability or being a stronger player than the opponent does not guarantee winning. Again, I recommended that dad reframe this irrational belief and set up realistic expectations of Jenny.

Over the weeks, Jim had been reflecting and writing down his fears in his journal. He recognised that he feared Jenny losing in competitions. He wrote, "I can see that when she's showing bad body language on court I get annoyed because I get nervous that she will lose. In fact, I believe that she will lose when she acts like that, and when she comes off [court] I shout at her". He explained that he feared that, by losing competitions, Jenny would not progress in the academy and the coaches would deem her not suitable for the academy and lose interest in her. Thus, dad associated Jenny's losing competitions with aversive consequences such as coaches losing interest in her and rejecting her from the academy. He strongly believed that these are real consequences of losing competitions and insisted on viewing them as "facts" rather than distorted beliefs and assumptions (as I referred to them). He also strongly believed that coaches are "only interested in winners"; yet another distorted belief that contributed to his FF.

Homework:

1- Keep on filling an event sheet for each of Jenny's competitions that you attend this week and challenge your fears using the R.U.N principles (see appendix 12)

2- "The 5 options exercise"- suggest five explanations to account for other people's behaviour. Select three situations that relate to Jenny's behaviour (tennis-related), two

situations that relate to her coaches' behaviour, and two situations that relate to other people's behaviour (e.g., people at work, in a restaurant, on a train). Think of each behaviour and suggest five possible explanations as to why the person behaved in the way they did.

My interaction with dad during this session was not smooth, as the next extract from my journal explains:

> "I encountered today quite a bit of resistance from Jim. He did not like me challenging his thoughts and was more argumentative and disagreeable today than in our previous sessions. He holds strongly on to his beliefs and assumptions and can't see that they are distorted and irrational. Therefore, he finds it difficult to reframe them or to think differently. Such rigid and irrational beliefs are unhelpful and contribute to his FF but he can't see it (yet). So, he really needs to work hard towards changing them if he wants to reduce his and Jenny's FF.... These beliefs are going to make it difficult for him to put things into perspective and to reduce his FF.... His beliefs and assumptions are so strongly embedded that he finds it difficult to view things differently, which makes it difficult for me to teach him new behaviours, because his beliefs drive his behaviour. Thus, in order to change his behaviour I first need for him to see that his beliefs are distorted and it's only then that he can begin to change his behaviour.... He follows his emotions, which are provoked by his irrational beliefs.... The other problem is that he transmits his irrational beliefs and his FF to Jenny. It was hard to shift some of his beliefs today but I hope that he'll implement and follow my recommendations and make some changes. I think that reframing and changing his distorted beliefs, which he calls 'facts', will need much more work before he can make meaningful changes in his behaviour. Unfortunately, we don't have many more sessions left and if he keeps on holding strongly to his beliefs it's going to make it difficult for him to neutralise his fears. But it's good that he's starting to recognise his fears".

Session 9 (week 9)

Session focus: Irrational beliefs

Relaxation techniques

The first aim of this session was further to examine irrational beliefs. I began by asking each parent to go over "The 5 options exercise" that they had completed for this session. This exercise aimed to illustrate to the parents that there are no absolutes when interpreting people's behaviour and that there can be a number of reasonable explanations to interpret and understand a person's actions. They should therefore, not jump to and adopt the first interpretation of Jenny's or the coaches' behaviour (and people's in general) that they think of. In other words, "The 5 options exercise" aimed to teach the parents to consider optional interpretations, to put things into perspective, and to avoid rigid and absolutistic beliefs, which can provide the basis for fear and other negative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration).

Each parent presented five different interpretations for each of the seven different behaviours; three of Jenny's behaviours, two of her coaches' behaviours, and two of other people's behaviours. When asked "what did you learn from the 5 options exercise?" mum replied, "Nothing is black and white.... It's not how you first see things and jump to conclusions, but there are options and other explanations that you need to think about". Dad replied, "There are many variables in human behaviour. Variables in people's thoughts, cultures, backgrounds.... There are always a few reasons for people's behaviour not just one.... It can also be a combination of reasons". Thus, it appears from these quotes that the exercise achieved its aims.

The second aim of this session was to teach the parents relaxation techniques. We tried together deep breathing exercises and I recommended that dad use this technique to help him calm down when feeling anxious during Jenny's performances. We also tried together progressive muscular relaxation and I gave the parents a tape for dad to use regularly in the evenings to help him relax, especially in the days preceding Jenny's competitions. Regularly practising relaxation can help dad neutralise his fear and other negative emotions, put things into perspective, and be less critical and volatile with Jenny when she loses in competitions or makes mistakes.

I also suggested that the parents should not make Jenny's tennis the focal point of the family around which all the family's activities and energy revolve, so that family needs (e.g., leisure activities, holidays) were neglected. Instead, I recommended that they prioritise their family's needs and have family leisure activities, take family holidays, and also have from time to time "mummy and daddy time out" where they go away for weekend breaks or go out on their own. Finally, I also advised that dad spend some weekends with his adolescent son instead of devoting all of his weekends to attending tennis tournaments with Jenny.

Homework:

1- Keep challenging your absolutistic beliefs, using "The 5 options exercise". Also begin to pay attention to Jenny's absolutistic beliefs and teach her how to change them by using "The 5 options exercise". This can help you and Jenny to correct absolutistic and distorted beliefs and to control fear and other negative emotions more effectively.

2- Practise relaxation techniques regularly (i.e., at least four time a week) at home and, especially, in days preceding competitions and during competitions when feeling stressed

and anxious.

3- Put family's needs first, before tennis; family leisure activities, weekend away, etc.

4- Summarise each one of the nine intervention sessions. Include what we discussed in each session, what exercises we did, and what you learnt from each session.

My interaction with dad during this session was smooth, as the extract from my journal explains:

> "The session went very well today. I felt that they both got quite a lot from the 5 options exercise and from the relaxation techniques. Jim was very good today!! No arguments from him!!..... He seemed relaxed today and seemed to be enjoying the session and taking in everything that I was teaching them. I'm very pleased with this session"

Session 10 (week 10)

Session focus: Summary of the intervention programme

This final session was devoted to summarising each of the intervention sessions. This was part of the parents' homework assignment from the previous week and I began the session by asking each of the parents to present their summary. The aim of this assignment was to make the parents carefully go over their notes and handouts from each of the sessions and think about what was discussed and what they learnt from each session. Thus, it aimed to refresh their memory and solidify their newly acquired knowledge.

In this final session I also reiterated the importance of modifying their (especially dad's) expectations of Jenny's performances, putting competition loss into perspective, and recognising Jenny's limitations as a young tennis player who is still learning and developing her athletic and tennis skills. Finally, I reemphasised the importance of continually challenging distorted beliefs as they often elicit fear and other negative emotions. I also reiterated to the parents that through their behaviour (especially dad's punitive and controlling behaviour, and high expectations; see study 2) they transmit their fears of failure to Jenny, which can be harmful to both her athletic and social development.

Homework:

1- In the following weeks, put into practice everything that you learnt from this intervention programme.

2- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.

3- Keep filling an event sheet for each competition to help you monitor your thoughts and emotions.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflections on the session:

> "This was a good session. I was very pleased with their summaries and I believe that it was a useful exercise for a final session. They both seemed to enjoy the session and Jim was pleasant and cooperative today. It's a pity that he's so desperately anticipates Jenny's competition results and gets go anxious about them, and always expects her to win. I believe that he draws his esteem from her wins and that they boost his ego. It's a pity for both of them [Jenny and dad] and for the entire family. I'm not at all surprised that their [Jenny's and dad's] FF level is high. He is a good example of a debilitative parent and it's his FF, unfortunately, that causes it…. Hopefully, this intervention will make some difference in their lives, but I suspect that ten sessions are just not enough to shift some of dad's fears and irrational beliefs that are so deeply embedded…. Changing his irrational beliefs will be tough for him as they are deeply embedded, making it difficult for him to accept and adopt other ways of seeing things and to modify his beliefs…. I hope that he'll make an effort in the next four weeks and that I'll hear good things in follow up 1…. I've done by best, the rest is up to him".

Follow-up sessions 1 and 2

Follow-up sessions 1 and 2 aimed to find out if the parents had been implementing what they had learnt from the intervention (the seminar and the ten one-to-one sessions) and, if so, how they were managing it. These two sessions also aimed to 'top up' the parents' knowledge, to remind them of things that they may have forgotten and to encourage and motivate them to implement the changes in their approach and behaviour that I had recommended. In addition, as the sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed, I also added my comments and suggestions to the transcripts before sending them to the parents (see appendix 13 for examples of transcript extracts with my comments). Thus, the transcripts provided a further written resource for the parents to use.

INTERVENTION SESSIONS WITH JENNY:

Table 6.5 below shows a summary of each of the eight sessions of the intervention programme with Jenny, including each session's topics and homework assignments. This is followed by a detailed description of each session.

Session	Topic	Homework
1 (Week 3)	Introduction to the intervention Establish intervention goals Developing mental toughness	1- Start a 'reflection journal', writing down your thoughts, feelings, concerns, fears, ideas, etc. 2- Read today's handout on establishing self-control and complete the exercises.
2 (Week 4)	Fears Being assertive and taking charge	1- Read today's handout on fears and being assertive and complete the exercises. 2- Go over your list of fears and classify them as focusing on controllable or uncontrollable things. Add to your list any other fears that you have. 3- Keep a diary of your competition dates and location. 4- Keep using your reflective journal regularly.
3 (Week 5)	Fears Visualisation	1- Think of your fears and break them down as we did in today's session. 2- Practise visualisation a few time in the next week 3- Keep using your reflective journal regularly.
4 (Week 6)	Mental toughness- thoughts and behaviour	1- Carry on with today's exercise, think of more difficult situations that you had experienced and write down what mentally tough players might think and do in such situations, and how they might behave; use the sheets provided. 2- Keep practising visualisation a few times in the next week. 3- Carry on using your reflective journal regularly.
5 (Week 7)	Self-criticism	1- After every training session and competition write down your self-criticism. Later, transfer your list of criticisms to a table and on the other side write instructions as to how you could correct these criticisms and what you could be telling yourself instead: "reframing". 2- Reframe the list of your self-criticisms taken from last year's interviews in the table provided. Change negative self-criticism to positive and encouraging statements. 3- Keep practising visualisation regularly. 4- Carry on using your reflective journal regularly.
6 (Week 8)	Positive self-talk	1- Read today's handout carefully and think about each point. 2- Use the table in the sheets provided for this exercise. Write down your self-talk before, during, and after matches, and in general, and determine whether these statements are positive or negative. Pay attention to the situations (in the match and in general) that trigger your negative self-talk and write them down. Change your negative self-talk to positive self-talk in the third column in the table. 3- Apply your positive self-talk (instead of the negative self-talk) when you are competing, training, and generally in your daily activities. Keep practising this skill regularly until it becomes second nature to you (automatic).
7 (Week 9)	Irrational beliefs Relaxation techniques Reframing negative self-talk and thinking	1- Keep challenging your absolutistic and distorted beliefs by using "The 5 options exercise". 2- Do "The 5 options exercise" in relation to your parents' behaviour, coaches' behaviour, and your peers' behaviour. 3- Practise relaxation techniques regularly. 4- Summarise each one of the seven intervention sessions. Include what we discussed in each session, what exercises we did, and what you learnt from each session.

8 (Week 10)	Summary of the intervention programme	1- In the following weeks, put into practice everything that you have learnt from this intervention programme.
		2- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.
		3- Keep practising "The 5 options exercise" whenever you find yourself upset or worried about someone's behaviour or statement. It will make you feel better and more positive.

Table 6.5: Summary of the one-to-one intervention programme with Jenny.

Session 1 (week 3)

Session focus: Introduction to the intervention

Establish intervention goals

Developing mental toughness

I began this session by explaining to Jenny that my role over the course of the intervention would be of an educator and, as such, I would be making suggestions and recommendations for her to implement in order to enhance her performance and well-being, and that I would not dictate to her what she should or should not do. It would be her decision which of my suggestions to implement. Therefore, giving her a sense of autonomy in the intervention, rather than a feeling that she was being controlled by me. I explained that over the course of the intervention we would work together to find the best possible options to suit her and her family, giving her sense of ownership in the intervention. Finally, I explained the purpose of homework assignments and that completing them for each session would help our progression.

For the first exercise of the intervention, I asked Jenny to compile a list of her goals for the intervention. Her list comprised two goals: "my dad stops shouting at me", and "my dad gives me a bit of space when I get off court". Thus, she wanted her dad not to conduct post-match analysis immediately after competition but to leave it until "I cooled down, had my shower and changed [clothes]". She also wanted her dad not to shout at her during those match-analyses, explaining that she did not mind discussing it with him, as she found that helpful, but she did like his "aggression... the tone of his voice... the shouting".

I gave Jenny a handout titled "Developing mental toughness" (see appendix 14) and explained it to her. The handout focused on negative thoughts and self-talk that harm performance and self-confidence, and provoke fear; on thoughts that focus on the distinction between controllable and uncontrollable variables; and on thought control.

Homework:

1- Start a 'reflection diary' to include your reflections on today's discussion. Over the following weeks, regularly write down in the journal your thoughts, feelings, fears, concerns, ideas, etc. Use your journal regularly to reflect.

2- Read today's handout and complete the exercises.

Session 2 (week 4)

Session focus: Fears

Being assertive and taking charge

In this session, I showed and explained to Jenny the graph of her fears of failure and gave her a list of her fears (taken from the data collected during study 2). Following on from this discussion, I explained what fears are, and how to recognise and handle them (see appendix 15 for the session's handout).

I also discussed with Jenny the need for her to be more assertive and take charge of her tennis (see appendix 15). For example, she should discuss her needs with her coaches rather than rely on her parents to do it for her, as had been the case. This aimed to encourage her to be more autonomous and assertive, and corresponded with the session that I had conducted with her parents on the need to foster autonomy in Jenny.

Homework:

1- Read today's handout on fears and being assertive and complete the exercises.

2- Go over your list of fears and classify them as focusing on controllable or uncontrollable things. Add to your list any other fears that you have.

3- Keep a diary of your competition dates and location.

4- Keep using your reflective journal regularly.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflection on this session:

"Jenny is a very sweet girl, she is very pleasant and polite. She did all her homework well and said that she enjoyed it. She seemed keen to do it well. She doesn't appear to be confident or assertive. She relies on her parents to take charge of her tennis. For example, she tells them what she's unhappy about with her coach and they discuss it with the coach instead of her approaching the coach directly. She also doesn't know where she's competing and when, which is why I suggested that she keep a diary for her timetable. Her parents organise her entry forms to tournaments (which is fair enough, they need to do it for

her) but, nonetheless, she needs to know her timetable. She also doesn't ask her dad to stop shouting at her because she's afraid to tell him. Hopefully, she'll start to make some small attempts to make changes and, hopefully, her parents, especially Jim, will allow her to become more autonomous. In order for this to work, their and Jenny's efforts must work in synergy, which is why I did the autonomy session with her parents last week".

Session 3 (week 5)

Session focus: Fears

Visualisation

While discussing with Jenny last week's homework on fear, which she had completed, I explained to her the link between negative thoughts and beliefs and fear formation (see appendix 16 for the session's handout). We also examined Jenny's fear of losing, or as she referred to it "nervous I might lose", by dissecting it to its components. It appeared that pre-competition Jenny typically thinks "I hope I don't mess up", "I hope I play well", and "I don't want to lose". She often felt that she had to win because she was expected to win, especially when competing against a lower ranked opponent. She perceived that if she lost she would drop in ranking, and this would prevent her from getting into tournaments and obtaining the experiences of competition and of playing against "good players". This aversive chain of consequences, she believed, would prevent her from progressing and improving. Thus, Jenny associated losing with halting her progression in tennis and feared it. In other words, Jenny's fear of losing was underpinned by her fear of not improving and progressing in tennis. Jenny revealed that she no longer worried about coaches' views of her, stating "I moved on from last year [study 2] (laugh)"

In this session, I also explained visualisation techniques and their benefits for, among other things, helping reduce FF. I also recommended that Jenny practise visualisation regularly and suggested visualising different situations (e.g., past wins, winning shots, skills and tactics).

Homework:

1- Think of your fears and break them down as we did in today's session. This will help you understand your fears and neutralise them; remember R.U.N. from session 1 (see appendix 15).

2- Practise visualisation a few times in the next week (for example, playing when you are behind in the score and coming back to win the match, past wins and winning shots, also visualise skills and tactics before your match, etc).

3- Keep using your reflective journal regularly.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflection on this session:

"Jenny was again very pleasant and seemed quite interested in the session. She said that she didn't like the '24- hour time out' and preferred her dad to tell her his views after the match. I explained that this exercise aimed to help dad get over his emotions and be calm when discussing the match with her. I asked if we could keep it going for the duration of the intervention and if she was still not happy about it by the end that they could go back to their old ways. She agreed. She did say, however, that waiting until the next day was helpful in that her dad didn't shout at her.... She seems very reliant on her dad's views and feedback on her performance and also on telling her how to play (tactics and skills) against her opponent, despite saying, "I know all that but I like him to tell me". She also said that her dad would "always" go with her to competitions even when she was older. Thus, it seems that she is reliant on his guidance and not on her own knowledge and judgment. It appears that she's used to him taking charge of her tennis and telling her what to do and how to play and that she has become reliant on him. As a result, she probably doesn't trust her own knowledge enough. Moreover, believing that her dad will always accompany her to matches even when she's older possibly makes her feel that she doesn't need to think for herself and that dad will always do the thinking for her and guide her. Her reliance on dad worries me because in about 15 months she could be moved to the next academy (subject to her progression) that is situated in another city and away from her family. Also, being a tennis player involves a lot of travelling around the world and it can be a very lonely and difficult life for players who are not sufficiently confident, assertive, and independent, and she might drop out. It is for these reasons that I believe that it is important for Jenny to begin to build up her self-confidence and to become more autonomous. Therefore, I encouraged her parents to foster autonomy in Jenny and for dad to allow and encourage her to express her views when conducting match analysis, rather then exclusively offering his views. I'd like Jenny to start trusting and believing in herself and in her knowledge, not to be afraid to express herself and not to be reliant on her dad; but she'll need to be gradually weaned off her reliance on her dad. I can see that an independent and autonomous Jenny could be a problem for dad; he wants her to rely on him because it gives him the control. I believe that he will let Jenny become autonomous and self-reliant when he starts to feel comfortable about giving up his control, which could occur when his FF decreases".

Session 4 (week 6)

Session focus: Mental toughness- thoughts and behaviour

This session focused on mental toughness and on the link between thoughts and behaviour. I asked Jenny to list difficult situations that she had found herself in during recent competitions; she listed being behind in the match, losing a match point, and a cheating opponent. I then asked her to pick a male and a female professional tennis players that she considered to be mentally tough players and write down what they might think and do, and how they might behave if they found themselves in the situations that she had encountered recently. Doing and discussing this exercise helped Jenny to consider the different thoughts and behaviours involved in different situations, to understand the link

between thoughts and behaviour and how positive thinking can enhance her behaviour and, consequently, her performance. Thus, this session helped Jenny understand positive thinking and its contribution to obtaining an optimal performance in competition.

Homework:

1- Carry on with today's exercise, using the sheets provided (see appendix 17). Think of more difficult situations in competitions that you had experienced and write down what mentally tough players might think and do in these situations, and how they might behave.

2- Keep practising visualisation a few times in the next week.

3- Carry on using your reflective journal regularly.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflections on this session:

> "Jenny stated that she enjoyed this exercise and found it helpful. The idea of this exercise was to teach her to become more aware of her thoughts and behaviour during competitions and how positive thoughts can help players deal more effectively with difficult situations, enhance their performance, and can lead to winning competitions. I believe that the exercise achieved its aims… Jenny is a very sweet girl and I really enjoy working with her. She seems very keen to learn and seems excited about her homework assignments. She said that she looked forward to the exercises that we do as she finds them interesting. I'm glad that she enjoys the sessions and her homework and finds them helpful. She is a perfectionist and does her homework meticulously. She learns really fast. I understand from her parents that she is a good pupil and achieves high grades despite her hectic athletic schedule. She's a joy to work with.… She said that she learned from last session's exercise how to break her fears and used this exercise to break down why she gets angry on court when she makes mistakes and found out that there was no point in getting annoyed. I said that next week we would look at self-criticism and getting angry with herself on court. She also said that she was pleased with how things had been going with her dad in the last two weeks".

Session 5 (week 7)

Session focus: Self-criticism

In this session I gave Jenny a list of her quotes from the interviews that I had conducted with her during study 2 in order to illustrate to her the harshness of her self-criticism when she felt dissatisfied with her performance during competitions (e.g., when making mistakes, behind in the score) and post-failure (see appendix 18). The session's handout examined self-criticism and getting angry on court and how to change such behaviour (see appendix 18). I explained to Jenny the negative psychological effects that self-criticism can have on her as a person (e.g., decreases self-esteem and motivation, increases FF), on her performance, and on her athletic development and progression. I also explained that making

mistakes and failures are natural part of sport and learning and that she needed to view mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and improve. Moreover, I explained that at her age the focus of her coaches was on her athletic development rather than on her win-lose record in tournaments.

This session's homework assignments (particularly exercises 1-3) aimed to reduce her self-criticism, FF, anxiety, stress, and anger, to increase her levels of self-confidence, concentration, and motivation and, consequently, to enhance her athletic development.

Homework:

1- Read today's handout carefully and think about each point.

2- Have a small writing pad in your tennis bag and after every training session and competition write down the self-criticisms that you told yourself when you made mistakes or when you did not perform as well as you wanted to. When you get home, transfer your list of criticisms to a table and on the other side write instructions as to how you should correct these criticisms and what you could be telling yourself instead: "reframing".

3- Reframe the list of your self-criticism taken from our interviews (last year) in the table provided (see appendix 18). Change your negative self-criticism to positive and encouraging statements.

4- Keep practising visualisation regularly.

5- Carry on using your reflective journal regularly.

Session 6 (week 8)

Session focus: Negative vs. positive self-talk

In this session I discussed with Jenny self-talk. I explained negative self-talk, its harm, recognising and monitoring self-talk, and ways of changing negative to positive self-talk. The session's handout (see appendix 19) encompassed these issues and an exercise that required Jenny to pay attention to and list her negative self-talk statements before, during, and after competitions, and in general, and to reframe those statements as positive statements. It also required Jenny to pay attention to and keep a record of the situations that triggered her negative self-talk. The exercise aimed to help Jenny to identify her negative self-talk and the situations in which it occurred, and to correct it. The long term aim of the exercise was to help Jenny develop a more positive self-talk when competing, training, and generally in her everyday activities, thereby becoming more positive, more in control of her

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thoughts and less fearful of losing.

Homework:

1- Read today's handout carefully and think about each point.

2- Use the table in the sheets provided for this exercise (see appendix 19). Write down your self-talk before, during, and after matches, and in general, and determine whether these statements are positive or negative. Pay attention to the situations (in the match and in general) that trigger your negative self-talk and write them down. Change your negative self-talk to positive self-talk in the third column in the table.

3- Apply your positive self-talk (instead of the negative self-talk) when you are training, competing, and generally in your daily activities. Keep practising this skill regularly until it becomes second nature (automatic) to you to talk positively to yourself.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflection on this session:

> "Jenny still seems to enjoy our sessions together and the exercises that I give her and says that she finds them helpful because they make her think about things that she hasn't thought of before.... Jenny is still a joy to work with and still seems very keen to learn and do her homework assignments".

Session 7 (week 9)

Session focus: Irrational beliefs

Relaxation techniques

Reframing negative self-talk and thinking

The first aim of this session was to examine Jenny's irrational beliefs and assumptions, which may be contributing to her FF. While telling me about her coach's reaction to a recent competition loss, Jenny stated, "She [coach] seemed off with me", and this made Jenny feel "worried". She had also told me previously that her coach gave another player in the academy more coaching time because, she believed, the coach liked the other player more than her. This belief made Jenny feel "upset". I challenged these beliefs by asking Jenny to suggest five other options or explanations as to why her coach might have been "off" on that day, and why the coach might have offered the other player more coaching. One of the options that I was looking for Jenny to suggest in both of these cases was that her beliefs might have been false and products of her imagination. Indeed, one of the options that Jenny offered was "maybe it's not true and I just think that it is *(laugh)*".

This exercise, "The 5 options exercise", illustrated to Jenny that there are no absolutes when trying to understand and interpret people's behaviour and that there can be a number of reasonable explanations of a person's actions. In other words, "The 5 options exercise" aimed to teach Jenny to consider optional interpretations, to put things into perspective, and to avoid absolutistic and rigid beliefs, which can provide the basis for fear and other negative emotions (e.g., feeling upset, worried). Jenny learnt that some assumptions could be distorted and false and, consequently, could make her feel bad, and that she should not accept one assumption as the truth but should consider other explanations; or as she stated, "don't believe what you first think but you should think about more options so you don't get all upset".

The second aim of this session was to teach Jenny relaxation techniques. We tried deep breathing exercises together and I recommended that she use this technique to help her calm down and relax when feeling anxious (e.g., before competitions). We also tried progressive muscular relaxation together and I suggested that she use the relaxation tape that I had given her parents, and recommended that she use it regularly in the evenings to help her relax, especially on evenings before competitions.

During this session I also worked with Jenny on establishing a routine for her to use to control negative self-talk and negative thoughts. I asked her to come up with a cue word to prompt her at the onset of negative thinking, she chose the word "focus". Accordingly, the routine that we devised comprised three steps for her to follow, (1) say to self "focus", (2) breath deeply into diaphragm, (3) reframe negative self-talk and thoughts.

Homework:

1- Keep challenging your absolutistic and distorted beliefs by using "The 5 options exercise". This can help you to correct such beliefs and to control your fear and other negative emotions more effectively.

2- Suggest five explanations to account for other people's behaviour. Select three situations that relate to your parents' behaviour (tennis-related), three situations that relate to your coaches' behaviour, and two situations that relate to your academy peers' behaviour. Think of each behaviour and suggest five possible explanations as to why the person behaved in the way that they did.

3- Practise relaxation techniques regularly (i.e., at least four time a week) at home and, especially, on evenings before your competitions.

4- Summarise each one of the seven intervention sessions. Include what we discussed in each session, what exercises we did, and what you learnt from each session.

Session 8 (week 10)

Session focus: Summary of the intervention programme

This final session was devoted to summarising each of the seven intervention sessions. This was part of Jenny's homework assignment from the previous week and I began the session by asking her to present her summary. The aim of this assignment was to make Jenny go over her notes and handouts from each of the sessions carefully and think about what we discussed and what she had learnt from each session. Thus, it aimed to refresh her memory and solidify her newly acquired knowledge.

In this final session I also reiterated to Jenny the importance of putting competition loss into perspective, and of recognising her limitations as a young tennis player who is still learning and developing her athletic and tennis skills. Finally, I reemphasised the importance of continually challenging distorted beliefs as they often elicit fear and other negative emotions.

Homework:

1- In the following weeks, put into practice everything that you have learnt from this intervention programme.

2- Keep using your journal regularly to reflect.

3- Keep practising "The 5 options exercise" whenever you find yourself upset or worried about someone's behaviour or statement. It will make you feel better and more positive.

The following extract from my journal reveals my reflection on this session:

> "This was a good final session and I believe that it was a useful exercise for Jenny to do....
> Hopefully, this intervention will make a difference for her. Like with her parents, I feel that
> the length of the intervention may have not been sufficient and she could possibly have
> benefited from more sessions to establish a deeper and stronger grounding in the teaching
> that I did with her.... Hopefully her dad will make an effort to treat her better and will
> implement some of my recommendations.... Throughout the intervention Jenny seems to
> have enjoyed the sessions and the exercises and the homework assignments that I gave her.
> She has been great to work with. She was eager to learn, even on days when she appeared
> tired, and always behaved well throughout the intervention".

Follow-up sessions 1 and 2

Follow-up sessions 1 and 2 aimed to find out if Jenny had been implementing what she had learnt from the intervention and if it had been helpful to her; also to find out from Jenny if she had noticed differences in her parents' behaviour and approach and, if so, whether she preferred it or not. These two sessions also aimed to 'top up' Jenny's knowledge and to remind her of things that she might have forgotten and to encourage and motivate her to implement the changes that I had recommended during the intervention. In addition, as these follow-up sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed, I added my comments and suggestions to the transcripts before sending them to Jenny (see appendix 20 for examples of transcript extracts with my comments). Thus, the transcripts provided a further written resource for her to use.

- **Data collection pre- and post-intervention**

Like the rest of the participating families in study 3a, family 2 also took part in the baseline pre-intervention data collection (i.e., interview, PFAI, and AGQ-S, parents and athlete; phase 1), the seminar (i.e., intervention for parents only; phase 2, week 1), post-intervention data collection 1 (i.e., interview parents only; phase 3, week 1), and post-intervention data collection 2 (i.e., interview, PFAI and AGQ-S, parents and athlete; phase 4, week 10) (see Figure 6.2 above).

Unlike the rest of the participating families in study 3a, family 2 also participated in follow-up 1 (phase 5, week 14), a session that took place four weeks after the final one-to-one session (i.e., after phase 4, week 10), and follow-up 2, that took place four weeks later (i.e., on phase 6, week 18). These two follow-up sessions aimed to ascertain changes that Jenny and her parents had implemented in the two-month period after the intervention (see section 'follow-up 1 and 2' above for further explanation of the aims). As mum and dad were not available to be seen together, follow-up 1 and 2 sessions were conducted with each of them separately. Both follow-up sessions with Jenny were conducted with her on her own. A week after follow-up 1, I also conducted a short telephone interview (23 minutes) with Jenny's personal coach to find out of any changes that she had noticed in Jenny's and her parents' behaviour since the start of the intervention.

I was involved with family 2 for the total duration of study 3, which was twenty weeks (i.e., from phase 1 to phase 6). Exiting the family was short and sharp, unlike study 2 where I exited the three families gradually. In the present study, follow-up 2 was the final session

and took place on the last week of the school and the tennis academy year after which the athletes left for a summer break. This provided a natural termination of the relationship.

- **Data analysis**

Data analysis for study 3b followed the exact procedures specified above in study 3a (see section 6.3.1; 'data analysis' page 240).

6.4.2 Results and Discussion

In this section I present and discuss the results obtained from the interviews conducted, and the measures (PFAI, AGQ-S) used, with Jenny and her parents. The results are presented in three separate parts as follows:

Part 1: Post-intervention results II (phase 4, week 10; results obtained after the 10-week one-to-one sessions; *Note,* Post-intervention results I for this family are presented above in study 3a)

Part 2: Follow-up 1 (phase 5, week 14)

Part 3: Follow-up 2 (phase 6, week 18)

Part 1: Post-intervention results II

This part presents the results ascertained from interview 2, which was conducted immediately after the final one-to-one sessions with Jenny and her parents (data collection 2, phase 4, week 10). The results are presented here in two sections: intervention outcomes, and implementing the intervention outcomes.

- **Intervention outcomes**

Dad revealed that he had learnt from the intervention the importance of building up Jenny's self-esteem, avoiding identity foreclosure, and fostering autonomy in Jenny. He stated:

> "[It's] important to make Jenny feel good about herself.... Self-esteem is massively important, she's got to believe in herself. Find something to praise her from every performance rather than look at the negatives...there is always something good there that will make her feel good.... because that will give her the inner strength, the foundation behind her. So I got all that, and I put all that in the one category of her self-esteem that we

should be doing in the background". *(Self-esteem)*

"We talked about identity foreclosure and it's important for her to be aware of her own identity.... Also need to discuss with her what she wants to do out of tennis, and what she wants to do ultimately if she doesn't succeed in tennis, 'cos she's got to have other avenues not just be like 'I'm gonna be the number one [player] in the world'" *(Identity)*

"Must look to give Jenny more responsibility, independence, let her make more decisions for herself, organise herself in terms of diets, broken rackets, packing her bag etc. So giving her more responsibility even if it's identifying which tournaments she wants to do. Get her involved in the process rather than just doing it for her and then she just turns up. Need to give her independence now, must prepare her now 'cos really she's just 12 months away from moving away [away from home to another academy], so you got to have a medium to long term plan how she's gonna develop, you got to make sure that she's got the grounding so that she can cope with future situations that she'll be thrown into". *(Autonomy)*

Dad also learnt about his FF, the importance of challenging and controlling negative thoughts and fears, putting things into perspective, and becoming more mastery oriented than outcome. He stated:

"The other thing [that I learnt] is about the fear of failure and the consequences and the thoughts.... Transmission of fear I thought was quite a big one because... she [Jenny] can certainly read me inside out and she can see, because we discuss all these match scenarios all the while, so she can understand what I'm thinking without me saying anything. So that transmission of thoughts and fears and behaviour from the parents into the court is quite critical.... Beware of the thoughts, competitions, and the fear of losing, and the feelings and how you analyse those.... There is the fear of losing, and I find to analyse your thoughts as they're happening is quite helpful, and if you're aware [of them] and you deal with the consequences of it, and you already visited those and you're aware that the consequences are insignificant, then it's not too difficult to deal with it. So must control fears and thoughts, they can be controlled". *(Fear)*

"Fear of failure, you need to focus on your thoughts, have a positive mental attitude and inner thoughts, imagery.... You get negative thoughts but you got to identify it as a negative thought and turn it into something positive.... [I learnt] how you turn your fears into positive things, and you said 'see in your mind what you want to happen'.... There's also visualisation....There are certain ideas that I can grab on to deal with certain situations.... take deep breaths.... It's just really that you're listening to that inner voice more....You just find some rational to how important it is.... So there's lots of things I picked up from it [the intervention] and I used it, and it does work. The [match] outcome suddenly doesn't seem so important but it's what she's gaining from it. I always thought like this, that she should be getting something from it, but I've not been able to deal with the anxiety or with the stress element, which is really, as you say, Jenny is reading into that and I'm getting worst and it's not helping me or her and everything goes on a negative slope. So that side was really useful. So although I've been aware of it I never really dealt with it, whereas now I'm finding ways to deal with it, which I'm finding really useful". *(Fear)*

"[I] must be a parent first rather than a coach or a teacher or advisor, got to make sure that you've got your priorities right.... Get a balance on life, tennis isn't number one in life....Keep winning and losing in perspective". *(Perspective)*

"We mentioned outcome oriented parents or mastery. I'm all of them.... I'm a mixture of those two.... I've got to become the kind of parent... more the mastery kind rather than the

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outcome kind, and I can see that with the outcome oriented that it was a problem in the past.... I've already started making the changes.... For example, in a tournament where Jenny is losing to someone that she shouldn't, so I've got the fear of failure there, the fear of the consequences behind it all. But you've got to think winning is not the be all and end all, the outcome isn't the end of it but its what she gets out of it at the end of the day and she can learn from it and she can move on. So it was all about me being aware of it. You know, its understanding now what the pressure on Jenny can be of me having that sort of focus of mind on winning and that it isn't healthy for anybody. So that's what I need to change". *(Orientation)*

It appears that dad also learnt about the importance of not having absolutistic and rigid beliefs (i.e., irrational beliefs) stating, "the type of language we use with her is important, and the words we think, words like 'should', 'ought', you got to be very careful what you say or think". Finally, dad revealed that he had learnt about the harm of his criticism post-failure to Jenny; stating:

> "She [Jenny] goes into self-criticism and everything else and that's very bad for her, but also if I carry on giving her negative responses it just enhances her negative views of herself and throws her deeper into a hole rather than just getting her out of it.... I learnt that criticism is very dangerous, you got to move away from it, you got to say the positive sides out of the situation rather the negatives. So let her come up with her own views about her performance.... So look at it more positively and focus on the positives.... Give it a bit of thought before you shout".

Mum stated that the intervention "made us look at things differently.... I enjoyed the research side of it, of what we're doing and Jenny is doing, and us as a whole, and I found it useful. Over each week it was good to analyse something different in the session". When she was asked "tell me what aspects of the intervention programme were useful for you", mum replied, "probably assessing yourself, analysing how you're thinking about things, how you're getting uptight.... So it [the intervention] just makes you look at yourself and think 'well, if you haven't got something positive to say then I just won't say it'.... it's to the benefit of Jenny as well". Dad replied:

> "The most useful thing I got from it [the intervention] is the self-esteem. We got to be careful with that, it's a gift for life.... Also the more confident she [Jenny] is the better she'll be able to deal with situations on the court and the outcome of her career .... The other thing is don't tell her my views but ask her to tell me her views.... Also it was useful to understand fear of failure and the consequences and the process that we talked about. Thoughts can be controlled, it's hard work but you can deal with it. That analysis thing that we did on the matches was useful, so you can deal with that. We looked at controllables and uncontrollables, it was useful thing.... Identity foreclose I thought was very important, because we got to start to prepare her for the future".

For Jenny, the most useful learning outcomes from the intervention were:

> "Not to self-criticise myself, and get on with it, and talk positively to myself instead of negatively.... Forget about the negative stuff and replace it with positive thoughts... by saying one key word 'focus'. Saying it strongly to myself, like an order "focus!"... and then

breathe into my stomach, and then change my language to positive…. The fears, you have to recognise them and then neutralise them…. And the other thing we did was to understand why I get annoyed and how, and like you break it all down and then you realise that it's nothing to get worried about. So, you neutralise it 'cos you've broken it down so it means nothing, so you just forget about it. So to break it down until it's nothing and then you just forget about it 'cos you see that it's nothing really…. The 5 explanations ["The 5-option exercise"] was useful…. Also how to deal with sticky situations and stuff like that is useful. So if like you think how the top players deal with them, the mentally tough people… and see how they behave, how they deal with it, and how they think about it and try and learn from them…. Visualisation, I think is going to be useful for me. If you visualise good things then you start to think good things instead of bad things".

- **Implementing the intervention outcomes**

Jenny and her parents were asked about aspects of the intervention that they had considered implementing in the weeks following the intervention (e.g., "Tell me what you will take from the intervention and implement in the following month"). Both parents stated that they had begun implementing aspects of the intervention during the intervention period. For example, mum revealed that she had already implemented some changes in her communication style with Jenny, stating:

"It's a matter of re-structuring our language. Like when I pick her up [from the academy] at night, I used to say 'how did you get on today?' but now I say 'have you had a nice day today?', 'how are you feeling?', and then the other information will come to you even thought you phrased it differently. Just making her feel differently about herself…. It's just sort of addressing how you talk to her and treat her".

Furthermore, it appears from mum's statement that she and dad implemented my recommendation to foster autonomy in Jenny. She stated:

"We've given her, like you said, more responsibilities, like getting her stuff ready, just general things not massive things, just gradual… it's just 'get your washing', 'sort out what needs washing', 'get your kit ready for tomorrow'. So giving her a bit more responsibilities without her even realising she's doing it, so she's slowly learning now that she's responsible for her actions. I filled some [tournament] entry forms for her, and although she needs to sign it, I said to her yesterday 'I want you to have just a quick look at this' so she know what's coming up".

It also appears from dad's statement that he and mum implemented "The 5-option exercise", as I had recommended, to challenge their and Jenny's distorted beliefs and interpretations. Dad revealed:

"In dealing with situations don't react but think about five options…. That's a good point that came out of it [the intervention]. And we've worked this with Jenny already and it does work. So it's something that we can grab to in certain situations rather than just react".

Thus, it appears from both mum's and dad's statements that they acquired new knowledge from the intervention and had been implementing some of my recommendations in their

interactions with Jenny.

Dad read out and explained his written list of learning outcomes that he had intended to implement:

> "So, number 1, give Jenny independence, ask her for her views.... And make sure that she's got a balanced life through it all..., Number 2, remain calm in tournaments and don't get involved.... not show actions or reactions during matches from me 'cos you can't change what's going on court, and you got to look at it [tennis development] as a long term process.... Put tennis in perspective.... Number 3, no criticism, its dangerous, just look at the positives.... So, eliminate all criticism and disapproval during the match. So my reactions during matches have got to be more consistent and not involved because you can't do anything to help her [during the match] and she's got to deal with it, but we can discuss it afterwards.... ask her and get her to come up with her views on matches and don't tell her my views.... Number 4, be a parent not a coach, be in a supportive role.... give her help when she asks for your input... and don't impose unnecessary things on her.... Number 5, I'm gonna try to work better with the coaches.... Number 6, find time for mum and dad to have a holiday and weekend, and also family weekends".

When asked "how are you going to work on your fears and anxiety?" dad replied:

> "Try to turn the negative thoughts into positives, and put things in perspective.... It [the intervention] made me understand sensitive situations and stressful situations that I'm in and how to deal with them; the fact that I'm now thinking about these negative thoughts all the while. Before I was aware of them but I didn't do anything about them. I showed my response in the wrong way, and that wasn't really helping anybody. So, by being able to identify them now I can deal with them straight away, which I've started doing now and also putting things into perspective. You got to look at things realistically. Jenny would love to be a professional tennis player but it wouldn't be all an end all to her if she didn't 'cos she's getting so much from it [tennis] as a person.... It's a life building process where her experiences will help her with whatever she wants to do in the future. The other thing is... that there are lots of areas within tennis other than being a professional tennis player that she could pursue.... So it's about getting a perspective on things".

Dad, however, revealed that he did not intend to implement the "24-hour time out" (i.e., not discuss the match until the following day) post-competition that I had recommended. He explained his reasons:

> "You can't keep a 24-hour time out when there is a match in the morning and one in the afternoon.... When there is one match in one day we've done it, but when there are two, like last Sunday, it's not practical. But I feel I'm doing it differently now. I'm not doing it five minutes after the match but later on after she's had a breather.... The way I'm dealing with it now is ten times different [than before the intervention]. Like now I ask her how she felt the match went, and 99 times out of 100 she'll tell me what I would have told her, but it ends up her telling me".

Thus, although dad did not intent to apply the "24-hour time out" after competitions, he had adapted and improved his interaction with Jenny post-competition according to his newly acquired knowledge from the intervention. It may be that dad's FF prevented him from implementing a "24-hour timeout" after competitions and relinquishing his control of Jenny's competitions (e.g., conduct match-analysis). Accordingly, it is logical to assume

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that as dad's FF will decrease, so will his need to control Jenny's competitions.

Part 2: Follow-up 1

This part presents the results ascertained from the first follow-up session with Jenny and with her parents, which took place four weeks after the intervention ended (i.e., after the final one-to-one session with Jenny and with her parents; phase 5, week 14). The issues that were discussed in this session were: neutralising fears, communication, changes noticed in Jenny's behaviour, and fostering autonomy in Jenny.

Neutralising fear

Dad revealed that he had been dealing with his fear and negative thoughts more effectively than prior to the intervention. Putting things into perspective and doing deep breathing exercises helped him feel calm during Jenny's competitions and in control of his fear and negative thoughts; as he stated:

> "I've been a lot more relaxed about the outcome of things. Rather than looking at things specifically in the moment I've been more open about it, like thinking 'at the end of the day it's just one game'. I've been dealing with it really well, in my opinion.... I'm now looking at it more positively. I'm trying to analyse the reasons why things are happening [in the match] and I appreciate her [Jenny's] frustration more and her behaviour on court.... I've been doing the deep breathing. I have been a lot calmer in situations where it's [the match score] really tight. During the game you really want her to do well and all that but I don't get anywhere now as involved [animated during match] as I used to.... It might have been the fear, it's the anxiety of it.... The reality is that you do have the fears about the consequences of her losing and whether she gets in [selected to tournaments] and gets enough [points], and things of this nature, but I'm now looking at the bigger picture rather than the individual match and trying to say 'what can we get from this' and 'how can we move forward'. Again, it's my expectations, do I really expect her to be a professional tennis player? She's got a chance, an opportunity of doing that, and she wants to do that, but you look at the reality of it all and I'm more content now than ever before. Whatever she's doing she is getting something from it as a person and if she wants to go to a different direction other than a tennis career it's [tennis] always gonna enhance her as a person. So, now I'm not being specific this is a win-lose situation and there is nothing else that she can get out of it. I'm putting it a lot more in perspective now.... Overall I've not been outcome oriented at all".

Thus, putting things into perspective helped dad to challenge his negative thoughts and, consequently, to reduce his fear. Changing his achievement orientation also helped him to control his negative thoughts and to reduce his fear. By adopting mastery and performance orientation, rather than an outcome orientation, dad changed his attitude about achievement and about competition outcomes and, consequently, began to focus on competition benefits

and learning outcomes for Jenny, rather than on winning and losing.

Dad further described how he challenged his negative thoughts to help him keep calm:

> "If I start thinking 'ooooohhhhh no' then when this thought process comes in I'm now obviously more aware of it, I can see it happening... so I can now react to it in a much more positive way by saying 'well yeah I accept that sort of an emotion anyway', so at that stage instead of going into this path *(pointing to 'fear' in the fear-thoughts diagram; see appendix 16)*, which is like an ignorant sort of stage, I can now look at it with a bit more better perspective.... I'm challenging it now. I'm aware of this path *(thoughts)* and also the damaging path *(fear)*.... I think it's a matter of putting things in perspective and my overall outlook to the whole thing now is that I feel that she can take something from it [the match].... So I'm calmer now.... So in a way I think that I've moved forward a lot and I'm aware much more now of my thoughts, big time.... I'm now thinking positively, thinking about the good things that she's doing in the match so far, what she's doing well rather than what she has not been doing well.... This area *(thoughts)* is quite big and I'm aware of it now".

> "What I've tried to do before her match is think 'this is a new match, be good be good be good' sort of attitude *(laugh)*. And it's like to re-focus, to say 'right, you know these things are gonna happen', like this and that and the other, 'so be sensible about it'.... It's a continuing effort to challenge these negative thoughts, but it works.... A lot of the things that we've gone through, like breathing and relaxation, I've been aware of [before the intervention], but it [the intervention] re-grouped and re-focused it all and put more importance on it all.... So there's lots of things that are new and lots of things that were re-emphasised.... There are lots of areas that you've covered, like how to be aware of the thought process, which I think is critical. So the fact that I'm aware of it now I can do something about it".

> "I listened to the relaxation tape you gave us and it does help me to relax and with breathing techniques .... I listened to it about half a dozen times. What I usually do, and sometimes also before I go to sleep, is I lie down and go through it.... And I also do other relaxations.... Paula [mum] has also done it, I mean we all done it. I think it's far easier and calmer to listen to the tape than to do it with the book. It's been helpful to calm me down".

Mum revealed that she had noticed that dad appeared more relaxed before Jenny's competitions than he used to. She stated, "I think he is probably more relaxed now. He seems more relaxed.... There is definitely a change in comparison to last year".

Finally, Jenny also said that the intervention had helped her deal with her fears. She declared that she felt calm and did not have fears, saying:

> "I haven't got any fears anymore.... I realised that they're pointless *(laugh)*... 'cos you broke it down in that session to something that isn't really important, so there is no point in having any fears... so I'm calmer now".

Communication

Mum revealed the changes that she had noticed in dad's communication with Jenny during competition, saying:

"I've only been with him in two tournaments so far, and he does seem to be better in hiding his feelings when she's playing.... He is still watching but he's trying not to be so visually expressive.... In the past, normally his actions will be visible and he'll say like "C'mon!" and everything else. But now he's trying to keep it to himself and not to express it to Jenny so that she can't see it.... He's working on it and on being calm when she's playing... and trying to be quieter and not to be visible in front of Jenny on the court.... I think she [Jenny] noticed a change in him, she said so.... She's noticed that his actions are not so visible.... I think it [the intervention] made him look at himself, analyse himself how he's affecting Jenny's tennis. It made him think about how she's relying on him being there and vice versa".

Jenny also noticed the changes in her dad's behaviour during her competitions. She stated, "During the match he's [dad] much calmer now. He used to like snigger and smirk and walk off, and do all these actions, but this has now changed".

Dad confirmed that he had improved his communication with Jenny both during and post-competition, saying:

"I kept away from the court, I sat on a bench behind the court where the other parents are sitting. Jenny knew why I moved and she wasn't upset. She could still see that I was there watching but I was away from the close proximity, so she couldn't see my facial expression... and she couldn't see what I was doing. So this allows her to concentrate on what she's doing rather than have an eye contact with me or have any distractions whatsoever.... I've tried to be one or two courts away from her so that she can focus better.... I'm looking [at her match] and making notes, so it's more constructive.... So I'm trying to deal with it better when I'm watching her now". *(Communication during competition)*

"I write it [his views of her performance] down so I got something constructive rather than just say, 'oh God how can you lose to a girl like that'. Loses happen, don't they? So I feel that I'm aware of that... I'm now looking at the analysis of the match more from a positive perspective.... And I'm interested in her views afterwards when we sit down.... I'm now interested in that side of things rather than the results 'cos I think everybody goes up and down in their results, so I'm interested more now in how she views the match afterwards, her analysis. As long as I can see Jenny moving forwards [progressing] I'm not too bothered with results now". *(Communication post-competition)*

Thus, dad had become aware of his verbal and non-verbal communications with Jenny during competitions and of their harm to her performance and, as such, had sat away from Jenny's court. He had also improved his communication with Jenny post-competition and, instead of criticising and shouting at her, he had been giving her constructive comments, and had been listening to her views and analysis of her performance. Moreover, dad had become less concerned with match results and more interested in Jenny's learning from her performances and progressing, thus, indicating that he had adopted a mastery orientation instead of outcome orientation.

Mum confirmed that generally after competition dad had been allowing Jenny to express her views about her performance; as I had recommended. Mum stated:

"He's been more positive and he asks her [Jenny] what she thinks on how things went.... You know, she knows what she's done wrong and she says 'I didn't do' this or that, and she knows what she should have done better.... He's definitely calmed down a lot about it [Jenny's performance].... It [dad's behaviour] has definitely changed for the better"..

It appears from Jenny's and mum's accounts that dad had implemented "the 24-hour time out" post-competition on a few occasions, and that none of them had liked it. They explained:

"Every time we tried the 24 hours [time out] we just ended up ignoring each other for that day and that's even worse.... 'cos he's [dad] got nothing to say apart from tennis.... I mean, we have other things to talk about, but he'll be so annoyed about the match that he can't talk about anything else.... I like it [the 24-hrs time out] 'cos he's calmer on the day after and I think that it's better 'cos he doesn't criticise me and he can think more about what went on [on court] so that he won't shout at me. But I'd rather him shout at me than not speaking to me, 'cos what he's saying [post-match analysis] is helpful, but the problem is how he puts it across.... On Saturday it [dad's criticism] was about an hour and a half after my match, not straight away. So he waited a bit but I don't think he can wait 24 hours *(laugh)*". [Jenny]

"He's very passionate about what's happening and you can't just not talk to her about it [the match] because that's the nature of the game. You can't ignore it because otherwise, I mean, that's what we're finding in the house that it's almost gone to the other extreme now. Whereas before they'd come home and they'd be moaning and saying this and that, now it's like total divide and quietness and Jim is watching the tele because he mustn't be talking to her and she'll go off and do whatever and nobody is talking *(laugh)*". [mum]

It seems from Jenny's and mum's quotes that this exercise did not work well for them because dad had not adhered to my recommendation, which was to not discuss the match for 24 hours after competition while carrying on with the normality of daily life activities. Instead, it emerged that dad had reduced his conversations with Jenny during the 24-hour period, making the home environment uncomfortable for Jenny and mum. This had been more uncomfortable for Jenny to tolerate than dad's criticism; as she stated, "I'd rather him shout at me than not speaking to me". Subsequently, I asked dad to make an effort to interact with Jenny as normally as possible during the timeout period in order to avoid creating a tension. However, dad decided to abandon this exercise, explaining:

"It's ['24-hour timeout'] not practical. I think if she only has one match then you should apply it, but if there are a few in a day you can't ignore the match in the morning 'cos there is so much she can learn from it, so you need to discuss it with her.... Fifty, forty weeks I'm taking her away [to tournaments], or sometime Paula [mum], so she [Jenny] hasn't got anybody else in these tournaments with her. Paula can't get involved 'cos she doesn't understand the sport, but I've got a reasonable knowledge.... I'm breaking it [the match] down, roughly what the coach would do anyway.... and how she should play the next player compared with the player she's just played.... She enjoys this match analysis.... 90% of that conversation is about the next match, it isn't about going over the last match. Yes if something was awful in last match, like she wasn't putting enough effort or energy into it, or whatever, you got to tell her that the next girl is really a hard girl to play and 'you've got to work hard out there'.... She's [Jenny] given about 1 or 2 hours in between matches and

during this time she also eats and she goes off playing with her friends".

It seems that despite the coaches' preparation of Jenny in the academy in the days leading to the competition, dad took upon himself the role of a coach and believed that he had to analyse the previous match with Jenny and to prepare her for her next match. Unfortunately, unlike a coach, dad typically did it with heightened emotions, and, although Jenny welcomed conducting match-analysis and preparation with her dad, she did not like the emotional way in which he did it. Jenny's coach also talked about dad taking on the role of a coach. She stated:

> "He [dad] shouldn't take the role of the coach.... His role isn't to give her pre- or post-match talk.... 'cos she should be very clear on what she doing 'cos we had worked on it and she's got her game plan, etcetera. And she [Jenny] should be able to do self-analysis herself.... Sometimes I think he tries to take on the coach role too much.... Ultimately, his role is there to support and encourage her".

It appears that dad had found it difficult to give up his control over Jenny's match-preparation and analysis. This had possibly been underpinned by his FF; as was discussed previously in study 2.

Jenny's coach also talked about the improvement that she had noticed in dad's behaviour during the intervention period. She said:

> "Jim has backed off a lot in the last couple of months and he hasn't been ringing me quite as much as he used to about trivial things for quite long conversations.... I definitely think that what you're doing with him has made a big difference with that.... He did back off massively.... He had taken a much of a backward stand and it helped Jenny massively and she just got on with things herself.... He has made big improvement in term of backing off, less phone calls, he's not watching her practices so much, and at matches he's been better.... I think that he has got noticeably better since he's been doing this work with you, he has been much better really".

> "It's his passion that's showing through in a bad way. But he struggles so much to look at it in a different way, and that's where your work was definitely helping and it definitely needs to be continued because I think that if this one thing alone can be sorted it will make a big difference to her tennis without anything else really, it's such a big area.... So, I'll be so keen for him to continue with you".

Despite the improvements in dad's behaviour, he had suffered a relapse in post-competition communication with Jenny a week prior to our meeting. He disclosed:

> "I've been dealing with it really well up until last Tuesday. I was very very tired myself, really knackered, and that's something else you need to think about, how you're feeling yourself at the time. And when she came off court I just told her exactly how I felt, that she didn't put the effort. I wasn't shouting... or anything, I just said 'you weren't really competing in that match'.... It was just my disappointment .... She wasn't even expected to win it, but I just felt that she could have offered more on that occasion.... In retrospect, I should have dealt with it better, I'm being honest with you.... I should have dealt with it differently, I should have left it and not dealt with it at the time. I was feeling really

annoyed with her... about her negativity and her body language was just so poor throughout, and her effort wasn't there. So I wasn't pleased with her but I know that it's not the time to deal with it, and I'm being honest, I was really tired and down myself, so I got emotionally involved more than I should have.... I recognise it now.... When you look at it afterwards and you've taken time out you can accept that she gets tired... she's constantly on the go.... You can't continually perform at high level, something emotionally is gonna give *(clicks his fingers)*.... And I'm aware of that, but in the heat of the moment I just.... But nine times out of ten it's been absolutely perfect in the last month [since the last session], whether she won or lost it's not been an issue.... I was quite disappointed with my attitude last Tuesday. And like I said, I expected more of her, but she looked knackered, and I think when your energy level is down you don't react in the same way, do you? And it affected her thought process... and really tiredness was the root of the problem. That's where I went wrong, I know I shouldn't have said anything".

Thus, dad was aware of his behaviour and acknowledged that he had not reacted well to Jenny's failure. Acknowledging that his reaction resulted from his disappointment and fatigue and was wrong, that Jenny's fatigue affected her performance, and that fatigue can harm performance and reaction, however, indicated that dad was applying his newly acquired knowledge from the intervention. His awareness, as I explained to him, was a valuable step forward in attempting to change his behaviour and that a relapse should be regarded as a norm when one endeavours to change behaviour. His efforts to change and improve his behaviour with Jenny were, however, commendable. I also reiterated to dad the need always to support and encourage Jenny after failure.

Jenny had noticed the improvement in her dad's communication with her post-competition and that he had not been shouting and criticising her, as before. She revealed that dad had managed to maintain this behaviour until a week prior to follow-up 1, when his post-competition communication with her relapsed on two occasions (one of which dad had also discussed with me). Jenny said:

"After the match he shouted at me, but it was just last Tuesday and this Saturday.... But in the other matches he didn't have a go at me.... It's not really what he says, but it's how he says it, he shouts at me... about my performance, my behaviour, everything.... Maybe he was tired *(laugh)* I don't know. He said his back was hurting. We are fine now.... It was just afterwards like when I came off court and on the way back home.... but it happened just last Tuesday and Saturday, and I think he knows that he has made a mistake and he said 'sorry' to me afterwards and he helped me get over my loss and re-focus on my goals.... It's different now 'cos before you saw him [the intervention] we wouldn't speak for three, four days [post-failure].... I suppose he's changed.... In general he's better now, he's improved, he's been alright generally.... He has been better since he started seeing you, but it's just been bad last Tuesday and Saturday, so it's just two days out of two months.... Maybe he's just been a bit stressed out *(laugh)*".

Thus, it appears from Jenny's quote that dad generally had been making an effort to improve his communication with her post-competition, and had been doing so successfully until his recent relapse; which he acknowledged to Jenny (and to me) as a wrong behaviour

that he regretted. Mum noticed similar changes in dad's behaviour post-competition. She revealed:

> "Jim is definitely a lot calmer now after the match, definitely. He doesn't carry it [post-match criticism, comments, anger, etc] on back home like he used to…. There doesn't seem to be much talking now when they get home [from competition] …. Like he didn't seem to be happy with her last Tuesday, and he did tell her about it at the time, but when they were at home there was nothing, there was no discussion about tennis at all at home…. They didn't have an argument. She knew that she didn't play well and that he wasn't happy about it. He didn't say anything at all to me about how she played, and she just went upstairs for a shower and came downstairs once she's had her recovery time, and they were talking normally… and they had a hug before she went to sleep…. Whereas before [the intervention] they'd argue and get annoyed with each other and not talk for a few days and he'd tell me about it and go on and on… he used to sometimes be talking about it for two, three days or more, whereas now he's not voicing his thoughts…. It's getting better, he's working on it…. He's definitely calmer at home".

It appears from both mum's and Jenny's accounts that dad generally improved his communication with Jenny post-failure (i.e., not shouting, criticising, or breaking-off communication with Jenny post-failure, as he used to) and also stopped dwelling on Jenny's failures for several days afterwards. Moreover, it seems that dad managed to control his anger and emotions after Jenny's failures and to keep himself calm at home; a departure from his behaviour pre-intervention.

It emerged from the account of Jenny's coach that dad also had a relapse in during-competition communication on two occasions; and not just in post-competition, as Jenny and dad had discussed with me. The coach said:

> "In the last couple of weeks he had a bit of a blip… he suddenly started to get agitated and to phone me more than he'd been for the last couple of months, and he's been expressive in two matches. The first one she actually played fantastically well, kind of 9 out 10. Jim was standing by the side of the court and he was very expressive when she missed the ball… showing facial expressions and gestures… and she could see it. She was doing a lot of things very well, however, he only picked on the bad things…. It was obvious to Jenny 'cos he was on court side so she could tell what he was thinking and doing, which doesn't help her when she's on court…. She was playing well and he was happy with what she was doing… but he was constantly picking on the negative stuff…. A lot of the damage has been done during the match, 'cos during the match he needs to be supportive regardless of what's going on in the match…. He had another blip last Saturday. I agree she didn't play well and her attitude wasn't good, however, what he was showing on court side was very bad 'cos Jenny is very very keen to please, she wants to please me, her dad, the academy. *He was sitting by the side of the court arms flagging everywhere, shaking his head, going* 'C'mon Jenny!'…. All this, I thought, made things twice as hard for Jenny on the court…. I told him afterwards, 'when she's on the court you got to be supportive and deal with the other stuff afterwards'…. But When he gets in a state like that its very very hard to get him to think logically…. and you can't get a word in edge way, he's quite an opinionated man and he wants to say his piece, and you can say what you say to him but it goes in one ear and out the other when he's in that state. Once he's calmed down he's fine and he'll say 'sorry, I didn't deal with it very well'…. The problem was that he struggled to control his emotions during these matches".

It appears from everybody's accounts that dad's relapses, which occurred in his communication during- and post-competitions, occurred in only two competitions out of six. These relapses took place approximately three weeks after my final one-to-one session with dad. Thus, they occurred during the first break period of the intervention and not during on-going intervention period. Dad offered an explanation for this occurrence, "You've [Sam] been away for a month and we've done all these things [in the sessions], but the emphasis can drift away, and it's not like when we were seeing you every week and it's all fresh in our mind every week". This statement may indicate that frequent, regular and continuous reinforcement and support is necessary for successfully implementing and maintaining an intervention programme for parental behaviour change and for avoiding relapses.

Changes noticed in Jenny's behaviour

Dad, mum, and Jenny's coach discussed the changes that they had noticed in Jenny's behaviour since the beginning of the intervention. Their statements were as follows:

> "Her [Jenny's] attitude and her response and her body language have been generally really really good recently.... I think there has been a massive change on that. She is a lot bigger on the court a lot of the time in her presence and her self-belief, a lot more positive body language.... her own self-belief has improved.... there has been a massive change. And she was looking at Sharapova [a top professional female tennis player] and saying how you deal with disappointments in certain shots and dealing with certain areas.... Victoria [coach] also said that Jenny's body language and the way she's been behaving on court she's been a lot bigger.... She's now competing more.... She's been beating girls that she didn't before.... a few months ago Jenny wouldn't have this inner belief and confidence but now she's saying 'yeah, I can do it' and she's showing a different attitude to players [ranked] above her.... Maybe it's a less fear. I think now she's possibly more confident.... Victoria [coach] also feels that Jenny has become a lot more independent and confidence in a lot of things.... I'm seeing lots of positive things on the court... she's [Jenny] obviously now more aware of the importance of the mental side". [dad]

> "She [Jenny] still gets down [when making mistakes], but I was impressed last week at how she, although she looked down at times, she came round quicker than she used to, she's not dwelling on her mistakes.... She gets upset when she makes them [mistakes] but then she'd come round and she'll be slapping her thigh and getting herself ready for the next point. This seems to be working a lot better now.... I did notice this change in her last weekend, and they were two high power matches. So I was very pleased.... I think she's controlling herself a lot better on court, she's still got a long way to go, but she's getting better.... She's still got to not be so down on herself. She's still got to learn to exude more positive body language than negative. There is still negative body language when she makes errors, or loses points, etcetera, but she is recovering quicker now, definitely last weekend. She got annoyed straight away but then she walked to the back got the ball, turned around, slapped her thigh as if 'c'mon I'm ready again'. So I think that she's definitely recovering a lot quicker now than she ever used to. Sometimes it used to take her a whole match to get over something like an errors, or bad empire call, or whatever. So in that respect it's better now". [mum]

"I saw quite a big improvement with Jenny for a couple of months, she was getting more confident and more positive with her outlook, and her body language on court wasn't getting so bad, and her *attitude was significantly better.*... *but she wasn't really that good* last weekend. I thought her attitude was quite poor, which is quite a shame 'cos I haven't seen her like that for quite some time. Other than this blip, I think that the work you've been doing with her has been *great and definitely done her some good 'cos I've seen some* real improvement in her. But it [the intervention] definitely needs to continue with her 'cos it made her significantly attitude better, but to make it very very good she has a long way to go and your work needs to continue with her, but I think it *made it significantly better*". [coach]

Hence, it appears that Jenny's behaviour had improved as a result of the intervention. Her attitude and body language during matches had improved, she had appeared more independent and confident, and had been winning matches. She also seemed to have recovered more quickly from making mistakes (i.e., not dwell on her mistakes and to move on) than before. Thus, Jenny had been able to control better her negative thoughts and emotions during competitions. Mum also stated that Jenny had seemed less fearful of failure. She said:

"Before [the intervention] I felt that she was worried a lot, she was more worried about the *outcome of the match rather than the actual playing the tennis*. But now I feel, she seems to be playing the tennis rather than be worrying about what's gonna happen at the end of the match".

Hence, it appears that Jenny had begun to focus on her performance rather than on the consequences of her failure; as she had done. This was a positive and valuable change in Jenny, as it could help reduce her FF level and, thereby, enhance her performance.

Jenny revealed the skills that she had been implementing to help her deal effectively with her negative emotions and thoughts when making mistakes during competitions and to neutralise her fears. She said:

"I say 'focus' and 'forget about it' and 'think about the next one'... I just try to forget totally about the bad shot that I've just hit.... I've been trying to make it better, but still sometimes I get annoyed *(laugh)* if I've been making too many mistakes (laugh).... I've been trying to do it every match, but sometimes it wares off.... It's been alright in most matches but in some I got too annoyed *(laugh)*.... In these [two] matches my decision making and also my movement wasn't very good.... I wasn't getting annoyed in either of these matches.... You think like 'how did you miss that shot?' and then I just like 'ok, next one'.... I shouted a few times but then I re-grouped quickly.... I still get annoyed a little bit but it doesn't drag into the next point whereas before [the intervention] it used to drag into the next point and I'd mess an easy shot again, whereas now I try to refocus for the next point. So it [the intervention] helped me.... I think on the court I'm better now... I feel confident with the mental skills".

"The visualisation I think was very useful. I do it the night before [competition].... And also I find it helps me get off to sleep at night and then in the morning it just helps me focus and concentrate on the main thing.... I've been trying to use it, but sometimes I forget about it *(laugh)*.... The 5 things [options], I found that one quite good to look at things in the

different ways. So, it helped me as well".

Fostering autonomy in Jenny

Both mum and dad followed my recommendation to foster autonomy in Jenny. They revealed:

> "We have been given her at every opportunity a lot more independence, and I think we can still go further. ..... We are giving her the independence, asking her for her views on things, she packs her bag the night before, and she's not being waited on hand and foot.... I let her lead it [match analysis] and she does, I'll probably throw in the odd thing here and there, but 99% she knows it anyway.... She does lead them, she gives her opinion on it" [dad].

> "What I've seen is that she's [Jenny] quite independent now that it doesn't make really too much difference whether I'm there [in the tournament] with her or not. I think like last weekend's match she would have done exactly the same whether I was there on the side of the court or not.... I think in match discussions afterwards Jim is letting her be independent more so now.... Also she'll say to him 'can you take me for a knock before we get to the tournament', and things like that. Last week one day we said to her 'what do you want to do today?' and she said 'I'd rather rest today'. So she speaks her mind now" [mum].

Part 3: Follow-up 2

This part presents the results ascertained from the second and final follow-up session (phase 6, week 18) with Jenny and with her parents, which took place four weeks after the first follow-up. The issues discussed in this session were: neutralising fears, communication, changes noticed in Jenny's behaviour, leisure time, fostering autonomy in Jenny, and the benefits of the intervention.

Neutralising fear

Dad revealed that he had continued to implement the skills that I had taught him to neutralise his fear and negative thoughts. He had controlled his fear by paying attention to his negative thoughts and challenging them, putting things into perspective, and doing breathing exercises. He had also changed his orientation from outcome to a more performance and mastery orientation. All these had helped dad neutralise his FF and feel calmer during Jenny's competitions than had done pre-intervention. This is evident in his following quotes:

> "There were two, three occasions recently where she played under pressure, girls her own age that she should beat, and normally I'd be 'oh Jenny I want you to win'. I wouldn't tell her, but I'd think it. But now I wasn't thinking it. I think I've now totally changed my attitude and now I want her to play well or do her best and I'm looking to see how she deals

with situations, if she's being positive. And when it [the thought of 'I want you to win'] comes to my mind while I'm watching, I'm thinking 'it's irrelevant the outcome of this', and all I really want is for Jenny to enjoy what she's doing and enjoy the match while she's out there. And I really do mean that.... I am taking in everything you said and I'm thinking about it. And as soon as I get a thought 'ooohhh if she loses this' I think 'well, does it really matter? Not really, because within a few days you'll forget about this match and you're on to another match'.... I can actually make a calculated sensible decision now, a rational decision that the outcome isn't that important, and it really isn't.... I've not been that bothered when she's lost matches.... I think what we did [the intervention] is really useful, I really do. When she's performing, of-course I want my daughter to win, but before this [intervention] I wasn't aware that you got those thoughts that come into your mind. Like the other day when she was playing I was thinking 'oh Jenny please don't lose this one 'cos this won't do you any good'... and as soon as the thought came in I said 'well it bloody won't even matter 'cos it's one match and in two days she'll be in the academy doing whatever it is she does.... So, I can most certainly challenge them [thoughts] now better".

"On Sunday I was really tired.... I did feel stress 'cos of the fact that she was playing [name of a strong opponent]. And I was doing exactly what you said, I was taking the deep breathing.... The reality of it all comes back if you're not careful. So I did pick up lots from this [intervention], which I use".

An interesting interaction occurred between mum and dad when dad had revealed his thinking during Jenny's competition, "Oh Jenny please don't lose this one 'cos this won't do you any good". At this point mum had interrupted him to say, "Now you see, this didn't even cross my mind and I didn't even think of it. I don't really think 'oh please don't lose this match', I just don't really think like this". Dad had seemed very puzzled that mum did not think like him and had questioned her, after which he had stated "I think like this often". This was a good example to illustrate to them the thought pattern of a person who is high in FF (i.e., dad) as opposed to someone who is low in FF (i.e., mum).

Jenny stated again, as she did in follow-up 1, that she did not fear failure because "when we broke it down [in the intervention session] it came to nothing so there is no point fearing it". When asked how she felt before recent competitions, Jenny replied, "I didn't worry about anything" and that she did not think about consequences of failure. She also revealed that she had used the "5-option exercise" to help her "understand why people do things" and that it helped her to "worry less about what they do 'cos I have other explanations, so I don't worry about it now".

Communication

Dad revealed that he had continued to make an effort to improve his communication with Jenny during and post-competition. He stated:

"In the Friday match I was out the way [not at court side].... I was frustrated, I wasn't pleased that she [Jenny] didn't seem to be bothered, she was upset and moody and she

> didn't seem to try to do something about it, like she didn't want to compete, she just accepted what was going on, she was getting moodier and moodier.... I was really upset with her performance and the way she behaved on court.... I wasn't happy but I wasn't making any hand signals or saying 'C'mon Jenny!' or anything like that. I just stood out of the way and I was discussing it [the match] with Victoria [coach] as it went along.... I didn't say hardly anything to Jenny afterwards and Victoria discussed the match pretty soon afterwards with her.... Victoria was also not satisfied with her effort and her performance.... On the way back [home] I hardly discussed it with Jenny. I just told her that this performance and effort isn't acceptable and is not good enough. I wasn't really nasty.... I think I did control myself, I didn't lose my temper, and I didn't discuss it with Jenny.... The following day I tried to get to the bottom of it, but she [Jenny] was in a bit of a mood, she was going through a mini depression".

> "I've been doing what you told me when she lost matches. I was finding all the positive things from it and was trying to lift her [mood].... You know, every time I found good things in it [her performance] I was telling her, like you told me.... I'm also asking her for her views on the match and not just telling her my views, like you said".

It appears from dad's account that, despite his dissatisfaction with Jenny's performance, he had not communicated it to her during the match and had not criticised her harshly after she had lost the match. Moreover, as I recommended, dad had begun to praise aspects of Jenny's performance, to be more supportive when she lost in competitions, and to seek her views on her performance after the competition rather than exclusively express his views. All these changes in dad's communication with Jenny during and post-competition are positive as they help reduce Jenny's FF level.

Mum welcomed the changes that she had noticed in dad's communication with Jenny during and post-performance. She revealed:

> "Jim needs to work on how to control his feelings... but he's getting better, it's better now than before [the intervention].... he's definitely a lot better now. It [the intervention] made him look at himself at how he is and it made him try to control how he is, whereas before [the intervention] he used to get very agitated [during competition] and things like that.... And even afterwards [post-match] it's much better now 'cos in the past it used to go on for two, three days sometimes that they [dad and Jenny] wouldn't talk to each other, but now they talk about it quickly and it gets sorted and then they get back home and back to normal.... He didn't talk for long the other day [after failure], which is a good thing. It's lot better than before when he used to go on about things for days.... He's a lot calmer now after matches whereas before [the intervention] they would both be in a mood with each other for few days, whereas now they'd say what they think and it's forgotten quickly".

Thus, dad had appeared calmer and in a better control of his emotions during Jenny's competitions than previously. Moreover, dad's and Jenny's communication post-competition had also improved and there was no longer a break-down in their communication post-failure, as there had been pre-intervention. Jenny also expressed her delight at this change, saying, "This is a positive change in my dad *(laugh)*....We now talk about things on that day [competition day] and we don't stop talking to each other like we

used to".

Jenny was also pleased that her dad had not criticised her post-competition since our previous meeting (i.e., four weeks). She said:

> "He [dad] is better now before and after matches.... Before [matches] we just relax and take it easy and only 10 minutes before the match we talk about what we're gonna do [tactics].... Afterwards [post-match] he asks me about it [the match], what I think, and then he tells me what he thinks and usually it's about the same as me, which is fine.... we usually see the match the same".

Jenny was glad that dad had also improved his behaviour during competitions and had not communicated to her his dissatisfaction and distress. She revealed, "He's better also when I'm on court 'cos he doesn't show actions.... It's good 'cos now I don't have to worry about why he's annoyed and why he's walked off.... So, it's better". Thus, dad's animated behaviour during her performances (i.e., communication during competition) had been a source of worry for Jenny and had contributed to her FF (as discussed in study 2); this explains her pleasure with the improvements in dad's behaviour. Finally, Jenny stated, "I'm happy with how I'm playing and with how things are going now". Indeed, Jenny seemed happier and more cheerful during this session than during our previous follow-up session.

Changes noticed in Jenny's behaviour

Both mum and dad talked about the changes that they had noticed in Jenny's performance and behaviour. Their statements are below:

> "Jenny seems a lot more settled. She seems a lot calmer now and less stressed on court. She seems more in control with what she's doing and she's been playing a lot better. But whether it's hand in hand, I don't know. Jim has been pleased with how she's been playing.... Jenny seems now a lot more confident, she doesn't seem to look at him [dad] as much [when playing] as she used to. Occasionally she does, but not as much as she used to, which is good. She's sort of taking more control of what she's doing in the match .... She's also more in control of what she's doing generally, which also comes with maturity.... I also noticed that she moves on quicker from an error on court, whereas before she could lose half a dozen points after one mistake because she was annoyed with herself for making the error, but now she turns around slaps her thigh, bouncy bouncy, and she does recover quicker, so this is now a lot better.... It [the intervention] probably made her look at herself". [mum]

> "Jenny has a positive attitude in the way she was behaving and the way she was dealing with situations [in the match] and everything else.... She's been absolutely fantastic, everything was going according to plan.... I was over the moon with her attitude and her behaviour, all the positive things were coming out, the competitive attitude was there.... We've [mum and dad] been doing lots of things as you said, that we can pick up and boost her, and she seems to have far more enthusiasm for the game.... There has been lots of things in these four weeks that have really come together, from her [Jenny] points of view,

that have been fantastic.... She's had some good results recently and some that she hadn't expected to get anywhere near, but she's beaten those people. She behaved very positively on court and beaten them.... Everything seems to be coming together". [dad]

"I think that 80% of the time Jenny benefited from this [intervention] massively. She is definitely going through things and trying to play the point rather than worrying about the past or the future. She is looking at the ball and she's playing the moment, and some of her body language is better now than before [the intervention]. I was amazed the other day, she played an older player and before she'd be like a mouse in situations like this, but not the other day. Jenny just passed that girl at the net and she slapped her thigh and said to herself quite loud 'C'mon you can do this', and the other girl just couldn't believe that. So Jenny made quite a positive statement, and that wouldn't come from Jenny a few months ago. So she's getting more positive on court and there are lots and lots positive things.... She seems to believe in herself more now". [dad]

Thus, it appears that Jenny had become confident, enthusiastic, relaxed during competitions and in control of her thoughts and emotions, and had been performing well and winning competitions. Both mum and dad were pleased with the changes that they had noticed in Jenny and attributed them to the intervention.

Jenny was also pleased with the changes in her performance, saying "I bounce back better from mistakes than before [the intervention]". She revealed that she had been using the routine that we had devised during the intervention and fixing on the word "focus" as her cue word to reframe her negative self-talk and thoughts. It appears that the intervention taught Jenny how to control her negative thoughts and emotions, and to reduce her punitive behaviour against herself when making mistakes. This helped to increase her self-confidence and decrease her FF level and, thereby, to enhance her performance in competitions.

Leisure time and fostering autonomy in Jenny

It appears that the parents followed my recommendation to incorporate leisure time into Jenny's schedule. They also continued to foster autonomy in Jenny. Dad said:

"You said try to build some social side, which we've done, we had her friends round and she's gone with a school friend to the cinema and shopping with Paula [mum] and this and that, and on Saturday she had no tennis.... Jenny and I had a day out last Friday, we went to Wimbledon to watch. We had a laugh and we were mocking around and we had a fantastic day. On the Saturday we had just a laugh all the day and got up late.... So we're working on it".

"We've given her [Jenny] more responsibilities.... I'm doing everything that you're saying and I'm asking her for her views and not telling her just my opinions after the match, so she's leading it [match-analysis] now".

Benefits of the intervention

Dad summarised the benefits of the intervention for him:

"I have taken on board what you said. I would love to knock it [the intervention] and say 'I haven't', but there has been lot's that I've taken from it and that I look at now. My outlook on all these things has changed and it helped me personally with the fact that I don't get frustrated as much. I really do look at things and matches in a different way and I am not as outcome oriented now…. I'm not looking for her to win every match she plays…. I think that there is a lot that I've learnt here [from the intervention] and there is a lot that I agree with you totally….. My behaviour on court side when she's playing is 10 times better now. So there are a lots and lots of positives that I took from this [intervention]…. I think that to a certain extend there are guidelines now for me to work on, and yes of-course I need to improve on what I'm doing and how I'm behaving in these situations and all that, and I've got the goal post now. I've got the things that I need to refer to now, and I have been trying most of the times….. Another thing that I've looked at and took from it [the intervention] is I can analyse it [situations, reactions, behaviour] now…. I did pick up lots of knowledge from this [intervention], which I now use…. I'm saying that there's lots there for me to take from it to help me…. I think that I learnt a lot…. You've done a good job".

Thus, it appears that the intervention was a source of knowledge for dad to use and draw upon. It helped him to change his outcome orientation to a more performance and mastery orientation and, thus, not to expect Jenny always to win competitions. It also helped him to learn to control his negative thoughts and emotions, to improve his behaviour, and to analyse his reactions and behaviours. Finally, it helped dad recognise the need to keep on improving his behaviour and gave him a "goal post" to aim for. Dad also stated, "Jenny has benefited from it [the intervention] massively, massively".

In this follow-up session, as in the previous follow-up session, dad indicated that providing frequent and regular intervention sessions to support and reinforce newly learnt skills and behaviours is needed for successfully maintaining parental behaviour change and preventing relapses. He stated:

"When you're involved in these things [intervention sessions] once a week everything is quite fresh in your mind. But if you don't, and you go about your every day business with work and the family and driving her [Jenny] here and there, and it's quite tiring. So you need to refresh these ideas in your mind before the match and to keep this work [intervention] as an on going thing otherwise you can easily slip".

The PFAI and AGQ-S results

The PFAI results (see Figure 6.27) showed that fear of devaluing self-estimate was Jenny's (athlete 2) highest fear pre-intervention, followed by fear of important others losing interest, followed by shame and embarrassment. The results at post-intervention 1 (data

collection 2, phase 4, week 10) showed that her fear of devaluing self-estimate had decreased markedly to a very low level and, although it increased slightly eight weeks later at post-intervention 2 (data collection 3, phase 6, week 18), it remained at a very low level. Her fear of shame and embarrassment also decreased to a very low level at post-intervention 1 and remained at that level at post-intervention 2. The level of her fear of important others losing interest was slightly higher at post-intervention 1 than at pre-intervention, and lower at post-intervention 2. Finally, her fear of upsetting important others decreased to a lower level and remained at that level at post-interventions 1 and 2. In short, all of Jenny's fears were at lower levels at post-intervention than at pre-intervention.

Athlete 2- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.71	0.25	-1.25	-0.60	-0.80
post 1	-1.86	-2.00	-1.25	-0.20	-1.40
post 2	-1.86	-1.50	-1.50	-0.80	-1.40

Figure 6.27: Athlete 2 types and levels of FF pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

The AGQ-S results (see Figure 6.28) revealed that Jenny's mastery approach goals were high pre-intervention and even higher at post-interventions 1 and 2. Her mastery avoidance goals decreased from a medium to a low level at post-intervention 1, and remained at that level at post-intervention 2. Jenny's performance approach goals decreased from a medium to a low level at post-intervention 1 and, although it increased slightly at post-intervention 2, it remained at a low level. Her performance avoidance goals, which were at a low level pre-intervention, dropped slightly at post-intervention 1 and returned to their original level at post-intervention 2. Thus, both avoidance goals (performance and mastery) were at low levels post-intervention. Low level of PAv goals post-intervention may indicate that Jenny was not focusing on avoiding normative incompetence, while the decrease in her MAv

goals level may indicate that she was no longer focusing on avoiding self- or task-referential incompetence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The drop in her overall FF (to between -1 and -2) may explain the decrease in her avoidance goals because goals are grounded in high FF levels.
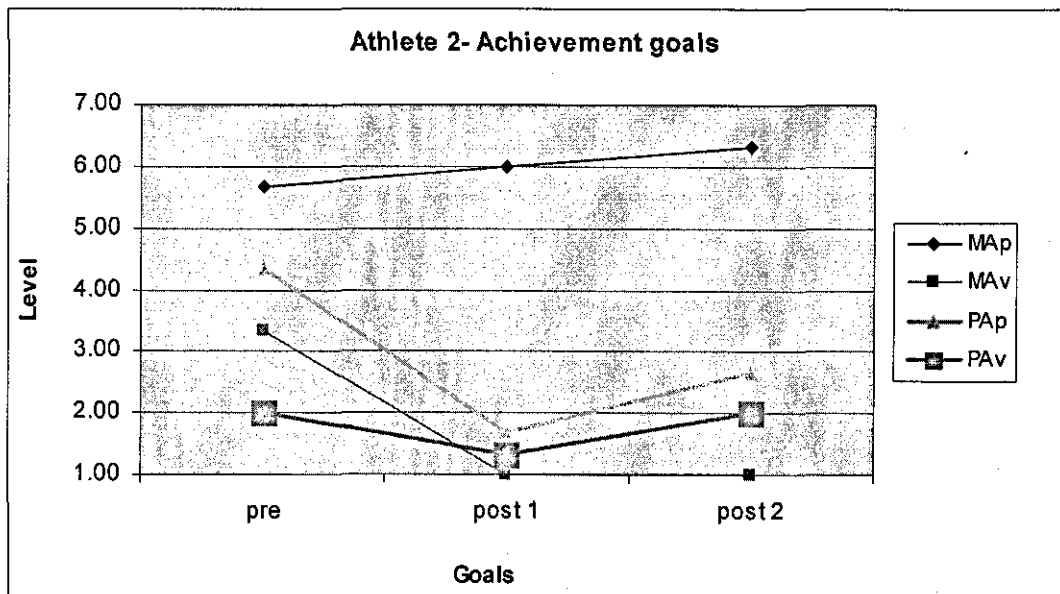
Figure 6.28: Athlete 2 achievement goals levels pre- and post-intervention (MAp= mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance- avoidance goal).

The PFAI results (see Figure 6.29) showed that mum's overall fears of failure for her daughter remained low and at a similar level post-intervention to what it had been pre-intervention. Fear of shame and embarrassment was her lowest fear (at a low level) pre-intervention and fear of uncertain future was her highest (at a medium level). While fear of shame and embarrassment remained her lowest fear at post-interventions 1 and 2, fear of uncertain future decreased markedly at post-intervention 1, and remained at a similarly low level at post-intervention 2. Fear of important others losing interest, which was her second highest fear pre-intervention, increased at post-intervention 1 and decreased slightly at post-intervention 2; it was, however, at a medium level throughout. In short, mum's fear of uncertain future (which was her highest pre-intervention) decreased markedly, while fear of important others losing interest (which was her second highest pre-intervention) increased slightly.
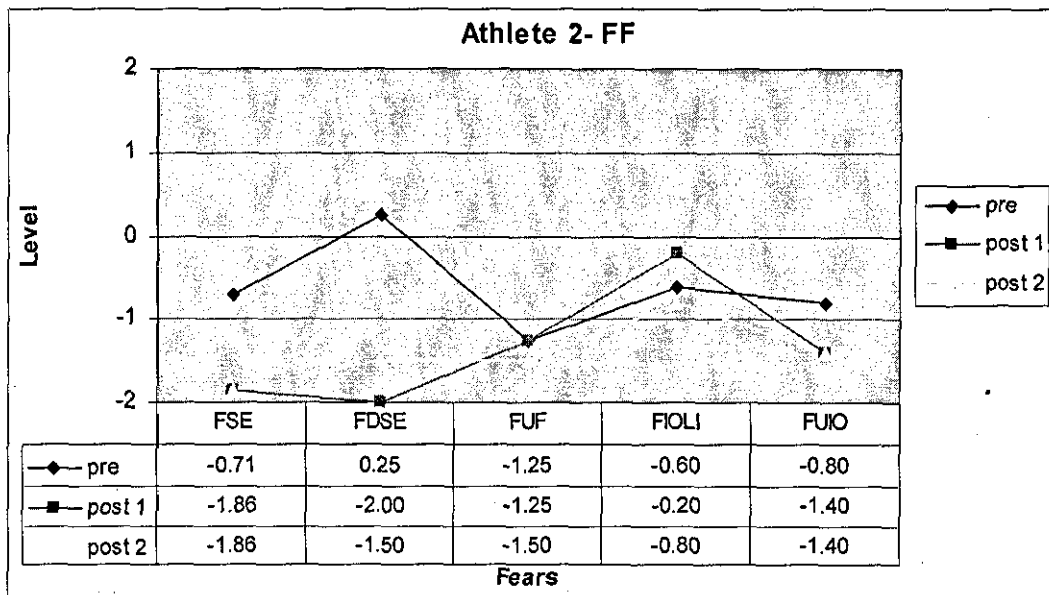
Figure 6.29: Mum 2 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention (FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

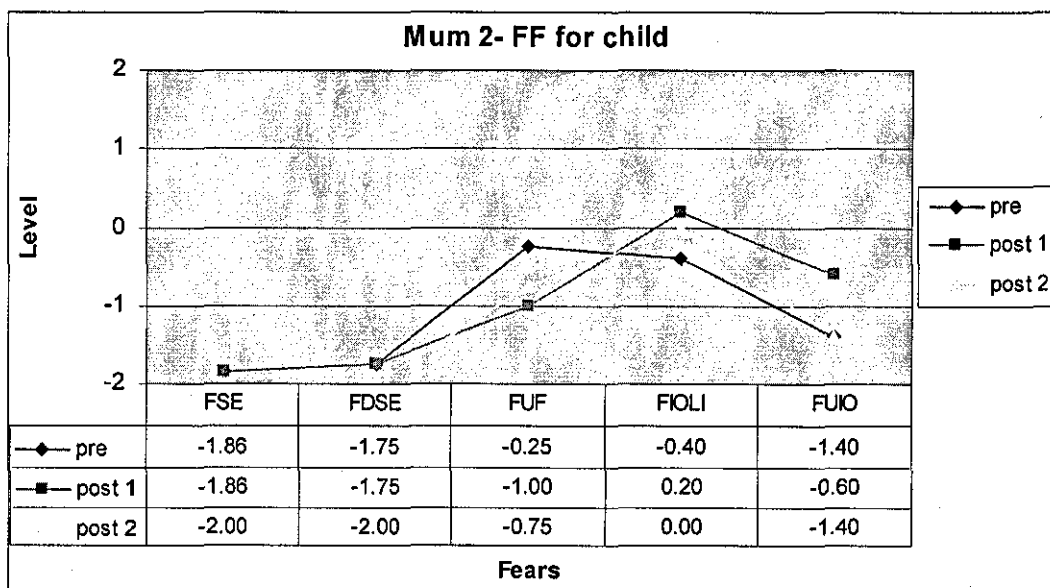Dad's PFAI results (see Figure 6.30) showed that his highest fear (at a high level) pre-intervention was of important others losing interest in his daughter, and his lowest fear was of devaluing self-estimate (at a very low level). Post-interventions 1 and 2, fear of devaluing self-estimate remained at the same low level, while fear of important others losing interest, although it decreased at post-intervention 1 and decreased slightly further at post-intervention 2, it remained dad's highest fear and at a high level. His second highest fear (at a medium level) pre-intervention, which was of upsetting important others, decreased markedly (to a very low level) at post-intervention 1, and increased markedly at post-intervention 2, rising back to a medium level, although still at a lower level than pre-intervention. Finally, fear of uncertain future decreased markedly and fear of shame and embarrassment decreased slightly post-intervention.

When comparing the decrease in common fears between mum, dad, and Jenny, the PFAI showed that fear of shame and embarrassment, which was at the same level for dad and Jenny pre-intervention, decreased markedly for Jenny post-intervention but remained at a similar level for dad. Fear of uncertain future, which was also at the same level for dad and Jenny pre-intervention, decreased markedly for dad but remained at a similar level for Jenny. Fear of important others losing interest, which was dad's highest fear and Jenny's second highest fear pre-intervention, decreased more for dad (even though it remained his highest fear) than for Jenny. In other words, pre- and post-intervention, dad was much more

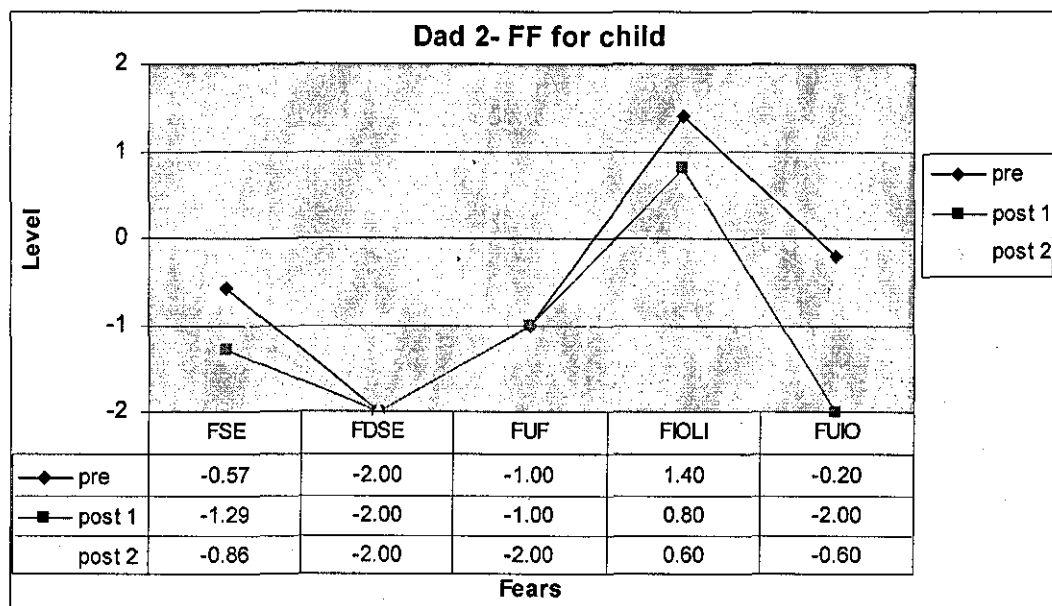fearful of others losing interest in Jenny after failure than Jenny.

Dad 2- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.57	-2.00	-1.00	1.40	-0.20
post 1	-1.29	-2.00	-1.00	0.80	-2.00
post 2	-0.86	-2.00	-2.00	0.60	-0.60

Figure 6.30: Dad 2 types and levels of FF for child pre- and post-intervention
(FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain
future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others).

In summary, the PFAI results showed that all of Jenny's fears were at lower levels post-intervention than pre-intervention. Her fears of shame and embarrassment and of devaluing self-estimate decreased markedly post-intervention. The AGQ-S results revealed that Jenny's mastery avoidance goals decreased from a medium to a low level, while her performance avoidance goals remained low. Mum's PFAI results showed that her overall fears of failure for her daughter remained low, while dad's PFAI results showed a decrease. The qualitative data revealed that dad became more in control of his negative thoughts and irrational beliefs. He had been neutralising his fears by putting things into perspective, doing breathing and relaxation exercises, challenging his irrational beliefs, and adopting mastery and performance instead of outcome orientation. All this helped dad to feel calmer and more relaxed during Jenny's competitions, and to improve his communication with her both during- and post-competition. Jenny also successfully challenged her negative thoughts and irrational beliefs and neutralised her fears. Consequently, she was able to control her emotions and thoughts and to become less fearful of failure. As a result, during competitions Jenny was able to focus on her performance better, and to recover more quickly from making mistakes and to move on. She appeared more enthusiastic, confident and relaxed, and exhibited a better attitude and body language during her performance. All

this may have helped Jenny perform better and win competitions.

Table 6.6 provides a summary of the changes ascertained from the PFAI, the AGQ-S, and the qualitative results post-intervention. It shows only decreases in fears of failure and in avoidance goals that were greater than 0.4; because avoidance goals are grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). As there are no norms available to base this decision, 0.4 was chosen as a conservative point. The results show that one of mum's fears and three of dad's and Jenny's fears were lower post-intervention. Fear of uncertain future, which was common to mum and dad, was lower post-intervention. Fear of upsetting important others, which was common to Jenny and dad, was also lower post-intervention. The qualitative results show the improvement in parental (predominantly dad's) behaviour and attitude post-intervention. These results reflect the benefits of the intervention for this family; benefits that were maintained at 2-month follow-up.

	PFAI results			AGQ-S results (athlete)	Qualitative results
	Athlete	Mum	Dad		
Family 2	FUIO FSE FDSE	FUF	FUF FIOLI FUIO	MAv-	· Improved communication during- and post-competition · ↓ criticism post-competition · ↑ autonomy in child · Dad became more mastery performance oriented · Dad challenged irrational beliefs · Dad became more relaxed during competitions

Table 6.6: Summary of the changes ascertained from the PFAI, AGQ-S, and the qualitative results for family 2 *(Fears:* FSE- fear of shame and embarrassment; FDSE- fear of devaluing self-estimate; FUF- fear of uncertain future; FIOLI- fear of important others losing interest; FUIO- fear of upsetting important others. *Achievement goals:* MAp=mastery-approach goal; MAv=mastery-avoidance goal; PAp=performance-approach goal; PAv=performance-avoidance goal).

6.5 General Discussion and Conclusions

The present study was designed to extend and apply findings from studies 1a, 1b and 2. Those studies recommended the development of intervention programmes to educate parents about causes of, and contributors to, FF development in young athletes. Study 1b recommended the use of cognitive-behavioural techniques to challenge and reduce the strength of beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure, which are at the core of FF; thereby reducing FF levels. Study 2 implicated parents in the development of FF among

young elite athletes and revealed the mechanism of FF transmission from parents to child. Therefore, the primary aim of the present study was to intervene in parent-child interaction, in order to reduce FF levels among young elite athletes.

For this purpose, an intervention programme was designed to teach parents about FF and about their role in the development of FF in their child-athlete, addressing issues of parental socialisation and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. The intervention comprised two separate educational programmes that were delivered to parents in two different ways. The first programme offered parents a one-off educational seminar (study 3a) and the second programme offered a young athlete and her parents ten weekly one-to-one intervention sessions (study 3b). Both programmes sought to promote and encourage parents to adopt a more positive approach and attitude towards their children's sporting achievements, and to teach parents ways of improving the quality of their interactions with their children, thereby reducing the children's levels of FF. Furthermore, over time, these programmes were intended to help reduce the transmission and development of FF among young athletes.

The primary intervention aim was to reduce young athletes' FF through parental training, and its secondary aim was to reduce parents' own fears of their child's failure. These aims had been successfully accomplished in both of the intervention programmes (i.e., study 3a and 3b). The results of both studies demonstrated that the parents:

- reduced their over-involvement in their child's sporting career;

- reduced criticism, punishment and threat after child's failure;

- modified their high expectations of their child's achievement to more realistic expectations;

- changed their perceptions of the meaning of success and failure in sport, and developed a more mastery orientation rather than their original outcome orientation;

- adopted favourable ways of reacting to their children's failures (e.g., praising and encouraging the child, controlling their own disappointment and emotions when the child fails or does not meet the parents' expectations, and putting failure into perspective); and

- modified their irrational beliefs about the consequences of failure, coaches' expectations, and others' negative judgment of their child after failure.

Both studies also showed that the levels of fears of failure of the athletes and their parents decreased after the intervention. Avoidance motivation goals also decreased for most of the athletes. This may have resulted from the reduction in the athletes' FF, as avoidance motivation is grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Thus, by lowering the athletes' FF level, their avoidance motivation goals were also lowered. The benefits of the treatment did not extend to the control group, as they did not receive the treatment.

Study 3a demonstrated that the fears of failure of young athletes and their parents can be reduced merely by providing the parents with a one-off educational seminar that teaches them how to correct their irrational beliefs and their unfavourable interaction styles with their child-athlete. Study 3b demonstrated that a longer and more focused one-to-one intervention that seeks to educate athletes and parents is also effective in reducing their FF levels. Although both studies had the same aims, each delivered the intervention programme in a different way. The two intervention programmes complemented each other where they involved the same family; what the seminar began, the one-to-one sessions bolstered and sustained. Both education programmes offered the parents a source of knowledge to use and draw upon when needed. Moreover, educating the parents also helped reduce their own fears of their child's failure.

Study 3b showed that all of Jenny's (the athlete) fears of failure were at lower levels post-intervention than pre-intervention. This was achieved by teaching her to become aware of her negative thoughts and irrational beliefs (i.e., distorted and absolutistic thinking), and gave her new skills to challenge and correct those thoughts and beliefs, thereby neutralising her fears of failure. Consequently, Jenny was better able to control her negative emotions and thoughts and had become less fearful of failure. As a result, during competitions Jenny was better able to focus on her performance, to accept and deal with her mistakes, and to perform and win competitions. She appeared more enthusiastic, confident and relaxed, and exhibited a better attitude and body language. Therefore, by reducing Jenny's FF level, the one-to-one intervention benefited both Jenny's performance and her well-being.

Like Jenny, her dad also became more aware and in control of his negative thoughts and irrational beliefs and, thereby, was able to neutralise his fears. Moreover, he adopted mastery and performance instead of outcome orientation and, thereby, stopped expecting Jenny always to win competitions. All of this helped dad to become less fearful of Jenny's failure and, consequently, to feel calmer and more relaxed during her competitions, and to improve his interaction and communication with her both during and post-competition.

These results of study 3b reflect the benefits of the treatment for family 2; benefits that were maintained at 8-week follow-up.

The use of a CBT framework in the intervention facilitated the changes made in the participants' thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours. It helped the parents and the athlete (Jenny), who participated in study 3b, to become aware of their negative thoughts and emotions and of the situations that trigger them, and to understand how such thinking elicited their fears and other negative emotions. It also helped the parents to understand how their irrational beliefs and FF shaped their behaviour with their child-athlete, how to analyse their reactions and behaviours and to recognise the need to continue to improve their behaviour.

These outcomes are in line with CBT objectives. This therapy aims to teach clients how to modify their maladaptive thoughts, which are seen as a habit that clients are only semi-aware of their existence (Trower et al., 1988). It postulates that clients are not fully aware of the build-up of negative emotions and become fully aware of them when they feel extremely upset. Therefore, CBT seeks to teach clients to become more aware of their negative thoughts and emotions and of the situations that trigger them, and how to correct them in order to alleviate negative emotions and distress.

By asking the participants to gather evidence that would disprove their irrational thinking and by showing them that such thinking was false and lacked evidence, I was able to help them change it. Furthermore, by asking them to challenge their negative thinking and behaviour continually and to think and behave in a way that contradicted their negative thinking, I was able to help them change their thought processes, emotions and behaviours. Finally, by adopting a constructionist perspective, I drew their attention to their language, which they had been using to construct their realities, create meanings, and develop beliefs about their child's sport. By making them aware of their language and its contribution to the formation of their FF, I sought to help them change it, in an attempt to reduce their fears. In short, CBT enabled me and the participants to identify irrational thinking and beliefs, to understand the link between thinking, emotions and behaviour, and to replace their irrational thinking with more rational and realistic thinking (Trower et al., 1988). All helped to reduce their FF levels.

The motive to avoid failure has long been recognised as being socially learnt during childhood (McClelland et al., 1953); and parents have been implicated in the development of FF, because of their primary caregiver role and attachment (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2004;

Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Study 2 (chapter 4), in line with previous research (e.g., Elliot & Thrash, 2004; McGregor & Elliot, 2005), showed that parents who feared failure responded negatively to their child's failure. This is not surprising as parents often project their fears, expectations, and hopes onto their children and view them as an extension of themselves (Crandall & Preston, 1961); and their children's successes and failures have an impact on their own self-evaluative judgment (Katkovsky et al., 1962). Parents high in FF, therefore, often respond to their child's failure and their own failure in the same way because the two outcomes are intertwined (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

Accordingly, as both intervention programmes helped to reduce parents' FF, it can be expected that over time they can sever the transmission of FF from parents to child and, consequently, reduce FF levels of young elite athletes and its development. The long term effect of the intervention, however, was not examined in the present study and, thus, can be considered a limitation; although the benefits of the treatment for family 2 (Study 3b) were maintained at 8-week follow-up and for the rest of the families (Study 3a) at 10-week follow-up. As such, the results of these studies reflect the benefits of the treatment that were maintained for 8 and 10 weeks. Accordingly, I recommend that future research extends this study by employing a longitudinal research design that spans over a longer duration (e.g., at least 12 months) to examine the long term benefits of the intervention for parents and athletes and its ability to sever the transmission of FF from parents to child over time.

Although in each family I collected data from the athlete and both parents to verify the experiences and events described, it can be argued that the study did not provide independent verification of the results (e.g., observing family interactions post-intervention) to safeguard against social desirability response. This can be considered a limitation of study 3a but not of study 3b. Study 3b provided independent verification of the results, by interviewing the coach who verified the data that I had collected from family 2; this is considered a strength of study 3b.

Other de-limitations (i.e., limitations that I imposed on the study) of the present study include: (1) the use of a CBT framework only rather than employing other frameworks in combination; (2) offering the parents a one-off seminar rather than several, which could possibly have facilitated greater reductions in fears of failure and caused greater changes in behaviour; (3) conducting individual interviews with the participants prevented direct comparisons of people's experiences from being made; (4) the intervention did not match the needs of the participants (i.e., I did not ask them what they wanted from the

intervention), thus, it was not tailored to their specific needs. A tailored intervention could have possibly yielded better results; (5) the intervention was not randomly controlled. A randomised controlled intervention could have offered a greater confidence in knowing which intervention was better; and finally, (6) the criterion for participation in the present study was delimited to young (ages 13-15 years) elite athletes from sporting academies. Therefore, the extent to which the findings generalise to athletes at different ages and at different levels of competition remains unclear and needs to be pursued in further research.

The strength of the present study (as indeed of studies 1 and 2) was the narrow age range of the participating athletes; this allows focusing on a specific age group for a greater depth. Another strength of the study was its investigation of family factors, which are highly relevant to FF socialisation. Furthermore, it was one of a few studies on FF socialisation processes that are involved in youth sport. As such, I encourage researchers to pursue this line of investigation in order to expand our understanding of the FF phenomenon and its treatment.

In conclusion, both of the intervention programmes successfully changed parental behaviour and reduced the levels of FF of young athletes and their parents. The results of Study 3a were achieved through one education session with parents, therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that a regular delivery of educational sessions to parents could greatly benefit parents and their children-athletes; both benefiting their relationships and reducing their levels of FF. This was indeed supported by Study 3b, which demonstrated the benefits of a weekly one-to-one intervention programme to reduce the levels of FF of a young athlete and her parents. Based on the latter study, I recommend providing frequent and regular intervention sessions to support and reinforce newly learnt skills and behaviours for successfully maintaining parental behaviour change and preventing relapses.

Finally, a CBT framework proved to be effective in reducing levels of fear of failure of young elite athletes and their parents. It helped them to modify their underlying irrational beliefs (which led to fearing failure and experiencing other emotional distress) to more flexible and rational beliefs that helped reduce their fears and the accompanying psychological distress. Thus, it helped them to construct more adaptive functional techniques for thinking and responding and, thereby, to alleviate symptoms of FF (i.e., worry, stress, anxiety). Accordingly, I recommend the use of a CBT framework in assessment and treatment of FF of young athletes and their parents.

Chapter 7: General Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions

Chapter overview:

This final chapter offers a summary and a general discussion of the research in this thesis. Thus, it offers a complete picture of the FF phenomenon among young elite athletes, as established by my PhD research: understanding young athletes' perceptions of the aversive consequences of failure; their coping with the effects of FF; the developmental origins of FF; and an intervention to reduce the FF of young athletes and their parents. This chapter begins with a general summary section, encompassing two sub-sections: a summary of the research background, rationale and aims; and a summary of studies. This is followed by a general discussion section that discusses the main findings from each of the three studies. The next section, entitled 'research contribution', outlines the contribution of my PhD research to scientific research and theory and to applied practice. It also makes recommendations to future research on FF. The chapter ends with a conclusions section.

7.1 General Summary

- **Summary of Research Background, Rationale, and Aims**

The primary purpose of my PhD research was to investigate FF in the sport domain, as research on FF in this domain has been greatly neglected. To date, existing knowledge on the FF construct has been generated predominantly by researchers in the education (e.g., Martin & Marsh, 2003; Schouwenburg, 1992; Thompson, 1997) and business contexts (e.g., Fried-Buchalter, 1997; Zaleznik, 1963), but not in the sport context. Three issues underpinned the development of my research. First, researchers have documented a prevalence of problems attributed to FF in achievement settings (e.g., Anshel, 1991; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Martin & Marsh, 2003; Orlick, 1974), highlighting an important social concern (Conroy, 2001a). Secondly, sport is a popular and a significant achievement setting for children and adolescents (Roberts, 1984; Treasure, 2001), where winning is important and is the typical demand (Passer, 1988). Thirdly, there is a lack of research on FF among this population, particularly among young elite athletes. Accordingly, the focus of my

research was to investigate FF in the sport domain, specifically among young elite athletes who typically perform in competitions (nationally and internationally) that are in public arenas and whose performances are regularly evaluated by selectors (or judges) and the public, where failure can have adverse consequences for them.

- **Summary of Studies**

My PhD research encompassed three studies. My initial study (Study 1, chapter 4) represents the first endeavour to examine FF in the sport domain among young elite athletes as such, an exploratory study was deemed appropriate. This study (which was divided into sub-studies 1a and 1b) sought to ascertain the perceived consequences of failure among young elite athletes (because beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure provide the basis for FF; Birney et al., 1969; Conroy, et al., 2002; Study 1a), to examine the effects that FF have on such athletes, and to find out how they coped with the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences can induce prior to competition (Study 1b). Data analysis revealed that the most commonly perceived aversive consequences of failure were diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, and the emotional cost of failure. Overall, there is a consistency between these findings and those reported by previous researchers with adult populations (e.g., Birney et al., 1969; Conroy el al., 2001). This suggests a potential for generalising existing results in adults to young elite athletes. As such, the novel aspect of this study was not so much in its results as in the potential for generalising existing results to young elite athletes. Accordingly, fears of failure may be instilled at a young age and can continue into adulthood.

Study 1 further revealed that FF affected the athletes' well-being, interpersonal relationships, schoolwork, and sporting performance. The athletes employed primarily emotion-focused and avoidance-focused strategies to cope with the effects of FF; the latter being the most frequently reported strategies. Both forms of coping, although effective for managing short-term threats and alleviating emotional distress, are considered less effective than problem-focused strategies (Carver et al., 1989; Endler & Parker, 1990). Accordingly, the study concluded that the athletes employed predominantly ineffective coping strategies for dealing with their FF.

My second study (Study 2, chapter 5) sought to examine the developmental origins of FF among young elite athletes. Achievement motivation theorists have long asserted that the motive to avoid failure (i.e., FF) is socially learnt during childhood between ages 5 and

9 years (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; McClelland, 1958). Parents have been implicated in the development of FF due to their primary caregiver role and attachment (e.g., Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). Parents high in FF often respond to their child's failure and their own failure in the same way, as the two are intertwined (Elliot & Thrash, 2004).

Despite the conceptual and applied importance of the FF construct, little research has been conducted on its developmental origins. Moreover, to date, researchers have not examined the origins of FF within the youth sport context. Consequently, the mechanisms of FF transmission within the sport context are not yet known. Accordingly, in this study I sought to examine how parental FF leads them to display particular patterns of affect, cognition and behaviour with regard to their children's failure; thus, exploring the mechanisms and processes by which parents transmit their own FF to their children. The central research question was as follows: is FF transmitted to young athletes from their parents and, if so, how?

Study 2 answered its central research question by providing evidence that FF is, indeed, transmitted from parents to young athletes through recurrent patterns of parent-child interaction. Data analysis revealed three mechanisms of FF transmission: parental punitive behaviour (e.g., criticism, punishment, threat), parental controlling behaviour (e.g., over-involvement in competition preparation, regularly attending practices), and parental expectations (e.g., to put in maximum effort, to win, to be committed); all are implemented in the development of FF in the participating athletes. The athletes and their parents reported common fears of failure, such as fears of negative judgment, of not attaining aspirations, of losing ranking, and of non-selection to future competitions. The study is the first one to provide evidence supporting an intergenerational transmission of FF in the sport context.

My final study (Study 3, chapter 6) was designed to extend and apply findings from studies 1a, 1b, and 2. These studies recommended the development of intervention programmes to educate parents about causes of and contributors to FF development in young elite athletes, aiming to reduce FF levels among young elite athletes. As such, the primary purpose of this study was to intervene in parent-child interaction in order to reduce FF levels among the young elite athletes. Its secondary purpose was to reduce the parents' fears of their child's failure. The intervention sought to teach parents about FF and about their role in the development of FF in their child-athlete, addressing issues of parental socialisation and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. It was designed

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to help parents improve the quality of their interaction with their child-and, thereby, to reduce the child's levels of FF. The intervention comprised two programmes, which were delivered concurrently over ten weeks. The first programme (Study 3a) offered parents of young elite athletes a one-off educational seminar, and the second programme (Study 3b) offered a young elite athlete and her parents ten weekly one-to-one intervention sessions. The control group did not receive a treatment. Cognitive-behavioural therapy provided the framework for these programmes.

Results from both programmes showed that the parents reduced their punitive behaviours (i.e., criticism, punishment and threat) and adopted more favourable ways of reacting to their child's failures (e.g., praising and encouraging the child, controlling their own disappointment after the child's failure, putting failure into perspective). They also reduced their over-involvement, changed their outcome-orientation to mastery, changed their perceptions of the meaning of success and failure in sport, modified their high expectations of their child's achievement, and modified their irrational beliefs about the consequences of failure, coaches' expectations, and others' negative judgment of their child after failure. Both programmes also showed that the athletes' and parents' FF levels decreased post-intervention, and avoidance motivation goals decreased for most of the athletes. The benefits of the intervention did not extend to the control group as they did not receive the treatment. The use of a CBT framework in the intervention facilitated the changes in the participants' thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours.

7.2 General Discussion

Perceiving the consequences of failure to be aversive provides the basis for FF (Birney et al., 1969; Conroy et al., 2001, 2002), and the anticipation of threatening outcomes elicits fear (Lazarus, 1991, 2000). Consequences of failure may be perceived differently by athletes and, thus, will affect them differently. Accordingly, if we are fully to understand why athletes fear failure we need to understand how they perceive the threat of failure. Achievement environments where successful individuals are rewarded and where success leads to gains (e.g., gaining respect, self-esteem, approval, acknowledgment, praise) and failure to losses (of the above), and where only a few can achieve success, can contribute to individuals' perceptions of failure as a threat and their fear of it (Rothblum, 1990). It is, therefore, not surprising that young elite athletes fear failure in a highly competitive achievement domain, such as sport, where their performances are regularly evaluated (by

judges, coaches, parents, peers, and the public), and where there is often pressure to win and achieve top performance in order to be successful, and where failure often has adverse consequences. The consequences of failure most commonly perceived as aversive by the young athletes who participated in study 1a were diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, and the emotional cost of failure (e.g., upset, disappointed, angry, sad, embarrassed).

Lazarus (1991) stated that an appraisal that one has failed to meet one's ego-ideal elicits emotions of shame, humiliation, and embarrassment. Thus, shame is associated with the perception of personal failure. McGregor and Elliot (2005) posited that shame is a highly aversive emotional experience grounded in global self-devaluation and that shame is at the core of FF. Individuals high in FF (in comparison to those low in FF) experience greater levels of shame upon failure, are more likely to generalise specific failure experience to the global self, and are more likely to have relational concerns upon failure. Furthermore, such individuals orient to and seek to avoid failure and making mistakes in achievement settings and this avoidance is likely to be a self-perpetuating process that serves to maintain and exacerbate the tendency to avoid failure and mistakes, leading to more mistakes and failures. In the sport context, fear of experiencing shame has been associated with increased self-blame and reduced affirmation while failing (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). Indeed, some of the young athletes who participated in studies 1 and 2 perceived self-blame to be an aversive consequence of failure.

Some of the athletes in study 1 also perceived failure to have aversive consequences for motivation level (i.e., to decrease motivation). Hence, failure can prevent athletes from attaining high levels of performance and reaching their potential (Conroy et al., 2001). Achievement behaviour, particularly its motivational aspects, is largely mediated by perceptions of ability, and the threat of failure can promote irrational strategies for defensive purposes (Covington, 1986). Individuals fearful of failure can decrease their effort in the task in order to defend against losses of self-esteem and social value, and experiences of embarrassment, by attributing failure to lack of effort (Birney et al., 1969). Accordingly, I propose that losing motivation post-failure and having thoughts of quitting, and indeed dropping out of the sport, are behaviours that serve to defend athletes' perceptions of their ability and competence, their social value, and their sense of worth.

The athletes who participated in study 1 employed primarily emotion-focused and avoidance-focused strategies to cope with the effects of FF; avoidance-focused coping

strategies were the most frequently reported. Both forms of coping are less effective than problem-focused strategies. They are considered maladaptive (as they divert people's attention from addressing the problem; Endler & Parker, 1990), "less useful" and "dysfunctional" strategies in most situations (Carver et al., 1989), and are associated with negative emotional and motivational outcomes (as they indicate loss of situational control; Folkman, 1984). Thus, the athletes employed predominantly ineffective coping strategies to deal with their fears of failure. Problem-focused coping strategies are more likely to be employed when individuals perceive personal control over the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and that something constructive can be done about it (Carver et al., 1989). In contrast, emotion-focused coping strategies are more likely to be employed when individuals perceive that they have little or no control over the stressor and that it must be endured; therefore, they focus on managing their emotional reaction (Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Accordingly, I propose that FF may be a stressor that the athletes perceived to be beyond their control and, therefore, employed more avoidance-focused coping and emotion-focused coping strategies than problem-focused strategies. After all, athletes typically have no control over the outcome of their performances or over the consequences of their failures. This is an important issue for practitioners to address when teaching young athletes effective coping responses to FF.

Study 2 is the first study to provide evidence to support an intergenerational transmission of FF from parents to young elite athletes through recurrent patterns of parent-child interaction. This is consistent with a recent study (Elliot & Thrash, 2004) in the education domain, which reported love withdrawal as the mediator of FF transmission. While that study only reported love withdrawal as the mechanism of transmission, study 2 revealed three mechanisms: parental punitive behaviour (e.g., criticism, punishment, threat; punishment encompassing love withdrawal); parental controlling behaviour (e.g., over-involvement in competition preparation, regularly attending practices); and parental expectations (e.g., to put maximum effort, to win, to be committed). All contributed to the development of FF in the participating athletes. As such, study 2, like previous research (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; Elliot & Thrash; Krohne, 1992; McClelland et al., 1953; Teevan & McGhee, 1972) implicated parents in the development of FF in children.

Parental FF influences the ways in which they view failure and interpret and respond to their own and their children's failures (Elliot & Thrash, 2004). In their responses and behaviours towards their children, parents teach their children the meaning and values

associated with different outcomes and actions (Parson et al., 1982). Accordingly, when parents respond to their children's failures with punitive and controlling behaviours it can teach children that failure has negative and undesirable consequences that they are likely to appraise as threatening. Thus, such parental responses to failure establish an association between failure and threatening consequences and, subsequently, lead to the development of FF in children, because motive dispositions develop when certain events become associated with a particular affective experience (McClelland, 1985).

Parents high in FF respond to their child's failure and their own failure in the same way because the two outcomes are intertwined (Elliot & Thrash, 2004). Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the parents who participated in study 2, and who feared their own and their child's failures, responded negatively to their child's failures. Parents often project their fears, expectations, and hopes onto their children, whom they view as an extension of themselves (Crandall & Preston, 1961), and their children's successes and failures impact their own self-evaluative judgment (Katkovsky et al., 1964). Failures and mistakes are common and are integral part of an achievement activity such as sport. As such, parents who are high in FF are likely to fear their child-athlete's failures and to respond negatively to their child's failures and mistakes. In so doing, they transmit their FF to their child.

Children learn to associate failure with parental negative responses, disapproval, and criticism and, consequently, to fear failure (Conroy, 2001a). Indeed, the results of studies 1a and 2 showed that the athletes disliked parental criticism and felt upset and worried by it and, thus, perceived it an aversive consequence of failure. Accordingly, parental criticism post-failure serves as a mechanism of FF transmission from parent to child. Parental negative feedback, disapproval and criticism post-failure have been associated with children's negative emotions (e.g., feeling distress, shame, sadness), high levels of worry, and diminished perceptions of self-worth (Harter, 1998; Rudolph et al., 2005). Thus, parental criticism has negative implications for children's well-being and sense of self-worth, and it mediates FF transmission.

Evidence from study 2 suggests that the parents perceived their children's successes as their own and their children's mistakes and failures as reflections on them (especially in the cases of dads 1 and 2, and mum 3). Consequently, they pressurised their children to perform well and avoid mistakes in order to be perceived (both parents and child) well by others. Fear of others' (i.e., of coaches and spectators) negative judgment was a predominant source of FF for the parents and underpinned many of their behaviours,

including their punitive and controlling behaviours and having high expectations of their child's achievement. This fear was also a predominant source of FF for their children, indicating a transmission from parent to child. Indeed, the athletes and their parents reported other common fears of failure, such as fears of not attaining aspirations, of losing ranking, and of non-selection to future competitions.

Parental controlling behaviours (e.g., over-involvement in child's sporting career and competition preparations, attending child's daily training sessions, pressurising child to avoid making mistakes) were evident in each of the three families examined in study 2. Researchers have associated such behaviours with parental ego-involvement (Grolnick, 2003; Grolnick et al., 2002) and stated that parents who use controlling behaviours do not act as neutral socialisers because their primary concern is (unknown to them) to protect their own position (i.e., needs, feelings, well-being) in their relationship to the child, rather than that of the child (Barber & Harmon, 2002). They are often ego-involved in their child's achievement activities and typically believe that how their child performs affects how others judge them as parents, impacting their own self-esteem. Consequently, they are highly motivated to protect their own self-esteem and, therefore, adopt controlling behaviours to ensure that their child performs well and achieves success, and that others judge them positively as parents.

Some of the parents (especially, dads 1 and 2 and mum 3 in Study 2) who participated in study 2 can be described as being ego-involved in their children's sporting careers, which led them to adopt controlling behaviours in order to ensure a favourable competition outcome (e.g., winning), and punitive behaviours toward their child (e.g., shouting criticism at the child from the sideline during performance, expressing frustration and disappointment with their child's failure). I suggest that their punitive and controlling behaviours were underpinned by their FF; they all reported fear of their child's failure as well as fear of their own failure. These parental behaviours served to alleviate their FF as well as to protect their other needs (i.e., self-esteem, emotions, and ego). They also served as mechanisms of fear transmission from parent to child.

Parental controlling behaviour has also been associated with parents' proneness to shame (Mills, et al., 2007); shame is a self-condemning reaction that is at the core of FF (Atkinson, 1957; McGregor & Elliot, 2005). Accordingly, fear of experiencing shame upon their child's failure and fear of others' negative judgment (of them as parents and of their child as an athlete) underpinned the participating parents' controlling behaviours with their

child-athlete. On the other hand, their FF encompassed other fears (e.g., of non-selection, of losing ranking, of non-attainment of aspiration, of upsetting important others, of uncertain future) and, I suggest, that it is a combination of all their fears of failure that underpinned their controlling behaviour. The greater the evaluative threat (or pressure) the parents perceive, the greater their FF will be and the greater their controlling behaviour becomes (Grolnick et al., 2002). Accordingly, I propose that such parents will experience higher levels of fear of their child's failure before important competitions (e.g., selection events, international competitions) and will demonstrate more controlling behaviours than they would before less important competitions, where failure presents less of a threat to their ego.

The third mechanism of FF transmission is parental high expectations of their child's achievement (e.g., always to put maximum effort and commitment into training and competitions, to perform well, achieve success and high results, win competitions, reach top national ranking; Study 2). It appears from all three of my studies that parental high ·expectations are a source of pressure for young athletes, contributing to the development of their FF. This is in accordance with previous research that examined the developmental origins of FF (e.g., Argyle & Robinson, 1962; McGhee, 1972; Schmalt, 1982; Teevan & McGhee, 1972). The desire to meet parental expectations is the most frequently reported source of stress and pressure by young athletes (Scanlan et al., 1991), contributing to their reduced enthusiasm and enjoyment levels (Power & Woolger, 1994; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984), and to feeling shame and guilt when they do not meet parental expectations (Lewis, 1992). Moreover, children may fear not meeting parental expectations and demands and, consequently, disappointing and upsetting their parents (Conroy, 2001a; Conroy et al., 2002). The findings from studies 1a and 2 support these claims. The athletes who participated in both of those studies associated winning in competitions with meeting their parents' expectations and pleasing them. As such, they perceived not meeting parental expectations and not pleasing them to be aversive consequences of failure, which they feared. Thus, their fear of not winning was underpinned by their perception that by not winning they would not meet their parents' expectations, and would displease and disappoint them. This, consequently, made the athletes feel bad and guilty. Hence, not winning had aversive consequences for these athletes. Parents who express their anger and disappointment after failure communicate to their children that they did not meet their expectations and displeased them. Through their high expectations and by expressing their disappointment and disapproval when these are not met, parents contribute to the

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development of FF in their child-athlete. Thereby, parental high expectations constitute another mechanism of FF transmission from parent to child.

The intervention designed in study 3 aimed to educate parents about FF and about their role in its development in young athletes. It was assumed that such an intervention could over time help reduce the transmission of FF from parents to child and, consequently, the development of FF among young athletes. The primary aim of the intervention was to reduce the young elite athletes' FF levels through parental training, and its secondary aim was to reduce the parents' fear of their child's failure. Results from both of the educational programmes (i.e., a one-off educational seminar to parents- Study 3a, and ten weekly one-to-one intervention sessions- Study 3b) demonstrated that these objectives had been successfully accomplished. The parents improved their behaviours, interactions and communication with their child-athlete, and changed their attitudes and beliefs about sport achievement. For example, they reduced their punitive behaviours (i.e., criticism, punishment and threat) and adopted more favourable ways of reacting to their child's failures (e.g., praising and encouraging the child, controlling own disappointment, putting failure into perspective). They also reduced their over-involvement, changed their outcome-orientation to mastery, changed their perceptions of the meaning of success and failure in sport, and modified their high expectations of their child's achievement. Furthermore, they modified their irrational beliefs about the consequences of failure, about coaches' expectations, and about others' negative judgment of their child after failure. Both programmes showed that the athletes' and parents' FF levels decreased post-intervention and avoidance motivation goals also decreased for most of the athletes; this may have resulted from the reduction in the athletes' FF, as avoidance motivation is grounded in FF (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The benefits of the intervention did not extend to the control group as they did not receive the treatment.

The results from study 3a demonstrated that fears of failure of young athletes and their parents can be reduced merely by providing the parents with a one-off educational seminar that teaches them how to correct their irrational beliefs and their unfavourable interaction styles with their child-athlete. The results from study 3b demonstrated that a longer and more focused one-to-one intervention that seeks to educate athletes and parents is also effective in reducing their FF levels. Although both studies had the same aims, each delivered the intervention programme in a different way. The two intervention programmes complemented each other where they involved the same family; what the seminar began,

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the one-to-one sessions bolstered and sustained. Both programmes offered the parents a source of knowledge to use and draw upon when needed, which they found helpful.

Based on the results obtained from study 3b, I propose that by teaching young elite athletes to become aware of their negative thoughts and irrational beliefs (i.e., distorted and absolutistic thinking), and by teaching them new skills to challenge and correct these thoughts and beliefs, psychologists can help them to neutralise the effects of their fears of failure. Consequently, the athletes will be better able to control their negative emotions and thoughts and to become less fearful of failure. Indeed, these were the outcomes in Jenny's case (the athlete in study 3b). Post-intervention she was better able to focus on her performance, to accept and deal with her mistakes, and to perform and win competitions. She appeared more enthusiastic, confident and relaxed, and exhibited a better attitude and improved body language during competitions. All of her fears of failure were at lower levels post-intervention than they had been pre-intervention. Thus, by reducing Jenny's FF level, the one-to-one intervention benefited both her performance and her well-being. The same techniques also helped reduce her dad's FF. He became more aware and in control of his negative thoughts and irrational beliefs and, subsequently, was better able to neutralise his fears. This helped him to become less fearful of Jenny's failure and, as a result, to feel more relaxed during her competitions, and to improve his interaction and communication with her during and post-competition. Thus, psychologists can apply the same CBT techniques when working with young athletes and their parents to reduce levels of FF and to enhance parent-child interaction.

The use of a CBT framework in the intervention proved useful for reducing fears of failure. It facilitated the changes made in the participants' thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours. It helped reduce the strength of beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure, which provides the basis for FF; thereby reducing FF levels among athletes and their parents. It also helped most of the parents as well as Jenny the athlete (who participated in study 3b) to become aware of their negative thoughts and emotions and of the situations that trigger them, to understand how such thinking elicited their fears and other negative emotions, and how to correct them in order to alleviate negative emotions and distress. Finally, CBT helped the parents understand how their irrational beliefs and FF shaped their behaviour with their child-athlete, how to analyse their reactions and behaviours, and to recognise the need to continue to improve their behaviour. All of these contributed to reduce parents' FF levels and to enhance parent-child interaction. Therefore, I recommend

that psychologists working with young elite athletes and their parents employ CBT in treatment of FF of young athletes and their parents, as well in the assessment and diagnosis of FF.

Based on my PhD research findings, FF appears to be cyclical in nature, both for athletes and parents (see Figure 7.1). These findings revealed that both athletes and parents feared not performing well because they believed that it would lead to losing the competition and, subsequently, to not meeting others' expectations (e.g., parents', coaches', peers) and to disappointing self and others, and to being negatively judged (evaluated) by others; a ripple effect of failure that is a chain of consequences. These perceptions and beliefs about the aversive consequences of failure seem to feed their fear and make it grow as these perceptions and beliefs become stronger. Fear of failure is a personality disposition (Atkinson, 1957; Conroy & Elliot, 2004; McClelland et al., 1953) in terms of a capacity to anticipate negative affect in achievement or evaluative situations. Fear of failure involves appraising threat in evaluative situations with the potential for failure because these situations activate cognitive beliefs (schemas) associated with the aversive consequences of failing (Lazarus, 1991). In other words, fear is an emotional reaction to a perceived threat that is stimulated by the belief that failure is a threat to achieving one's goals, and that aversive consequences will follow failure. The strength of the beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure was reduced successfully through CBT in study 3.

Figure 7.1: The cycle of fear of failure.

7.3 Research Contributions

My PhD research contributes to scientific research and theory on FF as well as to applied practice. In this section, I outline each contribution separately. Following that, I make recommendations for future research on FF.

- **Research Contributions to Research and Theory**

My PhD research represents one of the first endeavours to investigate FF among young elite athletes. Accordingly, it provides the first scientific documentation of young elite athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure (Study 1a). Thus, it provides the first insight into how young elite athletes appraise consequences of failure and why they fear failure. The novel aspect of that study (1a) was not so much in its results, which were largely consistent with those reported by previous researchers with adult populations (e.g., Birney et al., 1969; Conroy el al., 2001), as in its potential for generalising existing results

in adult population to young elite athletes. Accordingly, this highlights the possibility that fears of failure may be instilled at a young age and continue into adulthood.

My research also represents one of the first endeavours to uncover the effects that FF has on young elite athletes, and their coping responses to the effects that beliefs about the aversive consequences induce prior to competitions (Study 1b). Currently, owing to limited research on FF in the sport domain, we have limited knowledge on the impact FF has on young elite athletes and how they cope with its effects and with the threat of failure. Therefore, the novel aspect of study 1b was in its results that enhance our understanding and knowledge about the impact of FF on young elite athletes' well-being and their coping responses.

Despite the conceptual and practical importance of the FF construct, surprisingly little research has been conducted on its developmental origins. To date, researchers have not examined the origins of FF within youth sport context; consequently, the mechanisms of FF transmission within this context were not known prior to my research (Study 2). Accordingly, my research was the first endeavour to examine the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF within the sport domain and, as such, it offers the first scientific documentation on the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes. Therefore, the results ascertained by this research are novel and, accordingly, extend our knowledge.

Finally, the intervention programme (studies 3a and 3b) offered the first documented scientific programme designed to reduce FF levels among young elite athletes and their parents. Therefore, this research also extends our knowledge and enhances our understanding of the FF phenomenon in youth sport context and its treatment. Moreover, such an intervention programme can possibly help over time to reduce the transmission of FF from parents to child and the development of FF among young athletes; this assumption, however, requires further investigation.

One of the strengths of my PhD research is in the nature of data collection and analysis. Rich details in the data provided a deep understanding of young elite athletes' perceptions of aversive consequences of failure, the effects of FF on such athletes, and their coping responses with these effects and with the threat of failure. Qualitatively examining these issues with regard to FF went beyond pre-conceived categories of measurements. A qualitative method of inquiry helped to determine the perceptions, emotions, concerns, and fears associated with failure and to offer a deep understanding of the experiences of the

athletes and their parents. Adopting a social constructionist framework allowed me to study inter-relationships. It provided flexibility and freedom to explore family dynamics and interactions and helped me explore the experiences, processes and meanings for the participants. Interviews with young athletes and their parents provided in-depth information on the processes and the role of parents in the development of FF in young athletes, and on the role of the family in the early stages of an athlete's involvement in sport. Interviews also captured the individual and collective experiences of family members. Finding out about such experiences from the perspectives of parents and athletes allowed me to explore parental influence both from the child's perception of parenting practices and from the parents' own self-reports. This provided information on parent-child interaction and, thereby, the mechanisms by which FF was transmitted. This depth of information would not have been achieved had I relied solely on pre-conceived measurements.

Another strength of my research was the narrow age range of the participating athletes (i.e., Study 1: ages 14-17 years; Study 2: ages 13-14 years; and Study 3: ages 13-15 years). This allowed me to focus on a specific age group for greater depth. Furthermore, studying FF among young athletes from a wide range of sports (i.e., football, basketball, hockey, triathlon, kickboxing, tennis, figure skating, swimming) offered a broad understanding of the FF construct in the youth sport context that was not limited to one sport. Therefore, my research illustrates that FF is not exclusive to one sport but, rather, it is a phenomenon that exists across individual and team sports.

Investigating family factors, which are highly relevant to FF socialisation, was another strength of my research. It was one of the first studies on FF socialisation processes that are involved in youth sport context. Moreover, studying families 1, 2, and 3 in studies 2, 3a and 3b facilitated a continuity over 16 months. This allowed me to study these families over a length of time and to gain a deep insight into the family dynamics and interactions and, thereby, the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF.

Finally, my PhD research bridges scientific, practitioner, and clinical perspectives. As such, its results extend our knowledge of the FF construct in the youth sport context and help scientists develop a better theoretical and conceptual understanding of FF.

- **Research Contributions to Practice**

Children can drop-out of sport if they find athletic competition to be aversive and threatening rather than enjoyable and challenging (Smith & Smoll, 1990). Therefore, I

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advise that reducing FF among young elite athletes is important for enhancing their well being, quality of engagement, sporting performance, and social development; psychologists working with young elite athletes are in a good position to make contributions to such endeavours. In the light of my findings (Study 1a) that 'diminished perception of self', 'no sense of achievement', and 'emotional cost of failure' are the most commonly perceived aversive consequences of failure, I recommend that psychologists should attempt to modify such perceptions and their emotional consequences and, thereby, reduce young athletes' FF. It is worth noting, however, that some young elite athletes might be reluctant to reveal their fears of failure because they could associate FF with weakness of character, lack of confidence, and with non-successful athletes (as some of the athletes who participated in Study 1a perceived). Such perceptions can make it challenging for psychologists to access the fears of young athletes.

Given my findings that young elite athletes employ predominantly ineffective coping strategies (Study 1b), I recommend that psychologists teach young elite athletes effective coping strategies, such as problem focused coping, to deal with their fears of failure. These can help the athletes attain a positive emotional state and a positive level of motivation, and they can help with their sporting performance and social development as they can generalise these coping skills to other areas of their lives (Smith, 1999). Problem-focused coping includes strategies such as seeking instrumental social support, visualisation, planning, and re-framing.

Through cognitive-behavioural techniques, psychologists can teach young elite athletes how to confront their fears, how to put into perspective sporting demands, expectations, and experiences of failure, and how to challenge their perceptions of the meaning of failure in sport (i.e., develop process and mastery orientation rather than outcome orientation). Techniques can include challenging irrational beliefs, reframing, rehearsing the use of different self-statements, using different self-statements in real situations, scaling feelings (e.g., scaling anxiety level on 0-100 scale), thought stopping, systematic desensitization (replacing anxiety response by a learnt relaxation response), and homework assignments (tasks to practise new behaviour and cognitive strategies between therapeutic sessions) (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Head & Gross, 2003; Newman, 2003). Such techniques can also help reduce the strength of athletes' beliefs in the aversive consequences of failure that provide the basis for FF. Furthermore, psychologists can use these techniques to help enhance the self-perception and motivation of young athletes after failure.

Psychologists can also indirectly teach young elite athletes effective coping strategies to deal with their fears of failure by delivering psychosocial intervention programs to coaches and parents, who work closely with the athletes and who play important roles in their lives, their sporting careers, and their social development. Parents and coaches can be taught how to recognise signs of FF among young athletes and how to apply various techniques (e.g., putting things into perspective, challenging perceptions of failure in sport) to help the athletes. Both direct and indirect approaches can help teach young elite athletes effective coping responses to the effects of FF.

My research (Study 2), like previous research (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; Krohne, 1992; Teevan & McGhee, 1972), also implicated parents in the development of FF and provided evidence to support an intergenerational transmission of FF from parents to their child-athlete through recurrent patterns of child-parent interaction; specifically through punitive and controlling behaviours and high expectations. Such parental behaviours are underpinned by their own FF and their fear of their child's failure (the two are intertwined; Elliot & Thrash, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative that psychologists work with parents to reduce their own FF, to improve their interaction and communication with their child-athlete, and to promote and encourage parents to adopt a more positive approach and attitude towards their children's sporting achievements and teach them ways of improving the quality of their interactions with their children. They will thereby reduce athletes' and parents' levels of FF. Employing CBT in such endeavours is recommended as my research (study3) provided evidence that it facilitated the changes made in the participants' thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours and reduced levels of FF both among young elite athletes and their parents. Moreover, by improving parents' interactions with their child-athlete the transmission of FF from parents to child can possibly be severed over time and, thus, the development of FF in their child; thereby enhancing the young athletes' sporting performance and well-being, as well as parent-child relationships.

Finally, I encourage psychologists not to ignore the problems associated with FF, which have been associated with negative outcomes for children in achievement settings. If FF is not treated, children can continue to experience distress in such settings (Conroy, 2001a). This distress can lead to performance decrements and frustration over the discrepancy between their potential and actual performance and can detract from the quality of their experience. Eventually this learnt negative association (i.e., associating distress with achievement activity) can serve as a barrier to their future participation in achievement

activities. Such children might be disadvantaged from the beginning because early performance levels often determine later achievement opportunities (Conroy, 2001a). Moreover, effects of FF will continue and may become worse over time. Therefore, by reducing children's FF we can help enhance their performances, experiences in achievement activities, and their well-being; thereby reducing the problems associated with high FF. I recommend that psychologists use the results of my research to inform assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of FF in sport.

- **Recommendations For Future Research on Fear of failure**

There are numerous research questions that require investigating if we are to fully understand the FF phenomenon. In this section I make a few recommendations for research that I consider is much needed.

Currently, due to limited research on FF in the sport domain, we have limited knowledge on how FF impacts elite athletes and how they respond to its effects. Fear of failure is a source of stress and anxiety for athletes and effective coping responses to stresses are an essential element in effective functioning at elite level sport (Gould et al., 1993; Scanlan et al., 1991). Athletes who do not posses effective coping skills to deal with stress are likely to experience poor performance, negative affect, and may eventually drop out of sport (Madden, 1995). Accordingly, it is very important to carry on investigating young athletes' coping behaviour in relation to FF. I recommend that researchers continue to explore and classify coping behaviours with regard to the effects of FF among young elite athletes of different age groups.

Researchers have attributed prevalence of problems to high FF (e.g., substance abuse, eating disorders, classroom struggle, health problems, performance decrement, dropout; Anshel, 1991; Martin & Marsh, 2003; Orlick, 1974) and proposed that FF has no direct effect on sporting performance but primarily an indirect influence on cognitive performance via worry cognitions (Hosek & Man, 1989). These worry cognitions can hinder best performance since athletes high in FF engage primarily in irrelevant self-perception worries about the possible consequences of failure and this gives rise to emotions, thereby increasing mental stress that can lead to a decline of sporting performance or even to failure (Hosek & Man, 1989). Perceiving failure as a threat provides the bases for FF and it is the anticipation of threatening outcomes that elicits fear and anxiety (Lazarus, 1991). People perceive that there is a threat when they are confronted with a stimulus that they appraise as

endangering important values and goals (Lazarus, 1991). Accordingly, athletes can appraise failure as threatening to their goals and as endangering their chances of achieving their desired goals and, thus, perceive failure a threat and fear it. Accordingly, I propose that FF itself can potentially be harmful to athletes' performances, as FF might in itself be a threat to their achieving the desired goal. Thus, in competitions and other evaluative situations FF can potentially contribute to failure. I encourage future research to investigate this proposal.

I also encourage researchers to continue to design intervention programmes to teach parents about FF and about their role in its development in their child-athlete. Such programmes should address issues of parental socialisation and, specifically, parent-child communication and interaction. They can help improve the quality of parent-child interaction and, thereby, reduce athletes' and parents' levels of FF. Although cognitive-behavioural techniques proved beneficial to accomplishing the aims of my research (i.e., to reduce FF levels of young athletes and their parents; Study 3b), I recommend that future research examines the benefits of other therapeutic frameworks (e.g., psychodynamic therapy, existential therapy). This can enhance our knowledge about treatments of FF.

As both intervention programmes (studies 3a and 3b) proved beneficial for reducing parents' FF, it can be assumed that over time they could potentially sever the transmission of FF from parents to child and, consequently, reduce FF levels and its development among young elite athletes. The long term effect of the intervention, however, was not examined in my research. As such, I recommend that future studies consider extending from my research by designing longitudinal studies that span over a longer duration (e.g., at least 12 months) and examine the long term benefits of an intervention for parents and athletes, and its ability to sever the transmission of FF from parents to child. A longitudinal design can establish the benefits of an intervention for a period longer than the two months that my research reflected, thereby extending our current knowledge.

My research (Study 2) was the first to provide evidence to support an intergenerational transmission of FF from parents to young elite athletes. However, it is logical to assume that intergenerational transmission of FF can be bi-directional. Thus, FF in athletes may be transmitted to their parents. However, further research is needed to assess the bi-directional influences between the fears of young athletes and of their parents. A difficulty that can arise when examining bi-directional transmission is that parents may underestimate the influence of their children with regard to FF and may indicate unnoticed influences on them. This can occur, for example, when small changes in children's attitudes accrue over

time without the parents noticing them and their influence on them. Furthermore, parent-child relationships involve dynamic and interwoven processes, making it difficult to assess bi-directional transmission. This may, therefore, be a limitation of a research that examines bi-directional transmission of FF.

Future research should also consider examining the contribution of coaches to the development of FF among young elite athletes. Although my research (Study 2) implicated parents in the developmental origins of FF among young elite athletes, it did not examine coaches' contribution. Accordingly, I recommend that future research examine this possibility; specifically asking, 'do coaches transmit their FF to their young athletes and, if so, how?'. Such research should subsequently expand to develop intervention programmes with coaches that aim to teach them about FF and about their contribution to FF development among young athletes. It is logical to assume that coaches also fear the failure of their young athletes, because they often become involved in coaching them from a young age on a daily basis and for many hours. Furthermore, coaches' career progressions often depend on and are influenced by the success level that their athletes achieve. Accordingly, such research will extend from my study (Study 2) and will advance our knowledge about the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes.

Finally, my research focused on FF among young (aged 13-17 years) elite athletes from sporting academies. Therefore, the extent to which the findings generalise to athletes of different ages and at different levels of competition (i.e., non-elite levels) remains unclear. Accordingly, I recommend that future research should consider pursuing this. Such research could, for example, investigate how children who participate at non-elite competitions perceive consequences of failure, how FF affects them, and how they cope with its effects. Sport is a significant achievement domain for children (Treasure, 2001) and, as such, I recommend investigating FF at different levels of competition and ages.

These recommendations are by no means an exhaustive list for future studies on FF. I encourage researchers to consider continuing to pursue research on the FF in the sport domain as it will extend our current limited knowledge and will enable us to develop a better theoretical and conceptual understanding of it.

7.4 Conclusions

The prevalence of problems associated with FF in achievement settings highlights an important social concern. Nonetheless, our knowledge on FF in sport is limited due to a lack of research. As such, my PhD research fills this gap in knowledge and is one of the first endeavours to investigate FF among young elite athletes. It provides the first scientific documentation of young elite athletes' perceptions of the consequences of failure, the effects that FF has on such athletes, and their coping responses to the effects that beliefs of failure and of its aversive consequences can induce prior to competition. Examining the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of FF within the sport domain offers the first insight into the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes. Finally, the intervention programme offers the first documented scientific programme designed to reduce FF levels of young elite athletes and their parents. Accordingly, my research extends our knowledge and enhances our understanding of the FF phenomenon in the youth sport context, where research on FF has been greatly neglected. Moreover, its findings can be used to inform assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of FF in sport.

My research also provides the first evidence to support intergenerational transmission of FF from parents to young elite athletes, thus implicating parents in the developmental origins of FF in young elite athletes. Parent-child relationships are multifaceted, comprising a diverse range of activities and interactions (Videon, 2005). Such relations have important influences on adolescents' psychological well-being (Van Wel et al., 2000) and the affective quality of these relations influences a child's well-being into adulthood (Biller & Kimptom, 1997; Roberts & Bengtson, 1996). Parent-child relations in adolescence underpin intergenerational relations later in life (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Therefore, investigating family factors in relation to FF socialisation is of a paramount importance if we are to fully understand the developmental origins of FF and how to reduce its development in young elite athletes.

Fear of failure is an important construct to investigate for a number of reasons: (1) it allows us to explore the development of adaptive-maladaptive behaviours that have social implications; (2) many aspects of young people's lives are vulnerable to and affected by FF, and FF has been associated with prevalence of problems (e.g., drug abuse, anxiety, eating disorders, drop out, depression); and (3) FF contributes to performance decrement and frustration and can detract from the quality of the experience of sport participation, which

in the long term can serve as a barrier for participation in achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a). Ignoring FF and the problems associated with it can have negative outcomes for children in achievement settings because they might continue to experience distress in such settings and will learn to associate distress with achievement activity; thereby serving as a barrier to their future participation in achievement activities (Conroy, 2001a). Such children might be disadvantaged from the beginning because early performance levels often determine later achievement opportunities (Conroy, 2001a). Moreover, negative effects of FF will continue and may become worse over time. Therefore, by reducing children's FF we can help enhance their performances, their experiences in achievement activities, and their well-being and social development; thereby, reducing the problems associated with high FF.

Given the important role of sport in the lives of children and adolescents, sport psychologists are in a good position to contribute not only to young people's sporting performance but also to the quality of their lives and their social development. Thus, the FF construct is an area that can complement the customary performance enhancement efforts of sport psychologists and has great potential for intervention that can also contribute to the social development of children and youth in sport.

Finally, I urge researchers to consider investing their efforts in pursuing research on FF in the sport domain in order to extend our current limited knowledge. A better understanding of the FF phenomenon in sport will enable psychologists to enhance young athletes' performances, well-being, and social development. Moreover, further research on the FF construct will enable us to develop a better theoretical and conceptual understanding of it.

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Footnotes

1. This thesis is located within the post-positivism philosophy, which emerged from the rejection of positivism philosophy. The main tenants of post-positivism, as oppose to positivism, is that research outcomes are neither objective nor unquestionably certain. The development of alternative paradigms, such as post-positivism and constructivism, marked a period of development in relativist theory. These paradigms have had significant influence in the social sciences over the past half century, broadening the range of social inquiry (Crotty, 1998).

Positivism contended that science is what we can directly observe and measure and as we cannot observe human's emotions and thoughts these were not legitimate topics for scientific research. Thus, what cannot be measured is not science. Science is seen as the way to get at truth and to understand the world well enough so that we can predict and control it. Positivists believed in empiricism (the idea that observation and measurement was the core of the scientific endeavour) and that the key approach of scientific method is the experiment, the attempt to discern natural laws through direct manipulation and observation. Thus, science is seen largely as a mechanical affair. Positivism contended that scientific knowledge comes from logically deducted hypothesis with defined and formulated key concepts and variables to allow replication and falsification. Through the use of deductive reasoning we can postulate theories and test them. Thus, knowledge (as oppose to beliefs) was limited to what could be logically deducted from theory, measured, and empirically replicated.

Such narrow and rigid approach limited what could be considered as scientific knowledge and the study of the complex world of social phenomena. This was considered a limitation of positivism and lead to the emergence of post-positivism philosophy. Post-positivism philosophy advocates that absolute objectivity of the purist positivist is impossible to attain in social science research and that imperfection will always exist. It also claims that knowledge is embedded in relative rather than absolute and that all methods are imperfect and, thus, multiple methods are needed to generate and test theory and improve understanding overtime of the social world. Like positivism, post-positivism also advocated the need for rigour in research and in minimising bias and maximising accuracy while acknowledging that researchers' subjectivity and judgment may enter into the research. Rigour in research can be increased by showing credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (e.g., triangulation, audit trail) (Patton, 2002).

Positivists use deduction (which begins with a theory about the matter under investigation and moves to hypothesis, observation, and confirmation or not of the theory) as a method of reasoning, whereas post-positivists use deductive and inductive (which begins with observation and moves to tentative hypothesis and theory formation) approaches. Inductive reasoning, by its very nature, is more open-ended and exploratory, especially at the beginning. Deductive reasoning is narrower in nature and is concerned with testing or confirming hypotheses. Most social research involves both inductive and deductive reasoning processes at some time in the project. Most post-positivists are constructivists who believe that people construct their view of the world based on their perceptions and observations. Accordingly, this thesis is located within post-positivism philosophy, and specifically, within constructionism.

2. During my training in psychology I have taken several courses and training in counselling and I have obtained diplomas as a result. These include: Counselling Skills (a diploma); Introduction to CBT Techniques (a diploma); Expressive Counselling Skills: Using Art; Understanding and Managing a Panic Attack; Psychology of Counselling; and, Counselling Skills for Sports Practitioners. All have informed my intervention research in this thesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Interview guide (Study 2)

Appendix 2- PFAI Questionnaire (Conroy, et al., 2002)

Appendix 3- Educational seminar to parents- Power Point presentation.

Appendix 3a- Educational seminar to parents- additional information in handouts pack

Appendix 4- Interview guide- pre-intervention (Study 3)

Appendix 5- Interview guide study 3- post-intervention interview 1

Appendix 6: Interview guide study 3- post-intervention interview 2

Appendix 7- Achievement Goals Questionnaire for Sport (Conroy et al., 2003)

Appendix 8- Study 3a: PFAI and AGQ-S results for each control family

Appendix 9- Session 2 (parents): parental criticism quotes (taken from study 2)

Appendix 10- Session 3 (parents): fostering autonomy in your child (handout)

Appendix 11- Session 5 (parents): A sections on identity formation and retirement for sport taken from an article by Miller and Kerr (2002) (handout)

Appendix 12- Session 6 (parents): Fears and establishing inner control (handout)

Appendix 13- Examples of transcript extracts from follow-up 1 and 2 with the parents with my comments added for the parents

Appendix 14- Session 1 (Jenny): Developing mental toughness (handout)

Appendix 15- Session 2 (Jenny): Fear (handout)

Appendix 16- Session 3 (Jenny): Fear & Visualisation (handout)

Appendix 17- Session 4 (Jenny): Mental toughness (handout)

Appendix 18- Session 5 (Jenny): Self-criticism quotes (taken from study 2)

Appendix 19- Session 6 (Jenny): Negative vs. positive self-talk (handout)

Appendix 20- Examples of transcript extracts from follow-up 1 and 2 with Jenny with my comments added for Jenny

Appendix 1- Interview guide (Study 2)

Interview 1: Introduction

Questions to child and parents:

CHILD	PARENTS
1. Getting into sport Tell me how you got into your sport (age, path to elite, inspiration…) Tell me how your parents felt about you getting into sport. What did say, do…? What is your view on children competing at elite level sport? (advantage/ disadvantages)	1. Getting into sport Tell me how your child got into his sport Tell me how you felt about his getting into sport. What did say, do…? What is your view on children competing at elite level sport? (advantage/ disadvantages)
2. Value of sporting career Tell me how important is your sporting career to you? to your parents? Tell me how you feel about the fact that it's so important to you; to your parents	2. Value of sporting career Tell me how important is your child's sporting career to you? to him? Tell me how you feel about the fact that it's so important to him; to you
3. Parental support & involvement Tell me how they support you; Encourage you Tell me how involved they are (pushy?); Who is the predominant parent involved? What do you like, dislike, want to change about their involvement level? How do you think your parents like supporting you and being involved? How does your career affect your parents' lives? How do you & your parents feel about it? How invested are your parents in your success? How do you feel about it? How do your parents feel about it?	3. Parental support & involvement Tell me how you support him; Encourage him Tell me how involved you are (pushy?); Who is the predominant parent involved? What do you like, dislike, and want to change about your involvement level? How do you think your child perceives (likes) your support and involvement? How does your child's career affect your lives? How do you & your child feel about it? How invested are you in your child's success? How do you feel about it? How do your parents feel about it?
4. Parents-child relationships Tell me about your relationships with your parents. How does it compare to their	4. Parents-child relationships Tell me about your relationships with your child athlete. How does it compare to your

relationships with your siblings?	relationships with your other children?
How satisfied are you with your relationship? (like, dislike, want to change, is it just about sport? etc)	How satisfied are you with your relationship? (like, dislike, want to change, is it just about sport? etc)
Tell me how you feel when your parents are watching you perform? How do they feel?	Tell me how you feel when you're watching you child performing? How does he feel when you're watching him?
Why do some kids not like their parents to watch them perform? Do you sometimes feel like that?	Why do some kids not like their parents to watch them perform? Does your child sometimes feel like that?

Interview 2: Transmission of beliefs and aspirations

CHILD	PARENTS
1. Parents' childhood achievement experiences	1. Parents' childhood achievement experiences
Did your parents participate/compete in sport/other achievement activity?(dance, etc)	Did you participate/compete in sport/other achievement activity? (dance, etc)
Do they tell you about their experiences?	How did you & your parents deal with it?
(of success, failure, demands, academic	(of success, failure, demands, academic
achievements, etc)	achievements)
Tell me how they talk to you about it	
How do they feel about their achievements? About achievements generally? How do they rate themselves?	How do you feel about your achievements? About achievements generally? How do you rate your achievements? What is your current career?
2. Perceptions of success and failure	2. Perceptions of success and failure
How do you define/view success and failure in sport? What does failure mean to you? How do your parents view/ define success and failure in sport?	How do you define/view success and failure in sport? What does failure mean to you? How does your child define success and failure in sport?
Tell me what you see as consequences of failure?	Tell me what you see as consequences of failure?
Tell me what you think you need to do/ behave to become successful? What do your parents think?	Tell me what you think your child needs to do/ behave to become successful; What does he think?
What is yours and parents' views (beliefs) on: working hard, failure, making mistakes, setback *[Do you worry about it?]*, success, taking risks/setting safe goals,	What is your and your child's view (beliefs) on: working hard, failure, making mistakes, setback *[Do you worry about it?]*, success, taking risks/setting safe goals,

perfectionism, taking it easy, etc?	perfectionism, taking it easy, etc?
What are your main beliefs about achievement, success, failure, performance? What are your parents'?	What are your main beliefs about achievement, success, failure, performance? What are your child's?
How do they explain/ talk to you about it? How much do you agree with their beliefs?	How do you explain/ talk to your child about it? *(conversations/ modelling/ actions)* How much does s/he agree with your beliefs?
(Ways parents put across their views/ beliefs conversations, modelling/actions...)	How do you feel that your views influence your child's?
How do you feel that your parents' views influence your views?	How do your views affect you child? (e.g., motivation, goals, well-being, etc)
Tell me how do their views affect you (e.g., motivation, goals, well-being, etc)	
Do you feel that it's your parents' responsibility to communicate their values/beliefs to you? Why? How do you feel about it (like/dislike)? Why?	Do you feel that it's you responsibility to communicate your values/beliefs to your child? Why? How does s/he feel about it (like/dislike)? Why?
3. Goals, Aspirations and Expectations	**3. Goals, Aspirations and Expectations**
What are your goals and aspirations?	What are your child's goals and aspirations?
What are your parents' goals and expectations from you? How do you feel about it?	What are your goals and expectations from your child? How does s/he feel about it?
How do you feel about not meeting their expectations? Tell me how they would feel/ behave/ say if you didn't meet their expectations.	How do you feel about him/her not meeting your expectations? Tell me how s/he would feel/behave say if s/he didn't meet your expectations.
How do your parents tell you their expectations? Tell me how it makes you feel. (How does parental pressure come across? using bribery, guilt, manipulation, threat, punishment, love withdrawal, etc.)	How do you put across to him/her your expectations? Tell me how it, makes him feel. (How does parental pressure come across? using bribery, guilt, manipulation, threat, punishment, love withdrawal, etc.)
What are your hopes, fears and concerns for yourself as an athlete *(career)?*	What are your hopes, fears, and concerns for your child as an athlete (career)? How does it tie in with your own experiences?
What are your parents' hopes, fears and concerns for you?	What are your child's hopes, fears and concerns?
4. Desire to succeed and please parents	**4. Desire to succeed and please parents**
Tell me why you want to succeed. Why do your parents want you to succeed?	Tell me why you want him/her to succeed. Why does s/he want to succeed?
Is it important to you to please your parents (mum/dad), fulfil their expectations, make them proud? Tell me why.	Is it important to him/her to please you, fulfil your expectations, make you proud? Tell me why.

Tell me what makes your parents proud of you (sport related) Tell me why your success makes your parents proud	Tell me what makes you proud of him/her (sport related) Tell me why his/her success make your proud

Interview 3: Experiences of sporting success and failure, consequences, fears, and communicative style

CHILD	PARENTS
1. Experiences of success and failure, consequences, fears	1. Experiences of success and failure, consequences, fears
Tell me about your best sporting success and worst sporting failure (most traumatic)	Tell me about your child's best sporting success and worst sporting failure (most traumatic)
What were you/your parents thinking/ feeling before that event?	What were you/ your child thinking/ feeling before that event?
Before that event what did you think/imagine would happen if you lost? *(fears, consequences)*	Before that event what did you think/ imagine would happen if s/he lost? *(fears, consequences)*
How did you feel/react/say afterwards to yourself and to others? *(Self-beating behaviour)*	How did your child feel/react/say afterwards? *(Self-beating behaviour)*
How did your parents feel/react/say afterwards?	How did you feel/react/say afterwards?
Why did they react this way? *(interpretation of parents' behaviour)* How did it make you feel? Tell me how it felt to let them down, to be criticised, etc...	How do you think your child interpreted your reaction? Tell me why you reacted that way. How did it make him feel?
How different were their reactions in both situations (S+F)? Which one did you like best, and why? Tell me what you would like to change about their reaction. How would you prefer them to react?	How different were your reactions in both situations (S+F)? Which one did you like best, and why? Tell me what you would like to change about your reaction. How would you prefer to react?
How did it feel not to meet your parents and others expectations?	How did it feel that your child did not fulfil yours and others' expectations?
What did that failure mean to you and your parents?	What did that failure mean to you and to your child?
What did you think/ imagine (before and after event) the consequences of that failure would be? What was your and parents' worst fear about that failure? What did you and parents see as a potential threat to you? What were the actual consequences for you? What consequences of failure do you and your parents want to avoid?	What did you think/ imagine (before and after event) the consequences of that failure would be? What was your and child's worst fear about that failure? What did you and child's see as a potential threat to him/her? What were the actual consequences for him/her? What consequences of failure do you and your child want to avoid?
*Ask as above about the up and coming event *(examining prospective fears and consequences)*	*Ask as above about the up and coming event *(examining prospective fears and*

	consequences)
Tell me how you and parents feel about you failing again in the future? What worries you and your parents about you failing again?	Tell me how you and child feel about him/her failing again in the future? What worries you and him/her about failing again?
What is your and your parents' worst (imagined/real) fear or worry about you failing?	What is your and your child's worst (imagined/real) fear or worry about him/her failing?
Do you and your parents discuss these worries? Tell me who you prefer to discuss it with mum/ dad. Why?	Do you and your child discuss these worries? Who does s/he prefer to discuss it with (mum/dad)? Why?
How do you and your parents feel and think before you perform in an important competition? *(Inner head dialogue, worries before and on the day)*	How do you and your child feel and think before s/he competes in an important competition? *(Inner head dialogue, worries before and on the day)*
Before a competition people have expectations of you, how do you feel about it? Do you and parents think/worry about what if you don't fulfil the expectations? Tell me how it makes you and your parents feel?	Before a competition people have expectations of him/her, how do you and s/he feel about it? Do you and s/he think (worry) about what if he doesn't fulfil their expectations? Tell me how it makes you and your child feel
Tell me how you and your parents feel when you fail (shame/ embarrassment, disappointing self and others, others not interested in me, less worthy of love, guilt, self & others doubt my talent and ability and lose trust in me, lose confidence, motivation, respect, value, others watch me failing/losing the competition)	Tell me how you and your child feel when s/he fails (shame/ embarrassment, disappointing self and others, others not interested in me, less worthy of love, guilt, self & others doubt my talent and ability and lose trust in me, lose confidence, motivation, respect, value, others watch me failing/losing the competition)
* Discuss selected items on the PFAI Questionnaire (i.e., items that indicate high FF)	* Discuss selected items on the PFAI Questionnaire (i.e., items that indicate high FF)
Tell me how your losing in an important event affect your relationships, the home atmosphere, etc… How is it different from when you win an important event?	Tell me how his/her losing in an important event affect your relationships, the home atmosphere, etc… How is it different from when s/he wins an important event?

From your experience, tell me what is the best thing about success and the worst thing about failure (what do you like most about success and dislike most about failure)	From your experience, tell me what is the best thing
	About your child's success and the worst
	thing about his/ her failure (what do you
	    like most about success and dislike most
	    about failure)

2. Parental evaluation style	**2. Parental evaluation style**
Tell me how your parents assess/evaluate your performance/ training sessions. What do they say to you?	Tell me how you assess/evaluate your child's performance/ training sessions? What do you say to him/her?
How do your parents behave/react during your performance when you're ahead and behind in the score? What do you like and dislike about their behaviour/ reaction?	How do you behave/react during her/his performance when s/he's ahead and behind in the score? What do you and s/he like and dislike about your behaviour/ reaction?
How do you know when your parents approve and disapprove or your performance? (criticism,	How do you express/put across to him/her your approval and disapproval? (criticism,

judgement, comparison, shout/quiet, blame, only respond to good performance, turn away from me, refuse to talk to me, express loss of pride/ disappointment/ dislike me Vs praises & supports efforts regardless of outcome, etc). Tell me how you and your parents feel about their evaluation style (like/ dislike/ would like to change)	judgement, comparison, shout/quiet, blame, only respond to good performance, turn away from child, refuse to talk to child, express loss of pride/ disappointment/ dislike Vs praises & supports efforts regardless of outcome, etc). Tell me how you and your child feel about your evaluation style (like/ dislike/ would like to change)
3. Parent-child conversation & interactions Tell me about a typical conversation with your parents before and after an important competition/ training *(e.g., at home/car, lectures, instructions, blame, tone of voice, etc)* What other activities do they encourage you to take up? Why? Do you think that at your level (elite) children should have fun in their sport? Improve skills? Or win at all cost? What do your parents keep telling you?	3. Parent-child conversation & interactions Tell me about a typical conversation with your child before and after an important competition/ training *(e.g., at home/car, lectures, instructions, blame, tone of voice, etc)* What other activities do you encourage your child to take up? Why? Do you think that at his/her level (elite) children should have fun in their sport? Improve skills? Or win at all cost? What do you emphasise to him/her?
4. Parents and child characteristics Describe your characteristics (e.g., as if describing it to a friend on the internet), your mum's and dad's Which of these words describe you, your mum and dad: critical, judgmental, perfectionist, fear failure, controlling, angry, stressed, pushy, worry, stubborn, proud, negative, confident, risk taker, ambitious, focused, easy going, laid back, positive, finds a balance Tell me which one of these characteristics do you think is necessary for you to have in order to become successful, and why. What do you think your parents would say?	4. Parents and child characteristics Describe your and your spouse's characteristics (e.g., as if filling an application form) and your child's Which of these words describe you, your spouse, and your child: critical, judgmental, perfectionist, fear failure, controlling, angry, stressed, pushy, worry, stubborn, proud, negative, confident, risk taker, ambitious, focused, easy going, laid back, positive, finds a balance Tell me which one of these characteristics do you think is necessary for your child to have in order to become successful, and why? What do you think your child would say? How do you make him/her see it your way? *(transmission of beliefs)*
5. Recommendations/ Advice How in your opinion should parents communicate and behave with their child athlete in order to help them become successful, not fear failure, and enjoy competing and performing at elite level?	5. Recommendations/ Advice How in your opinion should parents communicate and behave with their child athlete in order to help them become successful, not fear failure, and enjoy competing and performing at elite level?

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Tell me what are the most important values, beliefs and attitudes that parents should teach/ pass to their children? How have your parents done that?	Tell me what you think are the most important values, beliefs and attitudes that parents should teach/ instil in/ pass on to their children? How have you done that? (e.g., modelling, conversations)
6. The interview experience Tell me how you found the three interviews? (Talking to me, talking about your feelings, thoughts and experiences, talking about you and your parents, me recording you, etc) Do/did you have concerns about any of the interviews? Did you hold back anything? Is there anything else you'd like to add now? What did you like and dislike about the interviews? What do you feel that you gained from these interviews?	6. The interview experience Tell me how you found the three interviews? (Talking to me, talking about your feelings, thoughts and experiences, talking about you and your child, me recording you, etc) Do/did you have concerns about any of the interviews? Did you hold back anything? Is there anything else you'd like to add now? What did you like and dislike about the interviews? What do you feel that you gained from these interviews?

Appendix 2- PFAI Questionnaire (Conroy et al., 2002)

Questionnaire to parents and athletes

-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Do Not Believe At All		Believe 50% of the Time		Believe 100% of the Time

HOW I FEEL/ THINK WHEN I AM FAILING:

--------1. When I am failing, it is often because I am not clever enough to perform successfully
--------2. When I am failing, my future seems uncertain
--------3. When I am failing, it upsets the people who are important to me
--------4. When I am failing, I blame my lack of talent
--------5. When I am failing, I believe that my future plans will change
--------6. When I am failing, I expect to be criticised by people who are important to me
--------7. When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent
--------8. When I am failing, it upsets my "plan" for the future
--------9. When I am failing, I lose the trust of people who are important to me
--------10. When I am not succeeding, I am less valuable than when I am succeeding
--------11. When I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me
--------12. When I am failing, I am not worried about it affecting my future plans
--------13. When I am not succeeding, people seem to want to help me less
--------14. When I am failing, people who are important to me are not happy
--------15. When I am failing, I get down on myself easily
--------16. When I am failing, I hate the fact that I am not in control of the outcome
--------17. When I am not succeeding, people tend to leave me alone
--------18. When I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it
--------19. When I am failing, people who are important to me are disappointed
--------20. When I am failing, I believe that everybody knows I am failing
--------21. When I am not succeeding, some people are not interested in me anymore
--------22. When I am failing, I feel that my doubters feel that they were right about me
--------23. When I am not succeeding, my value decreases for some people
--------24. When I am failing, I worry about what others may think about me
--------25. When I am failing, I worry that others may think I am not trying

FSE (fear of shame and embarrassment): items 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25
FDSE (fear of devaluing self-estimate): items 1, 4, 7, 16
FUF (fear of uncertain): items 2, 5, 8, 12
FIOLI (fear of important others lose interest): items 11, 13, 17, 21, 23
FUIO (fear of upsetting important others): items 3, 6, 9, 14, 19

Sam Sagar

Questionnaire to parents

-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Do Not Believe At All		Believe 50% of the Time		Believe 100% of the Time

HOW I FEEL/ THINK WHEN MY CHILD IS FAILING:

--------1. When my child is failing, it is often because s/he is not clever enough to perform successfully

--------2. When my child is failing, her/his future seems uncertain

--------3. When my child is failing, it upsets the people who are important to her/him

--------4. When my child is failing, I blame her/his lack of talent

--------5. When my child is failing, I believe that her/his future plans will change

--------6. When my child is failing, I expect her/him to be criticised by people who are important to her/him

--------7. When my child is failing, I am afraid that s/he might not have enough talent

--------8. When my child is failing, it upsets her/his "plan" for the future

--------9. When my child is failing, s/he loses the trust of people who are important to her/him

--------10. When my child is not succeeding, s/he is less valuable than when s/he is succeeding

--------11. When my child is not succeeding, people are less interested in her/him

--------12. When my child is failing, I am not worried about it affecting her/his future plans

--------13. When my child is not succeeding, people seem to want to help her/him less

--------14. When my child is failing, people who are important to her/him are not happy

--------15. When my child is failing, I get down on her/him easily

--------16. When my child is failing, I hate the fact that s/he is not in control of the outcome

--------17. When my child is not succeeding, people tend to leave her/him alone

--------18. When my child is failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it

--------19. When my child is failing, people who are important to her/him are disappointed

--------20. When my child is failing, I believe that everybody knows s/he is failing

--------21. When my child is not succeeding, some people are not interested in her/him anymore

--------22. When my child is failing, I feel that her/his doubters feel that they were right about her/him

--------23. When my child is not succeeding, her/his value decreases for some people

--------24. When my child is failing, I worry about what others may think about her/him

--------25. When my child is failing, I worry that others may think s/he is not trying

FSE (fear of shame and embarrassment): items 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25
FDSE (fear of devaluing self-estimate): items 1, 4, 7, 16
FUF (fear of uncertain): items 2, 5, 8, 12
FIOLI (fear of important others lose interest): items 11, 13, 17, 21, 23
FUIO (fear of upsetting important others): items 3, 6, 9, 14, 19

The Role of Parents in Young Athletes' Success and Failure

Sam Sagar
Loughborough University
14th March 2006

Seminar's objectives:

For you to recognise:

- How you can help your children achieve their dreams and aspirations

- How you can nurture your children's talent and help them progress and succeed

- How you can make your children's sporting experiences happy and good ones

- How you can enhance your children's well-being and motivation and reduce their stress & anxiety

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Seminar's outline:

- Introduction - general issues relating to young athletes

- Examining young athletes' fears (anxiety, stress, nervous, worry...)

- The development of fears in young athletes

- Round table discussion, comments, questions ... (confidentiality)

Introduction

- Tennis, kickboxing, triathlon, swimming, gymnastics, figure skating, hockey, football, basketball

- Reciprocal impact: family ⇌ child athlete

- Need more educational programmes to parents

- Need to bring parents into the picture

- No talent development without the parents!!

Seeking a harmonious triangle

Athlete

Harmony
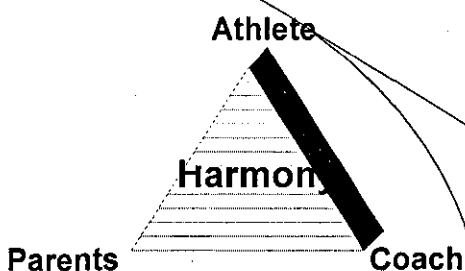
Parents   Coach

The science behind sport

- Coaching principles, training, fitness, nutrition, psychology, biomechanics...

- Achievements and demands are getting higher and tougher

- All placing a lot of pressure and stress on athletes, coaches and parents – sport psychology

1

Sport Psychology

- High level sport requires mental toughness
- Aims to educate athletes coaches how to deal with the demands of sport more effectively in order to progress further:
  - Mental toughness
  - Coping strategies
  - Emotional regulations
  - Enhancing motivation
  - Enhancing communications

- Mental skills, technical skills & fitness have to be developed and practised constantly at this phase of children's sport development

Children's Social Development

- Children athletes doing what most children their age are NOT doing

- High expectations - commitment, dedication, motivation, training, school, diet, sacrifices, leisure....

- Children not equipped with the mental skills to deal with such high demands – psychologists help them cope more effectively and, hence, perform better and progress

- S-confidence, S-esteem, S-belief, outgoing, makes friends, expresses views, wishes and feelings, articulate, shy, quiet, reserved, sensitive, worrier, temper, cries...

A fine balancing act

Social
Development

Athletic
Development

Examining fears
What is fear of failure?

➢ FEAR- a source of stress, anxiety, worry, nervous...

➢ Fear of failure is the motivation to avoid failure in achievement environments (e.g., sport, school)

➢ Failure = non-attainment of a goal

➢ The possibility (anticipation) of non-attainment produces fear (anxiety...)

➢ FF found among young athletes & their parents

The impact of FF on athletes

➢ Children learn (through verbal and non-verbal communications) that successful performance brings added affection, approval and reward, whereas failure can lead to their withdrawal. So they fear failure and place a high priority on not failing/ avoiding failure

➢ This can lead children to feel stressed, less motivated, spoils their experiences, drop out, and can stop then from participating in achievement activities

Classroom struggle

Avoidance orientation

Eating disorders

Decreased well-being

Fear of Failure

Increased cheating

Negative mood Anxiety, Stress

Burnout   Dropout   Performance decrements
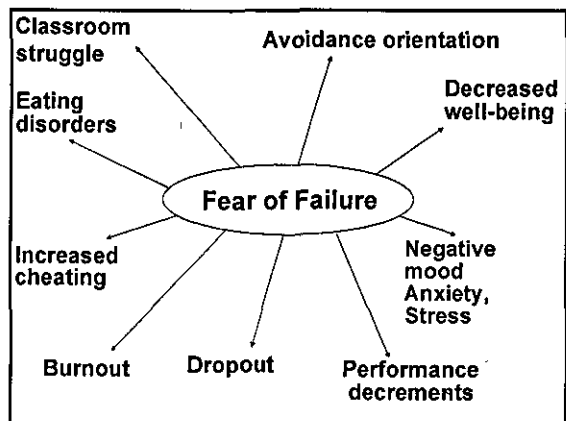
The impact of FF on athletes

➤ The intensity of the fear is strongest as they get closer to the competition

➤ It can be 1 day – 1 week before competition

➤ FF affects athletes negatively in four ways:

    1- Well-being
    2- Relationships
    3- School work
    4- Sporting performance

1- FF impact on well-being

➤ FF affects athletes' emotional states *(and parents')*

    E.g., feel nervous, anxious, stressed, scared, worried, upset, not sleep well, not eat well, lose confidence and motivation, and become negative (towards self and others)

➤ Affects athletes' motivation + self-perception (questioning their ability to perform well)

2- FF impact on relationships

➤ Becoming irritable, less sociable, less tolerant to others, seek isolation

    - "Not nice to people"
    - "Snappy"
    - "Less capable of dealing with the world around me"
    - "I get quieter and keep myself to myself"

3- FF impact on school work

➤ Neglecting school work and other activities/ interests

    "I wasn't concentrating enough on schoolwork and other things"

4- FF impact on sporting performance

➤ "I swam slower...my times were slower in competition"

➤ "You're more nervous on court and you don't play well.... You're afraid to take risks"

➤ "Usually I get ok after a few minutes but that time I didn't, I was so scared the whole time"

"I was so afraid and my confidence went down, and I'd play a game terribly because I just wouldn't hit the ball... I was too scared... I'll go week after week to play a match and not be happy with it and at the end of the day it just made me depressed" [sigh]

Why do athletes & parents fear failure?

> Sport is very competitive achievement domain. *Demand for top performance*

> Social pressure - success is rewarded (gain acknowledgment, esteem, respect, approval) and failure is looked down upon

> People fear the consequences of failure
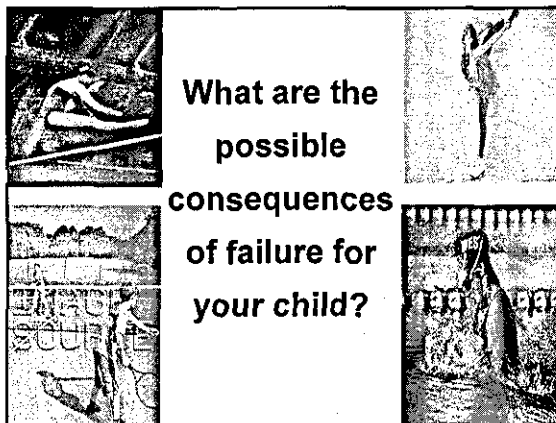
What are the possible consequences of failure for your child?

Consequences of failure

Fear of Failure

| Experience Shame Upon Failure | Devalue One's value | Have an Uncertain Future | Loss of Social Value | Upset Important Others |

Most quoted consequences by athletes

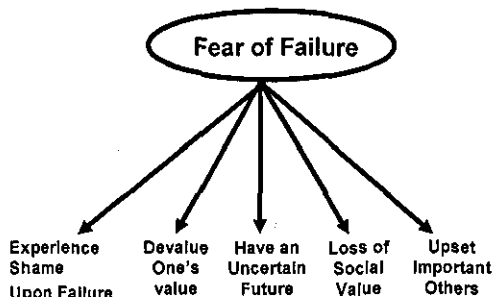|	
1- Diminished perception of self (s-confidence, s-belief, s-worth; "I'm useless")	**3-** Negative social evaluation
1- No sense of achievement	**4-** Lose motivation, thoughts of quitting
1- Emotional cost	**5-** Tangible loss (e.g., financial, get out of competition)
2- Letting down others	**6-** Uncertain future (e.g., lose opportunities for *future participation*)

Fear of negative judgment

Parents	Athletes
> Coaches label child as: - weak - not good - not putting effort - not trying - not a winning material - not up to it > People, coaches, peers will have a negative opinion of my child	> Peers will think I'm no good > Opponents will think I'm not good > Others will think negatively of me > Others will think I'm not the best > Coaches won't like me

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Fear of negative judgment *(cont...)*

Parents	Athletes
	> Coaches will think I'm not good and I won't become a professional >Coaches will lose interest in me >Judges will mark me low (neg evaluation) *(e.g. skating, gymnastics)* >Lose peers' respect and friendship

Fear of Non-attainment of aspirations

Parents	Athletes
➤ Not achieving ultimate goal/ dream	➤ Not achieving my ultimate goal
➤ Not moving up the ladder	➤ Not becoming a professional
➤ Not improving and going up/ progressing	

Fear of not meeting expectations

Parents	Athletes
➤ Not meeting coaches' expectations	➤Not meeting my coaches', parents', peers' expectations
	➤Letting down self and others
	➤Upsetting, disappointing parents
	➤Not pleasing parents and coaches

Fear of shame & embarrassment

Parents	Athletes
➤ Other parents, spectators, coaches	➤Making mistakes in front of coaches and peers *("what if I embarrass my-self...")*
	➤Not live up to my reputation

Fear of not performing well

Parents	Athletes
➤ Not perform to best ability	➤ (as parents)
➤ Make mistakes and lose/ low score	

Bi-directional transmission

Recognising the language of fear
(of parents & athletes)

"What if ..."

"(S/he) I might lose/ not win/ get beaten"

"I think about losing..."

"I'm nervous...concerned...scared...afraid..."

"I worry that..."

"I have doubts..." *(about winning, performing well...)*

"I dread..."

"You worry about whether you'll do it well or not... you think 'oh my God I've got to do well, I've got to get the place'"

"You think 'oh God I don't want to play this game I might lose'"

5

Key point to remember…

> Most performance blocks (choking) and poor performances are direct result of the athlete being pre-occupied with fear of failing (e.g., messing up, letting down others, etc...)

Athletes can NOT have peak performance if they're concerned with failing/ losing/ making mistakes, etc…

When do athletes & parents fear failure the most?

> Before important/ big events
  E.g., selection events, international, national, crucial competitions that can have negative impact on ranking/ position, etc....

> Performing in front of judges and/ or important coaches

> Didn't have optimal training (e.g., post illness, injury, bad training session)

How is Fear of Failure Developed?

Parents' role in the development of fear of failure

Fear of Failure Development

1- Transmission of parental beliefs & attitudes

2- Parental involvement

3- Parental criticism

4- Parental threat and punishment

5- Parental high expectations

Transmission of attitudes, thoughts & beliefs

What's the link?
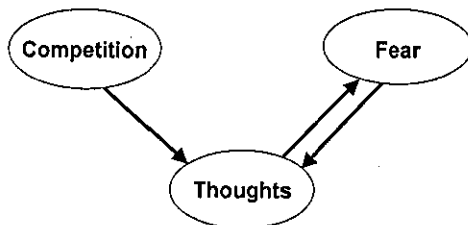
Transmission of attitudes, thoughts & beliefs

- Parents influence children's perceptions of competence, motivation and future achievement

- Shape/ influence their child's belief systems

- Through interactions & communications (verbal and behavioural), parents transmit their beliefs and attitudes about: success/ failure, setbacks, values of achievement and mastery, making mistakes, perfectionism, morality, etc...

- Gradually kids adopt their parents' beliefs & attitudes

- **Outcome oriented** parents view success as getting good marks, winning, doing better than others, impressing others, etc...

- **Mastery oriented parents** equate success with working hard and putting in effort
    They are likely to encourage and reward their children for seeking challenges, for improvement and mastery, and for trying hard <u>regardless of the outcome</u>

- Parents' outcome orientation is more likely to elicit FF in children than mastery oriented parents

Example 1: Transmission of fear of not winning

- If you believe that winning is success, you pass on this belief to your child (via your behaviour, verbal communications, etc)

- Consequently when your child is not winning he'll view himself as not successful and will believe that you also view him as not successful

- This leads to child **FEARING NOT WINNING**

Example 2: Transmission of fear of losing/ not winning

- Common myths among parents:
    "coaches want winners"
    "coaches would think you can't do it"
    "coaches won't select you if you don't do well", etc...

- Transmitting such beliefs to kids can make them **FEARFUL OF LOSING**

Example 3: Transmission of fear of negative judgment

- If you and your child are watching an athlete who is performing poorly and you say:
    "She's rubbish/ useless, lets go and watch someone else"

    Message transmitted to your child- when someone doesn't perform well we view them as rubbish
    (which is not true because "rubbish athletes" don't compete in elite competitions)

    This can develop fear in your child as s/he can think: 'if I'm not performing well people will view me as rubbish' - **FEAR OF NEGATIVE JUDGEMENT**

Transmission of FF via parental behaviour

- Children pick up on your pre- & during-competition anxiety through your behaviour
   This makes them more nervous

Key points to remember...

- Your beliefs and attitudes can reinforce negative thoughts and beliefs that contribute to ways your children feel (e.g., FF) and behave and, thus, impact their performance

- <u>Watch out</u> **for how you communicate and behave with your child.**

CAUTION

Parental Involvement

- Parental support & involvement is **crucial** in the process of nurturing sports talent and the success of youth sport

Under-Involved ← – – – – – – – – → Over-Involved
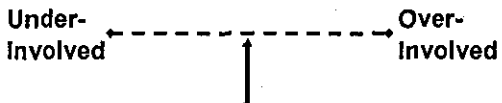
Who is over- involved?

- Believe they're solely responsible for their child's progress, efforts and success

- Overly concerned with performance outcome

- Pressurise their children into avoiding mistakes

- Pre-plan performance (tactics, routine...)

- Talk regularly about the competition days before

- Analyse the performance post-event (S/F)

- Regularly attend training sessions & competitions

- Spend considerable time talking with coaches about practice, performance plan, child's skill level, etc...

CAREER FUSION

Why are (some) parents over-involved?

- Parents often view their children as extensions of themselves and, consequently, project their hopes, fears and expectations onto their children

- Live through their child's career. Child's success boosts their own ego and, therefore, they try to **control** everything (within their control!) in order to prevent their child from failing *(irrational belief)*

Impact of parental over-involvement on the child

- In the long run this parental controlling behaviour serves to teach children:

  - not to trust themselves
  - not to be independent and take responsibility for their sport
  - to be passive
  - to ignore their own emotions and needs

- This makes children feel trapped and frustrated *("suffocating me")*

Impact of over-involvement on the child *(cont...)*

- Source of pressure and stress for children

- Contributes to the development of **fear of failure**

- Hinders athletic success and development

- Harmful to children's well-being and sporting performance

- Detracts from the quality of children's sporting experiences (e.g., decrease enjoyment and motivation, increase dropout)

Key point to remember...

- Talent can be developed in a healthy manner and success can be achieved without the need for parents to be over-involved

- <u>Watch out</u>, your over-involvement can hinder your child's success and athletic & social development

CAUTION

8

Parental Criticism

- **Verbal**
  - shouting
  - insults
  - blaming child for poor performance
  - expressing disappointment and loss of pride in the child

- **Non-Verbal**
  - Gestures, body/ facial expressions to communicate disapproval, disappointment and loss of pride
  - tone of voice
  - not respond to poor performance
  - withdraw affection
  - not talk to child

Parental Criticism *(cont...)*

- All types of criticism are a form of **emotional abuse**

- Criticism/ telling off is very painful for children

- Parents criticise children for:
  not achieving good results, making mistakes, misbehaving, lack of effort, not warming up, etc...

Find out the reason and help them move forward

Don't scold them, help them work things out

Impact of parental criticism

- Lowers children's S-confidence, S-esteem, sense of S-worth/ value

  They become timid, reserved, low achievers, non-assertive, not outgoing, sensitive, frustrated, anxious, **fear failure**, feel incompetent, harshly criticise themselves when making mistakes/ losing, etc...

- Child's S-criticism: shouting at self, putting self down *("I'm useless", "I'm rubbish, I can't do it")*

- They accept parental & S-criticism as ok/ norm and blame themselves *("I deserved it", "It was my fault")*

Impact of parental criticism *(cont...)*

- S-criticism is a learnt behaviour

- Degrading, humiliating, embarrassing, putting children down.... will only <u>teach them</u> to do the same to themselves ⟶

  This will lower their S-esteem, confidence.... They learn to emotionally abuse themselves

Impact of parental criticism *(cont...)*

- Children translate criticism into meaning that they're bad athletes, incompetent, useless, hopeless, etc...

- Perceiving that you disapprove of their efforts and performance makes them feel less competent and less in control ⟶
  consequently they can experience anxiety and **fear** when facing future performances

Building your child's S-esteem

- Children seek parental approval, praises, encouragement and support pre- & post-event <u>regardless of the outcome and the quality of their performance</u> !!!

- This will help build your child's S-esteem, S-confidence, reduce **fear of failure**, and enhance their social and athletic development

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Building your child's S-esteem (cont...)

- Athletes perform in direct relation to how they feel about themselves (esteem)

- Children in environments that boost their S-esteem will learn faster, experience more enjoyment, cope better with pressure, feel less stress, perform better in competitions, and **fear failure less**

- Children want their parents to feel good, be pleased, be proud of them, and approve of what they do *(this is how esteem is established)*

Building your child's S-esteem (cont...)

- When your interactions with your child make him feel good about himself he will learn to treat himself in the same way

- Parents are the key people in building/ destroying their child's S-esteem

- Be empathic and sensitive to your child's feelings

- **S-esteem is a gift for life!!**

Parental criticism:

"He (dad) was shouting 'I'm really disappointed in your performance"

"They (parents) said I didn't try *hard enough even though I* did.... They told me off... it's kind of like a lecture.... They don't understand the pressure I'm under... they <u>should try it</u> <u>sometime!"</u>

"My dad said 'you'll never make it on performances like this.... It was disgusting!"

"My mum said 'that was the worst performance I seen you do in quite a long time'"

Parental criticism during-performance

- During performance children notice their parents:
  - "Smirk sarcastically"
  - "Pull horrible faces"
  - "Chuckle" "laugh"
  - "Sigh"
  - "Shake head"
  - "Shrug shoulders"
  - "Shout 'just hit the ball!"
  - "Shout 'what are you doing?!"

Key points to remember...

- Criticism damages children's S-esteem and increases their **fear of failure**

- Children seek your approval, praises, support, and encouragements

- <u>**Watch out,**</u> **criticism harms children's social and athletic development & your relationships**

CAUTION

Parental threats & punishments post-failure

- **Threats to:**
  pull child out of the sport, not invest money, stop training, not drive child to competitions, etc...

- **Punishments:**
  withdraw affection, privileges, impose restrictions on child's other activities, stop training programme, parents responding with criticism and disappointment

Why use threats & punishments?

- Parents use it to **motivate** their child to try harder and perform better next time.... - **a myth!!!**

- Using fear as a motivator is the **worst** dynamics you could set-up for your child

- Inappropriate form of pushing and pressurising

- Short term results, but long term psychological and performance cost

Impact of threats & punishments

- Threats and punishments harm your child's:
  achievement level
  motivation level
  enjoyment level
  S-esteem, S-belief, and S-confidence

- They make your child feel:
  guilty, not in control, resentful, frustrated, anxious, stressed, and fearful that you'll carry out your threats

- They leads to bad performances as your child becomes **fearful of failure**   CAUTION

Parental expectations

- Set higher goals
- Put maximum effort
- Reach higher level
- Achieve high results
- Demonstrate good attitude
- Perform well
- Strive for perfection
- Win
- Display moral functioning
- Be committed
- Keep up school grades

Parental expectations *(cont...)*

- Children love their parents and don't want to lose and let them down and upset them

- When children don't meet your expectations they feel guilty for letting you down and for displeasing you

- They know how important the sport, achievement, and success is to you and how much you're investing in them to succeed. So they want to please you and make you proud; **"pay back time"**

Parental expectations & reactions

- Children described parents' reactions post-failure:
  "not happy; disappointed; angry; irritated; cross; annoyed; shouted; gutted; upset; agitated"   ↓   ↓   ↓
  Damage children's Self-esteem, S-confidence, and motivation

- Such reactions are because your child didn't meet **YOUR** expectations or hopes for that performance

- Such reactions are a clear message to your child: "you have disappointed me"

Parental expectations & reactions

- Letting parents down is **VERY painful** for children and is a cause of worry and anxiety for them pre- and post-competition. Hence, **fear of losing and disappointing my parents** develops <u>through your harsh reactions</u>

- Parents own FF affects the way in which they view their and their child's failure and how they respond to failures

- Parents who fear failure feel shame and devalued when they fail. Accordingly, they fear that others will devalue their child when s/he fails. Therefore, will react strongly to their child's failure

Keep asking yourself: whose goal is it?

- Do you have realistic expectations of your child's ability level and age? Do you teach your child to develop realistic expectations?

- Are her goals and aspirations yours or hers?

- Is he performing because he wants to fulfil your expectations and not disappoint you, since he knows how important the sport, achievement, and success is to you?

Key points to remember...

- Children must have their own reasons, goals and aspirations that will motivate them to excel and *succeed*

- You **CAN NOT** make your children succeed by pressurising them with your expectations, by using guilt, bribery, threat, etc...

- Parental high expectations are one of the **biggest** contributors to children's FF.

CAUTION

Summary

- Seek a balance social & athletic development
- Fear of consequences of failure
- FF development:
  - transmission of parental beliefs
  - parental involvement, criticism, threat & punishment, and high expectations

Lots of food for thoughts.....

Dear mum and dad...

Now that you have all this knowledge what would you like to do differently in order to help reduce your child's fears, stress and anxiety and contribute to their success?
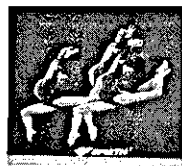
Appendix 3a- Educational seminar to parents- additional information in handouts pack

Tips on how to Help Reduce Your Child's Fear of Failure

❖ Teach your child to focus on the controllable (e.g., their performance, attitude, and reaction) and not on the uncontrollable (e.g., the opponent, other people's views and judgements).

❖ Don't compare your child to others (e.g., team mates, opponent, siblings, etc) and encourage your child to focus only on their own goals and performance. Remember, peak performances occur when athletes focus only on themselves and not on others, as this can distract them from the task at hand, make them feel tense and nervous (thus tightening their muscles) and impair their performance.

❖ As your child experiences success and failure keep these in perspective and emphasise normal childhood chores and responsibilities. Don't reward success and not failure; treat both outcomes in exactly the same way and maintain the same post-competition routine (e.g., going to a restaurant/ cinema). This will teach your child to accept success and failure as a norm that brings equal rewards. Remember, even after failure, to always praise your child's performance for the good things they did and to reward their efforts.

❖ Ensure that your child's sport is fun and enjoyable, as the pressure on them to perform and achieve top performance increases at this level. Do non-sport family activities and avoid regular discussions with your child on their sport, training and competitions. Your child needs a break from it all when they are at home with you. Leave these conversations to the coaches.

❖ Ensure that you keep the competition in perspective for your child (e.g., sometimes you win, sometimes you lose). Teach them (and keep reinforcing) that bad performances are just part of sport and that everybody has them and moves on.

❖ Don't talk to your children about how big/ important the competition is, what is at stake if they lose and what they stand to gain if they win, why they have to beat the opponent, how bad the referee/ judge is, etc.

❖ Don't focus on the competition's outcomes (e.g., on winning, on records, on qualifying times, awards, making the national team, etc) as this will make your child nervous and fearful and will reduce the likelihood of them achieving the desired outcome. Remember, children learn and adopt their parents' beliefs and attitudes, so use your influence positively and cautiously.

Focusing on performance outcome (which is out of the athlete's control) often leads athletes to choke under pressure and to perform below par. It makes them feel anxious and nervous, and distracts their concentration, thus, impairing their performances. For peak performance, athletes need to be completely absorbed in the here and now of the actual performance. So, if you want your child to win, help them get their focus away from how important the competition is and help them focus on the task at hand. Supportive parents de-emphasise winning and emphasise learning skills, improving, and long term development.

❖ Learn and teach your child to adopt Daley Thompson's attitude: *"It's ok to lose but its how you perform.... I tried not to think about the consequences of failing and just think about what I needed to do and shut everything else out".* This attitude helped Thompson win two Olympic gold medals, a world championship, four world records, three Commonwealth titles, and a pair of European crowns in decathlon.

❖ Let your child know that, regardless of competitions' outcomes, you'll still love and respect them, you will not be disappointed in them, and you'll continue to be proud of them and to support them. Don't just tell them this, but also show them that your love and affection are unconditional.

❖ During your child's performance cheer all good efforts, both your child's and the opponent's. Stay calm and don't make any remarks, shout or display nervousness and negative emotions and body language, as your child can often see and hear you and this will make them feel tense and anxious. Remember, the more relaxed and comfortable your child is, the better they will perform.

❖ Teach your child to forgive their mistakes, bad performances, etc, and remember to <u>model this behaviour yourself.</u> Children learn more from watching their parents' behaviour than listening to their "lectures".

❖ Post-performance, avoid shouting, criticising, blaming, humiliating, punishing, and expressing your disappointment and disapproval of your child's performance as this will only serve to reduce your child's confidence level and make them more nervous and fearful of their next competition.

❖ There are various forms of approval that you can use to effectively motivate your child. For example:

   1. *Praise or verbal comments* indicating your approval and encouragement, such as, 'that's good', 'you're doing/ playing well', etc;

   2. *Affection or positive physical contact* such as, embracing, patting, holding an arm/ hand, sitting on lap, etc; and

   3. *Facial attention* such as, smiling, eye contact, winking, etc.

❖ Give your child time to recover and grieve after failure and then help them get over it as effectively as possible. **Avoid discussing the performance with your child on the day of their failure.** Remember, post-performance analyses are best left for the coaches to conduct with your child and <u>not for you.</u>

❖ Before, during, and after competitions parents experience various positive and negative emotions (e.g., worry, stress, anger, frustration, impatient, sadness, pride, exuberance, satisfaction). Understand your emotions and handle them effectively and teach your child to do the same - **be a good role model to your child.**

❖ Children learn mostly from their parents. You are your child's **MOST** influential model. Every interaction you have with your child is another opportunity for him to learn something from you (on conscious and unconscious levels). These lessons learnt from parents can last a life time and be passed to the next generation. Your child picks up your behaviour, tone of voice, attitude, truthfulness, etc, and learns them. It's how you say things and how you conduct yourself in your interactions with your child that provide the most powerful teaching. Therefore, **model a good and appropriate behaviour and attitude.**

❖ Help your child put their fears in perspective by teaching them and making them understand that **failure is necessary for success** and that failure is a feedback on how to improve, get better, and progress. Teach your child that **failure is a friend not a foe,** as there is plenty they can learn from failure and failure can help them improve and progress. So, give your child permission to fail and respond to their failures in a constructive way.

Teach your child that successful people (not just athletes) are people who are willing to take risks and, therefore, fail more frequently, but they use failure in a positive way. They use it as a source of motivation and feedback to improve and this is why they are successful. Hence, teach your child that every time they fail they can learn and gain valuable knowledge and so they should think of failure as a friend not a foe, or as an opportunity to learn, improve and progress further.

❖ A key point for you to remember, and to keep reminding your child, is that there is **no success without failure** and that even champions make mistakes and fail sometimes.

Sam Sagar

(Some) Fears of Failure of Young Athletes

♦ "You're a bit scared that it [failure] will happen to you again" *(fear of failing again)*

♦ "I thought 'oh God I don't want to play this game I might lose'" *(Fear of losing)*

♦ "You <u>worry</u> about not doing as well as you want to do... You're nervous thinking 'am I gonna do good this is a big competition'.... It's a worry that you might not make it... You think 'oh maybe I can't do it'.... You always have <u>doubts</u> in the back of your mind of not doing well, and you worry" *(fear of not performing well and losing)*

♦ "You worry about whether you'll do it well or not... you think 'oh my God I've got to do well, I've got to get the place'" *(fear of non-selection)*

♦ "You're just thinking 'what happens if someone has been doing more training than I have, does it mean they're going to beat me? Am I as good as them? Oh no I'm not going to win the race... I'm going to get beaten... I may come 3rd or 4th'" *(fear of not performing well and getting beaten)*

♦ "You worry 'am I gonna have a bad game'... Everyone worries about 'oh maybe I'll have a bad game'... You think before the game 'am I going to play well, can I do good? Can I win? Everything all mixed into one" *(Fear of not performing well and not winning)*

♦ "After having all this training and then going to the tournaments, just then because to know that being able to put all this coaching onto the court and then being able to be successful but then if it didn't go well and you failed, that is the fear of failing, to be able to come back and people weren't gonna give you the same respect and then you just going on a slump and things go down hill from there" *(Fear of not performing well and failing and losing others' respect)*

♦ "It just goes through your mind a little bit that you might lose... that you're out there and the match is going all wrong for you, and you feel nervous before [the match].... You're expected to win and there are friends and you don't want to let them down.... You want to win for the respect of your friends.... I let people down if I lose" *(Fear of winning and not meeting expectations, and losing others' respect)*

♦ "High expectations contribute a lot to FF 'cos if you don't reach near these expectations then that's failure and you fear that 'cos if you haven't reached that level then you failed.... When the expectations are high the FF becomes more 'cos you've got more expectations to reach" *(Fear of not meeting expectations)*

♦ "When the expectations are high I'm more worried about not making it.... There is so much pressure on you the higher you get.... It's the expectations that make you fear failure.... The higher you get the expectations get higher and fear of failure gets higher 'cos you have more pressure and expectations from yourself and from others.... The expectations is stress, it breaks down your confidence" *(Fear of not meeting expectations)*

♦ "I fear that I won't live up to the expectations and the goals.... When you get higher you have your expectations and you feel everyone else's expectations from you and that's adds to the pressure" *(Fear of not meeting expectations)*

♦ "I'm afraid that I won't live up to the expectations.... Expectations add to your fear of failure.... I feel like being a disappointment if I don't get them.... The major part of my worry is that I'm afraid that I'm going to disappoint or not live up to the expectations.... Making my mum happy makes me happy, I don't ever want to disappoint her and I don't want to disappoint my coach" *(Fear of not meeting expectations)*

♦ "Fear of failure grows as you get higher, the bigger the event the more people are watching you play and the more people are rooting for you and you've got more people to please" *(Fear of not meeting expectations)*

(Some) Parental Criticisms (as told by young athletes)

♦ "My dad said 'you could have beaten him, you should have put more effort into it"

♦ "They [parent] said I didn't try hard enough even though I did.... they told me off...it's kind of like a lecture.... They don't understand the pressure I'm under... they should try it sometime!"

♦ "He [dad] said 'you could have finished it in two sets instead of three'"

♦ "She [mum] said you didn't try your hardest.... Your performance wasn't good"

♦ "My mum said 'that was a very disappointing performance.... It was your worst performance'"

♦ "My dad said 'you'll never make it on performances like this.... It was disgusting!"

♦ "He [dad] was shouting 'I'm really disappointed in your performance'"

♦ "My mum said 'that was the worst performance I seen you do in quite a long time'"

♦ "He [dad] said 'I'm disappointed in you, you could have done... [such and such]"

♦ "She [mum] was saying 'why couldn't you put more into it.... You should have done... [such and such]"

♦ "When I make mistakes my dad says 'that was silly... you didn't use your head... you didn't make the right decisions out there... you made too many mistakes'"

♦ "He [dad] said that my attitude was disgusting out there"

♦ "My mum said she was disappointed and that she thought better of me, and she just kept repeating it over and over"

♦ "My dad was shouting at me afterwards 'what do you think you were you doing?'"

Effects of Fear of Failure

Effects of Fear of Failure on Well-being and Motivation

♦ "I feared failure a couple of days of the build up... I felt nervous... I wouldn't say that I slept very well"

♦ "A day probably before the match ... I just become a lot more nervous and anxious about the match and about how well I want to do and people try to calm me down but I still stay nervous"

♦ "I worry about failure about a week before the tournament"

♦ "Fear of failure is stressful.... It breaks down your confidence and then you don't do as well because you're scared.... It takes me a long time to sort myself out... I'll be upset for quite a while"

♦ "Fear of failure just eats you away really, if you're constantly thinking you're going to fail then it makes you scared and less confident and not feel so good about yourself and your capabilities.... you just feel like maybe you're not capable of doing it, you just have doubts in your mind about being able to take on the challenge"

- "Fear of failure affects your motivation. It can make me feel 'oh god I don't want to play this game I might lose'.... It just makes you feel before a big game like we're not capable of taking this team on and you're just not motivated to go do it"

Effects of Fear of Failure on Interpersonal Relationships

- "you're not very nice to people.... you are just less capable of dealing with the world around you"

- "I get a little bit snappy with people"

- "I end up going quiet on everybody... I keep myself to myself more"

Effects of Fear of Failure on Sporting Performance

- "Fear of failure affects you and your performance.... It made my playing go down, my confidence went down, and I would play a game terribly because I just wouldn't hit the ball.... I was too scared and I'd be cross with myself for not having the confidence to hit the ball. I'll go week after week to play a match and not be happy with it and at the end of the day it just made me depressed" [sigh]

Effects of Fear of Failure on Schoolwork

- "Fear of failure affected my schoolwork because I wasn't concentrating enough"

- "I'd be just thinking about the game instead of thinking about my school work or what I did last night or something"

Parenting- a roller coaster ride

"Being a parent is like being on a roller coaster. Once you get on, there is no getting off and you never know what is coming round the next corner. There are lots of ups and downs, lots of highs and lows. The ride can make you frightened, scared and sick as well as thrilled, excited and delighted- all at the same time! But like being on a roller coaster, it's the ups and downs that make it so wonderful. The most important thing is 'to go with the flow', do your best to hang on and to let yourself enjoy the experience" (John Sharry, 2002).

Happy parenting!

Appendix 4- Interview guide, pre-intervention (study 3)

<u>*Questions to child and parents:*</u>

Parents' and athletes' typical behaviour and interaction pre-competitions

Child	Parents
Tell me about your typical conversations with your parents before important competitions. *(e.g., at home/ car, lectures, instructions)*	Tell me about your typical conversations with your child before important competitions. *(e.g., at home/ car, lectures, instructions)*
Tell me about your conversations before your last important competition.	Tell me about your conversations before the last important competition.
Tell me what you typically notice about your parents' behaviour before important competitions.	Tell me what you typically notice about your child's behaviour before important competitions.
Tell me what you noticed about their behaviour before your last important competition.	Tell me what you noticed about your child's behaviour before the last important competition.
Tell me how you usually feel before important competitions.	
Tell me how you felt before your last important competition.	
	Tell me how you usually feel before your child's important competitions.
	Tell me how you felt before your child's last important competition.
Tell me how your parents usually feel before your important competitions.	
Tell me how your parents felt before your last important competition.	
	Tell me how your child usually feels before important competitions.
	Tell me how your child felt before the last important competition.

Parents' and athletes' behaviour and reaction during competitions

Child	Parents
Tell me what your parents say, do, feel when they are watching you not performing well/ making mistakes/ behind in the score in competition, and when you're performing well.	Tell me what your child says, does, feels when s/he is not performing well/ making mistakes/ behind in the score in competition, and when s/he is performing well.
Tell me how you feel, do, say when you're not performing well in competition, and when you're performing well.	Tell me how you feel, do, say when you are watching your child not performing well in competition, and when s/he is performing well.

Parents' and athletes' behaviours, reactions and interactions after winning and losing in competitions.

Child	Parents
Tell me how your parents usually feel/ react /say after you lose, win important competitions. Tell me how your parents felt/ reacted /said after you lost, won your last important competition. Tell me how you felt/ reacted /said after your last competition that you lost, and won.	Tell me how your child usually feels/ reacts /says after losing, winning important competitions. Tell me how your child felt/ reacted /said after you lost, won your last important competition. Tell me how you felt/ reacted /said after your child's last competition that s/he lost, and won.

Appendix 5- Interview guide study 3- post-intervention interview 1

Questions to parents:

1- Tell me what you learnt from the seminar. Please be specific.

2- What will you be doing differently now with your child based on what you learnt in the seminar?

3- What did the seminar help you understand about issues of fear, stress and anxiety in your child?

4- What did the seminar help you understand about your own fear of failure for your child? And what will you now be doing differently to deal with your own fear of your child failing?

Appendix 6: Interview guide study 3- post-intervention interview 2

Questions to child and parents:

Child	Parents
Tell me what changes you noticed in your parents in the last ten weeks since they came to my seminar. What have they been doing differently with you in relation to your sport?	Tell me what you have been doing differently in your interactions with your child in relation to his/her sport in the last ten weeks since the seminar.
What changes have you noticed in your parents' behaviour/ reactions pre-, post- and during-competitions?	How do you/ your child feel about these changes?
What changes did you like, and why? What changes did you dislike, and why?	What changes do you think were useful/ helpful to you and your child?
What changes would you like them to keep up in the future?	Of the changes that you've made what will you keep up in the future?

Appendix 7- Achievement Goals Questionnaire for Sport (Conroy et al., 2003)

	Not at all like me						Completely like me
1. It is important to me to perform as well as I possibly can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I worry that I may not perform as well as I possibly can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. It is important to me to do well compared to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I just want to avoid performing worse than others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I want to perform as well as it is possible for me to perform.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Sometimes, I'm afraid that I may not perform as well as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. It is important for me to perform better than others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My goal is to avoid performing worse than everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It is important for me to master all aspects of my performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I'm often concerned that I may not perform as well as I can perform.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My goal is to do better than most other performers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. It is important for me to avoid being one of the worst performers in the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

MAp: items 1, 5, 9
MAv: items 2, 6, 10
PAp: items 3, 7, 11
PAv: items 4, 8, 12

Appendix 8- Study 3a: PFAI and AGQ-S results for each control family

Athlete 7 (control group)- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.14	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00	1.60
post	0.14	-1.00	-2.00	-0.80	1.60

Fears

Athlete 7- Achievement goals

Legend: MAp, MAv, PAp, PAv

Goals: pre, post

Mum 7- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.43	-1.75	0.25	0.40	1.00
post	-0.14	-1.75	0.00	-0.20	0.60

Fears

Dad 7- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.14	-0.75	0.50	-0.40	-0.40
post	0.14	-0.50	0.50	0.00	-0.60

Fears

Athlete 8 (control group)- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	1.57	0.25	1.00	0.80	0.20
post	2.00	-0.25	0.50	1.20	-0.40

Fears

Athlete 8- Achievement goals

Goals

Mum 8- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	0.71	0.50	-1.00	1.80	0.80
post	0.57	0.50	-0.50	1.80	1.20

Fears

Dad 8 - FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.29	-1.75	-0.25	0.00	-0.20
post	-0.71	-0.75	-0.50	0.20	-0.60

Fears

Athlete 9 (control group)- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	0.29	0.25	0.75	-0.20	0.00
post	0.43	-0.50	-1.00	0.80	0.80

Fears

Athlete 9- Achievement goals

Goals — pre, post

Legend: MAp, MAv, PAp, PAv

Mum 9- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-1.86	-1.00	1.25	-2.00	-1.40
post	-1.86	-1.75	1.25	-0.60	-1.20

Fears

Dad 9- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-1.71	-2.00	-2.00	-1.20	-1.00
post	-1.71	-2.00	-1.25	-2.00	-0.60

Fears

Athlete 10 (control group)- FF

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.14	-0.75	-1.00	-0.20	0.00
post	0.57	0.50	0.75	-0.60	-0.80

Fears

Athlete 10- Achievement goals

Goals

Mum 10- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
post	-0.43	-0.25	-0.25	1.20	0.00

Fears

Dad 10- FF for child

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO
pre	-0.43	-0.50	1.00	-0.40	-0.40
post	-0.57	-0.25	0.50	0.40	-0.20

Fears

Appendix 9- Session 2 (parents): parental criticism quotes (taken from study 2)

[A copy given to dad]

Dad's criticism of Jenny during-performance (as told by dad)

[During performance] "I'm going *(shaking his head side to side in disapproval)*. I'm terrible *(laugh)*.... **I get up and walk away, so that's not good, is it?"**.... "It must put her under pressure because **she can see me pulling faces** and things like this because I live every minute of it with her. That's why I said to you I'm the father from hell, because it must be horribly for her.... When she's on court **she looks across at me** and she must be thinking 'what is my dad thinking' or something like that" *<<dad conveys his disapproval of Jenny's mistakes during her performance. Jenny revealed that his behaviour during her performance annoys her>>*

"I was really tense for Jenny... **she was just playing very very cautious** and I just said from the side 'Jenny just go for it, just hit a few balls'. She must have been under so much pressure in that much, it must have been a cauldron for her to be in that situation.... It was just a really serious pressure" *<<Dad's criticism during a match for not performing well in a competition in front of a big crowd and the LTA top coaches>>*

[When Jenny is on court] "She probably thinks 'my dad's getting really upset because I'm losing', **I'm getting upset with her attitude on court**.... I'm annoyed with her attitude, because of the way that is her body mannerisms because she's looking totally down, or she's walking around with her head and shoulders down and sluggish.... And with this attitude I'm thinking 'you're just telling the girl [opponent] that you're giving up at this stage', and this is what I find frustrating" *<< "giving up" is seen by dad as a threat to wining; thus, he associates it with failure. Imagined fear provoked dad's negative emotions during-competition>>*

Dad's criticism of Jenny post-failure (as told by dad)

"**Normally I give her 5 minutes to just come round....** she'll come out and she'll be upset and I say 'how do you think that went?'... and then **I'd tell her what I felt about it**" *<<Match analysis & criticism for mistakes post-failure>>*

"I'll say what I feel that she **should have been doing**.... I'll say 'Jenny you really should have done this or you really should have done that'... **I probably upset her sometimes....** that's why I was saying that I'm the father from hell" *<<criticism for mistakes post-failure>>*

[Post-match] "If I don't deem it to have affected the whole match, if it's just a blip, then I don't say anything at all afterwards" *<<dad's criticism is provoked by his perception of a threat to winning>>*

"I don't accept, and this is where I know I'm wrong, when she behaves like a spoilt brat, like sometimes she goes really **moody and sulky on the court....** and she's goes pretty low, like her focus, concentration, attitude, body language.... So I tell her afterwards **'you were really silly the way you were dealing with it'**, or **'you should deal with this better'**, or something like that ...or **'you didn't compete well'**" *<<dad's criticism for poor attitude on court and for not performing well>>*

"She was playing in this really big international tournament.... her body language was poor when she walked on court... she looked subservient like 'I shouldn't be on court with you'.... she wasn't showing any sort of enthusiasm to be out there and **I find that disappointing.... I wasn't happy, I was seriously annoyed about it**, the whole game she didn't show any positive attitude, everything about her was 'I don't really care whether I'm here or not'.... **I definitely upset her afterwards....** It probably was the wrong way of me dealing with it, but I said, **'what was this all about?', 'what's going on, why couldn't you put more into it, you know, we discussed it, you've got to show positive attitude and you've got to show good body language, what went on? It was poor'....** I was upset that she just didn't seem to be bothering at all [on court].... **She should have shown good spirit.... she could have been far more positive, she could have been showing good spirit in the whole game....** I was very disappointed that she **didn't show her true colours**" *<<dad's post-failure criticism>>*

"I felt that she's been given opportunity but she **just didn't grab that chance and she didn't really put**

any effort into it that was worthwhile. So at that stage I was really annoyed, I was shouting at her and everything…. I said 'what on earth's going on? Why did you go on court with an attitude like that? Why did you only practise 2 or 3 serves'…. I just say 'why, why, why', 'absolutely ridiculous Jenny'…. So at that stage I would get quite frustrated with her and I got really annoyed, and she cried, she was upset" <<dad's post-failure criticism>>

"They [coaches] are quite positive towards the kids and they don't sort of dwell on it [mistakes], whereas me as a parent, I was blowing on all the negatives from her performance, whereas they didn't. She didn't feel any pressure from the international coaches or anything like that afterwards in any way, it was only my disappointment, my conversation with her afterwards and everything else that sort of put pressure on her" <<criticism from dad post-failure but NOT from the coaches. This is possibly linked to his fear of coaches' negative judgment of Jenny>>

"She gets upset with me… a lot of the time, because she disagrees with the way I saw it [her performance] and what I say to her afterwards…. She gets upset probably because the way I put it across is wrong. I'm probably too much abrupt or 'Jenny what are you doing?!' (raising his voice) sort of attitude. So I'm probably not putting it across the way I should, but that's probably because I'm just too emotionally involved and I just say it as it is" <<dad's post-failure criticism>>

Summary of dad's criticism during-performance and post-failure (as told by dad)

Criticism during performance:
"She can see me pulling faces".
"She was just playing very very cautious so I just said 'Jenny just go for it, just hit a few balls'"
"I'm getting upset with her attitude on court".
Criticism post-failure:
"I'm probably too much abrupt 'Jenny what are you doing?!', or 'what you could you have done this better'".
"'This is not acceptable sort of behaviour Jenny'".
"You were really silly the way you were dealing with it', 'you should deal with this better'".
"'What was this all about?', 'what's going on, why couldn't you put more into it, we discussed it, you've got to show positive attitude and you've got to show good body language, what went on? It was poor'".
"I was shouting at her, 'what on earth's going on? Why did you go on court with an attitude like that? 'why, why, why', 'absolutely ridiculous Jo, the opponent can't stop you from playing, can't stop the way you look'".
"you didn't compete well".

Summary of dad's and Jenny's emotional reaction post-failure (as told by dad)

Dad's reaction post-failure: Not happy, agitated, annoyed, upset, angry, shouting, disappointed, frustrated.

Jenny's reaction to dad's criticism post-failure: not happy, cry, annoyed, upset, angry.

Sam Sagar

[A copy given to mum]

Mum's criticism of Jenny during-performance (as told by mum)

"I don't normally tend to disapprove, I might say to myself '**oh that was awful**' but I wouldn't normally say it loud enough for her to hear at all…. Under my breath I might go '**oh that's rubbish**', '**what did you do that for?**'…. I've quite often say when she's playing '**c'mon, you can do better, pull it together**', and she's said once '**shut up mum!**' *(shouting angrily)*. So then I sort of drew back and moved away or just go quiet… so that may affect her…. I don't always make comments, I try to be impartial most of the match". <<*Mum's criticism for not performing well*>>

"Once she was making lots of mistakes…. She was like a **headless chicken not playing at all**, so we [mum and dad] said, from the side [courtside], '**c'mon Jenny pull it together**'" <<*Parents' criticism for not performing well*>>

Mum's criticism of Jenny post-failure (as told by mum)

"**She played awful**…. and Jim [dad] wasn't there at the time, and I actually rang him and said '**she's awful**'. But I think that's about the only time **I've actually got annoyed with her about the way she's played**. Normally I'm not the one to say anything, Jim talks to her not me….I'm normally the quieter one, I stand in the background…. I don't do those [post-match] discussions with dad". <<*Mum's criticism post-failure*>>

"She won the final [match] in Bournemouth but because of her attitude [on court] we didn't feel that you could congratulate her, you know, **she didn't deserve to win it**…. It was just her attitude, and we said to her '**we should be really happy and cheering and be really pleased that you've won that match** [the final], but **you didn't deserve it because of how you were**, you were stropping about, you were upset, or whatever…. I felt disappointed with her behaviour…. I felt irritated". <<*Parents' criticism post-match of her attitude on court despite winning the final*>>

Dad's criticism of Jenny post-failure (as told by mum)

"**My husband is not happy if she's not played well** …. he would be very honest with her and say '**that was awful, why did you do that?**', '**what were you doing?**', '**what was going on there, why were you doing that?**'…. Normally he'd tell her straight away '**that wasn't very good**'" <<*Dad's criticism post-failure*>>

"My husband would normally say to her afterwards [post-match] '**I'm not happy with your attitude on court**', '**that was disgusting**'…. She'd probably worries about what dad would think or say when she's finished the match in terms of how she's played…. Sometimes when she lost, depending if she's worried, she'll say '**what's dad said? Has dad said anything?**' Or '**is dad annoyed with me?**'. So she's concerned about how he's feeling and if he's upset or whatever" [M#14] <<*Dad's criticism is a source of worry for Jenny*>>

"It happens sometimes that he may think that **she's not tried hard enough** and she thinks she has. And she'll sometimes say '**dad thinks I'm not trying when I am**', and things like that".<<*dad's criticism for effort*>>

"She played in Wales, I think, I didn't go, she went over with Jim and he said when they got back [home] '**she was just awful**', and they were annoyed with other and didn't speak for few days". <<*Dad's criticism post-failure*>>

Sam Sagar

Summary of mum's and dad's criticism during-performance and post-failure (as told by mum)

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Mum's criticism during-performance:

"I might say to myself 'oh that was awful'….'oh that's rubbish', 'what did you do that for?'

"I've quite often say when she's playing 'c'mon, you can do better, pull it together'"

"She was making lots of mistakes…. was like a **headless chicken not playing at all**, so we [mum and dad] said, from the side [courtside], **'c'mon Jenny pull it together'"**

Mum's criticism post-failure:

"I phoned Jim and said **'she's awful'"**

Dad's criticism post-failure(as told by mum):

"He [dad] said **'she was just awful'"**

"He'd say to her 'that was awful, why did you do that? what were you doing?', 'what was going on there, why were you doing that?'…. 'why this happened, what reason, why did you do that?' …. 'I'm not happy with your attitude on court', 'that was disgusting'…. 'you played really bad, like headless chicken'…. 'that wasn't very good'"

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Summary of mum's, dad's, and Jenny's emotional reaction post-failure (as told by mum)

Mum's reaction post-failure: annoyed, disappointed, irritated.

Dad's reaction post-failure: not happy, annoyed.

Jenny's reaction to dad's criticism post-failure: worried, concerned [about dad's reaction], annoyed.

Sam Sagar

Appendix 10- *Session 3 (parents): fostering autonomy in your child (handout)*

<u>Fostering autonomy in your child</u>

Parents have a role in every step of their children's development process and as they gradually learn to become independent, make decisions, and solve problems. Nonetheless, in tennis, just as in life generally, you will find that your role as a tennis parent gradually changes over time. *After spending years of being your child's taxi driver, chaperone, planner, supporter, goal setter, motivator, etc,* there comes a time when your child needs to take on these responsibilities on themselves. This is **vital** for your child's development as it can make them more autonomous, more responsible, more confident, more motivated, more assertive and less passive, feel more competent and satisfied, *and less fearful of failure. Furthermore, this can help your child's social and athletic development.* Although sometimes you may find it difficult to pass over some of your control and responsibilities to your child, it is essential that you do so for the sake of your child's progress and development as a person and as an athlete. Remember, one of your role as a parent is to socialize your children into society and to prepare them for adulthood, *and as you gradually begin giving them more responsibilities and supporting their autonomy you are preparing them to enter adulthood and, in the case of a young tennis player, to move on to the next level in their tennis development.*

Encourage Jenny to gradually take more responsibility for her practice times, organising her tennis gear, going to bed early, waking up on time, etc. Also, encourage her to discus issues with her coach regularly (rather than rely on you to do it) and to have more input into her practice sessions (e.g., "I need to practise my backhand topspin more"). Encourage her to keep a diary of her future events *(e.g., competitions, trips, training camps, etc).* Finally, during match-analysis, encourage **Jenny** to lead the discussion <u>rather than you</u> leading it and telling her your views. Thus, allow her to take charge and express her opinion and show her that value her views. Implementing these changes and praising her efforts can help her learn to take responsibility for her athletic development and progression, to be more proactive and self-directed both on and off the court, and to increase her self-confidence and self-esteem.

<u>Eliminating criticism</u>

I view shouting and harshly criticising children as a form of an emotional abuse. Criticising, shouting, and scolding your daughter for her performance (e.g., behaviour on court, not playing well, lack of effort, making mistakes, not meeting your hopes/ expectations, etc) can make her feel inadequate as a player and reduce her motivation, self-confidence and self esteem, and increase her fear of failure- all can be **detrimental** to her social and athletic development.

<u>Homework:</u>

- Encourage Jenny to gradually take more responsibilities.

- **"24-hour time out"** after competitions <u>regardless of the outcome</u>. After the time out (i.e., on the following day) match analysis must be <u>very brief</u> (10 minutes maximum) where Jenny leads and you listen. Remember, it's easy to give your opinion about the match but, in the long run, *it will impair her progression as a player. So, encourage her to reflect on her match,* as she is now fairly knowledgeable about tennis skills and tactics, etc. Sharing her match-reflections with you can help her learn about her game and can help you learn about her thoughts and gage her understanding and progression as a tennis player. *She can only achieve this if you give/ allow her the opportunity to do so and you listen to her patiently* **without forcing your opinions** on her. This is part of the process of her learning, understanding and improving as an athlete- it is a process so **be patient, praise her, and encourage her!**

- Communicate to her only your positive feelings and comments and not the negative. Hence, do not criticise <u>any aspects</u> of her performance, but praise her for the positives in her performance <u>regardless of match results</u> (e.g., "you played that point very well", "you handled the double fault in the third game well", "your forehand was good", etc)

- Keep <u>winning and losing</u> in perspective and treat them the same.

- Keep up your reflective journal (thoughts, feelings, concerns, fears, etc) and fill an event sheet (enclosed) for each of Jenny's competition that you attend to include your feelings, thoughts and the actions you take at that time.

Event Sheet

Event	Your Feelings/ Emotions	Your Thoughts	Your Actions

Appendix 11- Session 5 (parents): A sections on *identity formation* and *retirement* for sport taken from an article by Miller and Kerr (2002) (handout)

<u>RECOGNISING THE COSTS OF PURSUING PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE</u>

In the early 1990s, there was a quiet, but palatable philosophical shift in the discipline. There continued to be a strong focus on performance excellence. The field did not entirely abandon its philosophical roots, and indeed there are still active lines of research on both personality and psychological factors that influence performance. However, there was a growing awareness of the costs of pursuing performance excellence. The field began to acknowledge that succeeding in high-level sport often came at the expense of overall healthy development. The exceptional demands placed on athletes often challenged age appropriate physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. Numerous examples of personal excellence being compromised in the name of performance excellence are available and we have chosen to highlight two: identity development and retirement.

* *Identity Development*

Developmental theorists have known for years that many young men and women struggle with the developmental task of identity formation. Indeed, we have known since the 1970s that many students enter college and university in a state of identity foreclosure (Offer & Offer, 1975; Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1981). An individual with a foreclosed identity adopts a conferred role identity and fails to assess the degree to which said role identity matches his/her worldview and ambitions. Meaningful introspection and self-reflection are limited, as are planning and investment in future selves (Marcia, 1966, 1980, 1993).

Researchers have noted that, like their peers, many college student-athletes experience identity foreclosure. Murphy and his colleagues (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996) found male and female student-athletes reported significantly higher identity foreclosure scores than non varsity athletes. Likewise, researchers discovered signs of identity foreclosure among high level athletes including dependence and poor moral development (Petitpas & Champagne, 1988).

The primary means of resolving or progressing through identity foreclosure is role experimentation. Student-athletes seem to be particularly at risk because the demands of high-level competition discourage their exploration of diverse roles. Brewer and his colleagues found many college athletes had strong athletic identities that precluded their exploration of other, available roles (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). Similarly, Miller and Kerr (in press) reported male and female university student-athletes from both individual and team sports over-identified with the athlete role and demonstrated restricted role experimentation, particularly during their early university careers.

Research suggests that the over-identification with the athlete role and concomitant lack of role experimentation may lead to a range of developmental disadvantages. These may include restricted exploration of external interests (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993), emotional and psychological distress upon withdrawal from sport roles (Brewer, 1993; Chartrand & Lent,1987; Grant & Darley, 1993; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990), a willingness to engage in risk behaviors (Brewer et al., 1993), and immature career and lifestyle planning (Grant & Darley, 1993; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). It is clear from this research that many high level athletes compromise their identity development in order to pursue performance excellence.

* *Retirement*

A growing concern about athletes' transition out of sport was apparent in the literature in the 1980s and into the early 1990s, particularly among researchers who also worked in applied capacities (Rotella & Heyman, 1986; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1982). Many witnessed athletes struggle with the loss of the athlete role and try to piece together a sense of self outside the sport arena.

One of the most consistent findings in the literature was that retirement was a process as opposed to being a discrete, isolated event (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Some research suggested the transition from sport could take place over a significant, sometimes protracted, period of time. Kerr and Dacyshyn (2001), for example, found elite female gymnasts were dealing with the ramifications of leaving competitive gymnastics up to a year, and in one case, two years after withdrawal.

The literature of this era also suggested that retirement from competitive athletics was a traumatic and stressful experience for athletes (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2001; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998). Researchers found signs of anxiety, identity confusion, decreased self-confidence, and disordered eating among collegiate, amateur, and elite retired athletes (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Brewer, 1993; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2001; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). More serious clinical manifestations following retirement including substance abuse, criminal activity, depression, and suicide attempts have also been documented in the literature (Ogilvie, 1987; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). The research consistently indicated that retirement transitions were more distressing when forced upon the athlete, as in the cases of de-selection and career-ending injuries (Brewer, 1998; Udry, Gould, Bridges, & Beck, 1997). It is clear athletes often have less than optimal personal development when they leave high-level sport.

Miller, P., & Kerr, G. (2002). Conceptualizing excellence: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 14,* 140-153.

Appendix 12- Session 6 (parents): Fears and establishing inner control (handout)

<u>Fears and Establishing Your Inner Control</u>

❖ It's not what's happening around you, it's not what's happening to you, but it's what's happening **inside your mind** that really matters.

❖ Examine your inner self-talk (what you say to yourself) and thoughts during:

days before competition

just before competition

during competition

after competition

Mental strategies	Stress, anxiety, fear	Calm, relaxed state
Thoughts	Negative	Positive, supportive
Self-talk	Confidence destroying	Confidence enhancing
Focus	On uncontrollables, on competition results/outcome	On controllables, on process (not outcome)
Imagery	See in your mind what you're **afraid** will happen	See in your mind what you **want** to happen

❖ **Examples of uncontrollables:**

The opponent's size, power, speed, behaviour (e.g., cheating, wasting time) etc

Umpire's decisions

The weather and the conditions of the courts/ competition arena

The audience (e.g., behaviour, size)

Other people's expectations and thoughts of you

Winning/ losing

Please add more.........

❖ **Examples of controllables:**

Your thoughts

Your focus and concentration

Your reaction before, during, and after competition

Please add more.........

Focus only on what you **can control**, not on what you can't. Every time you find yourself thinking about the uncontrollables, <u>recognise</u> it and then quickly bring your thoughts back to what you can control. Make sure that **YOU** are in charge of your thoughts and don't let them be in charge of you!!

Fears

- Fears make you feel nervous, worried, stressed, anxious, concerned, etc...

- Fears reduce your self-confidence, make you aggressive, and make you "need" to control other people and situations.

- Your fears get stronger and stronger as your child get closer to the competition.

- Many performance-related fears are product of your emotions, imagination, and distorted beliefs.

- Fears can only have power over you if you continually avoid them and not deal with them and crush them.

- To beat your fears you must **recognise** them, **understand** them, and take action to **neutralise** (defeat) them; **R.U.N.**

Recognise your fears

You are feeling fearful of your child's failure when you are thinking: **"she might lose"**, **"I have doubts"**, **"what if..."**,etc. Such thoughts can **make you** feel **nervous, scared, worried, anxious, stressed** (these are symptoms of fear of failure). All these make up fear and suggest that you are thinking about the future and about the consequences of your child's failure/ losing, and that your imagination is going wild (you're thinking about the uncontrollables). When we are under pressure our imagination exaggerates what we fear and magnifies it to extreme; this is called **"catastrophizing"**

Here are some examples of catastrophizing thoughts that I found common among tennis parents (and young players):

"If she can't return the next serve she'll lose the match and then her coach will be disappointed"

"If he loses he won't get selected to the next international trip"

"If she doesn't perform well the top coaches will think less of her"

"If she doesn't win she will not be perceived in the right light"

"If he loses people will not think well of him and will have less respect for him as a player"

These thoughts can provoke fear, making you feel fearful of your child's failure/ losing. They are extremely harmful to your state of mind, well-being, and your child's progress and development as a person and as a player. Remember, the future and other people's views and

thoughts are uncontrollables and when you focus on uncontrollables and on the consequences of failure you make yourself fearful and anxious and less confident and relaxed.

Tip #1: Don't go over the "what if" in your head before, during, and after competitions as this will only serve to harm you and your child's performance. So, recognise your fears, monitor them, and don't allow them to get hold of you, your mind, and your thoughts.

Tip #2: Don't think of competition outcome (winning/ losing) before or close to competition as it will only fuel your fears and interfere with your positive and calm state of mind, will reduce your enjoyment, and will harm your child's performance

Understand your fears

Once you've recognized your fears you must think of them as **"false"** and **"liars"** since fears trick you into believing things that are not real. Fears distort reality and make non-sense seem real to you and, hence, make you feel fearful about something that isn't real! *(Irrational belief)*

Often when children are behind in the match, parents start to see it through **the lenses of failure**, which means that they start to think of their child as failing and start to think negatively, get angry and anxious, and criticise their child during and after the match.

What do you think you should do at this point in the match in order to avoid getting yourself into this scenario?

Neutralise your fears

To defeat your fears you must take action to neutralise them. If you ignore, or avoid dealing with your fears they will grow and grow and will not go away. They will keep coming into your head and become powerful and control your thoughts and emotions. Therefore, you must face your fears and deal with them head on!

To defeat your fears (to neutralise them) you must force yourself to do the things that you're fearful of over and over again.

Tip #3: Fears make you think about the future and about the uncontrollables, so make sure that you keep yourself mentally focused on what you can control. Also, keep monitoring your thoughts and ensure that they are focusing on the present rather than on the future. It's vital that you don't allow the "what if", "she might lose", etc, enter your thoughts at anytime. When you become aware that you have let them into your mind you must quickly bring your thoughts back to the present and to things that you can control.

Tip #4: Confront and challenge the non-logic of your fears and begin to question and reject them rather then accept and listen to them. Keep challenging your fears and the non-sensical reasons behind them.

For example:

1) *"Yes, she lost the last point but I mustn't keep thinking about the 'why' and 'how' and get myself angry and tense about it. I must now forget about it and focus on the next point or else I'll get my mental state all messed up!!"*

2) *"Yes, I'm worried about what coaches will say and think about her if she loses, but what's the worst thing that can happen? There is no way that her coaches will think negatively of her 'cos they know that all players have good days and bad days, and today she's having a bad day. They are experienced and they'll be fine about her*

losing this match, they'll work out with her what she needs to improve on"

Tip #5: Never accept 'SHOULD' as a norm (e.g., "she should have won that point", "she should have beaten her", "she should have done" such and such, etc) as it only fuels your fear and anxiety and, consequently, your anger and criticism towards your child. There is NO 'SHOULD' in sport as **athletes perform on the day** and not according to 'should' and 'shouldn't'!! *Remember, even if your child is ranked higher than her opponent, has beaten her in the last 5 matches, and is more experienced, there is no* "she should beat her". This is a key tip to remember!

Keep challenging your fears and keep practise doing it until you are in complete control of your mind and thoughts. Don't allow your fears to control you, your mind and thoughts, to reduce your self-confidence and to make you anxious, angry, critical, and aggressive. Start to take charge of your mind!

Tip #6: Put your fears of failure in perspective by understanding that **failure is necessary for success** and that failure is a feedback for your child on how to improve, learn, and progress. Think of failure as **a friend not a foe,** as there is a lot that your child can learn from failure and it can help her improve and progress.

Successful people (not just athletes) are people who are willing to take risks and, therefore, fail more frequently, but they use failure in a positive way. They use it as a source of motivation and feedback to improve, which is why they are successful. So, remember to tell yourself (and your child) every time when she fails (or make mistakes) that she can learn valuable lessons from it and teach her to think of her failure as a friend not a foe, as an opportunity for her to learn, improve, and progress.

Tip #7: A key point for you to remember, and to keep reminding yourself, is that **there is no success without failure** and that even champions make mistakes and fail sometimes.

Appendix 13- Examples of transcript extracts from follow-up 1 and 2 with the parents with my comments added (in upper key text) for the parents.

Example 1:

Dad: Up until then I've been dealing with it really really well, overall I've not been outcome oriented at all, I've just been dealing with things, giving her time, and "what do you think Jo" and how can we improve. But last Tuesday I was very very tired myself, really knackered, and that's something else you need to think about, how you're feeling yourself at the time, [I AGREE. THIS IS WHY I SUGGESTED YOU MAKE TIME TO REGULARLY PRACTISE RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES, AND SHARE THE DRIVING WITH MUM SO THAT YOU GET SOME REST TIME] and when she came off court I just told her exactly how I felt, that she didn't put the effort. [DO NOT TELL HER HOW YOU FEEL, ITS IRRELEVANT! FOCUS ON HOW SHE FEELS AND HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT HER. IT IS HER TENNIS AND IT IS ALL ABOUT HER AND NOT ABOUT YOU] I wasn't shouting or tears or anything, I just said "look, you weren't really competing in that match". In my opinion, she competed for about 20 minutes, but whatever happened, whether she was tired, and she was tired, but she didn't seem to be competing at all.

Example 2:

Dad: And I'm aware of that, but in the heat of the moment I just, I mean I wasn't happy with the way she dealt with it and she could have dealt with it better and she knows that [THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WERE THINKING AT THAT TIME THAT MADE YOU REACT. HOW COULD YOU HAVE CHALLENGED THESE THOUGHTS SO THAT YOU COULD KEEP YOURSELF CALMER AND IN CHARGE OF BOTH YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS?- THIS IS KEY FOR YOU]

Example 3:

Mum: You'll need to speak to Jenny to find out how he speaks to her when they're there (in tournaments) because, as said, I was there. I was with her last weekend and said to her afterwards "I'm really pleased, I'm really impresses with how you played". [EXCELLENT, KEEP IT UP! ALWAYS PRAISE HER REGARDLESS OF RESULTS OR HOW SHE PERFORMED. ENCOURAGE JIM TO DO THE SAME AFTER EVERY MATCH THAT HE ATTENDS]

Example 4:

Mum: A lot of the time if she's snappy with me I just ignore it 'cos I think 'oh she must be tired' I know I'm tired so she must be tired [YES, JENNY, LIKE ALL ATHELTES, GET TIRED 'COS THEY HAVE A VERY PHYSICALLY DEMANDING AND HECTIC SCHEDULE AND VERY LITTLE OR NO TIME OFF TO REST]

Sam Sagar

Developing Mental Toughness

☺ Establishing self-control

❖ It's not what's happening around you, it's not what's happening to you, but it's what's happening **inside you** that really matters

❖ Examine your inner self-talk (what you say to yourself) during:

days before competition

just before competition

during competition

after competition

CAUTION

Mental strategies	Poor performance	Peak performance
Thoughts	Negative, putting yourself down, criticism yourself	Positive, supportive
Self-talk	Confidence destroying	Confidence enhancing
Focus	on uncontrollables, on outcome/results	On controllables, on process (not outcome)
Imagery	See in your mind what you're **afraid** will happen	See in your mind what you **want** to happen

❖ **Examples of uncontrollables:**

The opponent's size, power, speed, behaviour (e.g., cheating, wasting time) etc

Umpire's decisions

The weather

The audience (e.g., behaviour, size)

Other people's expectations and thoughts of you

Winning/ losing

Please add more.........

Examples of controllables:

Your thoughts

your focus and concentration

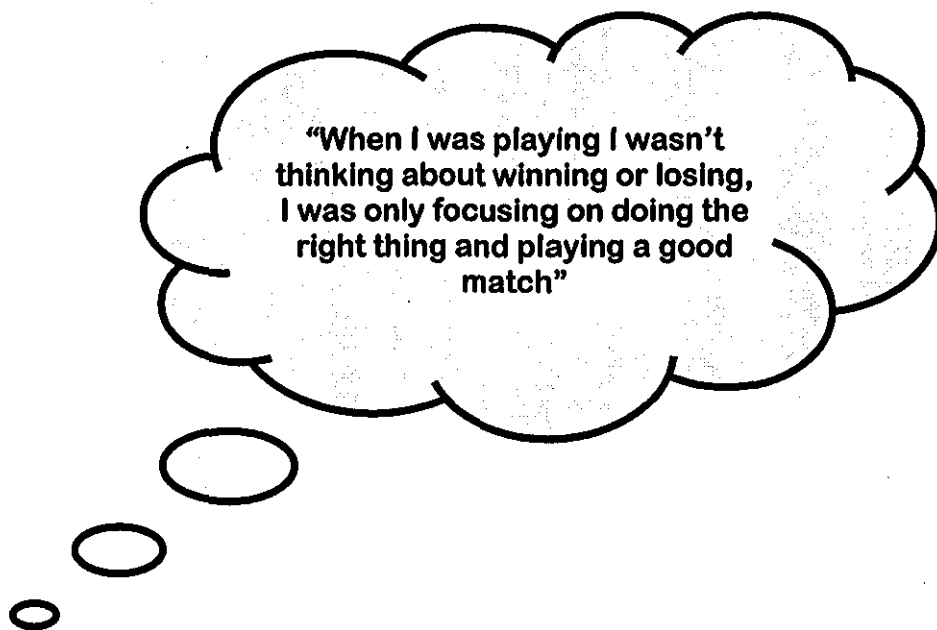your reactions on court

Yours game

Your food and drink intake

Please add more.........

Focus only on what **you can control** and not on what you can't (see Venus William's quote below in the bubble). **If you can't control it ignore it!!**

Every time you find yourself thinking about something that is uncontrollable, recognise it and then quickly bring your focus and concentration back to what you can control. Make sure that **YOU are in charge of your thoughts and don't let them be in charge of you!!**

It's only when you're focused on the here and now (you and your performance, which are in your control) that you are able to respond to cues necessary for peak performance. So, **make sure you're controlling your thoughts and not the other way around!!**

"When I was playing I wasn't thinking about winning or losing, I was only focusing on doing the right thing and playing a good match"

☺ Fears

- ◆ Fears make you feel nervous, worried, stressed, anxious, concerned, etc, and tighten your muscles during play.

- ◆ Fears reduce your self-confidence and self-belief and make you not take risks in a match and not play aggressively.

- ◆ Fears can get stronger and stronger as you get closer to your competition.

- ◆ Fears are the biggest cause of choking in sport and losing.

- ◆ Many performance-related fears are product of your emotions, imagination, and distorted (incorrect) beliefs.

- ◆ Fears can only have power over you if you continually avoid them and not deal with them.

- ◆ To beat your fears you must **Recognise** them, **Understand** them, and take action to **Neutralise** (defeat) them; **R.U.N.**

Recognise your fears

You're feeling fear when you're thinking: "I might lose", "I have doubts", "I'm nervous", "I'm scared", "I'm worried", "I'm anxious", "what if". All these thoughts make up fear and suggest that you're thinking about the future and about the consequences of you losing, and your imagination is going wild (you're thinking about the uncontrollables). When we are under pressure our imagination exaggerates what we fear and magnifies it to extreme; this is called **"catastrophizing"**

Here is an example of catastrophizing thoughts:

> *"If I can't return her next serve she'll win the match and then my coach will be disappointed and won't like me, and my parents will get cross with me, and I won't get selected to internationals, and people will not respect me and will think that I'm not a good player, oh no I can't miss her next serve, I can't lose this match......."*

This kind of thinking makes players fearful of losing the match. They are also extremely harmful to players' progress and success. Remember, the future is a huge uncontrollable and when you focus on uncontrollables you'll only make yourself more fearful and anxious and less confident.

Tip #1: Don't go over the "what if" in your head before, during, and after the match as this will only make you fearful and will harm you and your performance. So, recognise your fears and don't let them get hold of you and your mind.

Tip #2: Don't think of competition outcome (winning/losing) before or close to competition as it will only feed your fears and interfere with your positive state of mind, will reduce your enjoyment, and will harm your performance.

Tip #3: Superstitions are not logical beliefs. They can feed your fears and take away your control. So, as a young athlete, be very careful not to fall into this trap.

Understand your fears

Once you've recognized your fears, you'll need to think of them as **liars** since fears trick you into believing things that are not real. Fears distort reality and make nonsense seem real to you and, hence, make you feel scared about something that isn't real!!

Often when tennis players are behind in a match they start to see it through **"the lense of failure"**, which means that they start to think of themselves as failing and start to think negatively about themselves. They become angry with themselves and criticise themselves, lose their confidence and concentration, and are most likely to end up losing the match!

> *What do you think you should do at this point in match in order not to end up losing?............*

Neutralise your fears

To defeat your fears you must take action to neutralise them. If you ignore, or avoid dealing with your fears they will grow and grow and will <u>not</u> go away. They will keep coming into your head and become powerful and control your thoughts and emotions. Therefore, it's best to face your fears and deal with them head on!

To defeat your fears you need to force yourself to do the things that you're fearful of over and over again.

Tip #4: Sitting in your room, start by visualising yourself being successful in a match that you're behind. Mentally see, hear, and feel yourself playing confidently and comfortably and coming back from behind to win the match. Go over each step in your mind as if you're on the court in a real match (don't rush it) and "experience" the match in your mind. This is known as **"visualisation"**; a very powerful and popular technique among young and senior athletes in all sports.
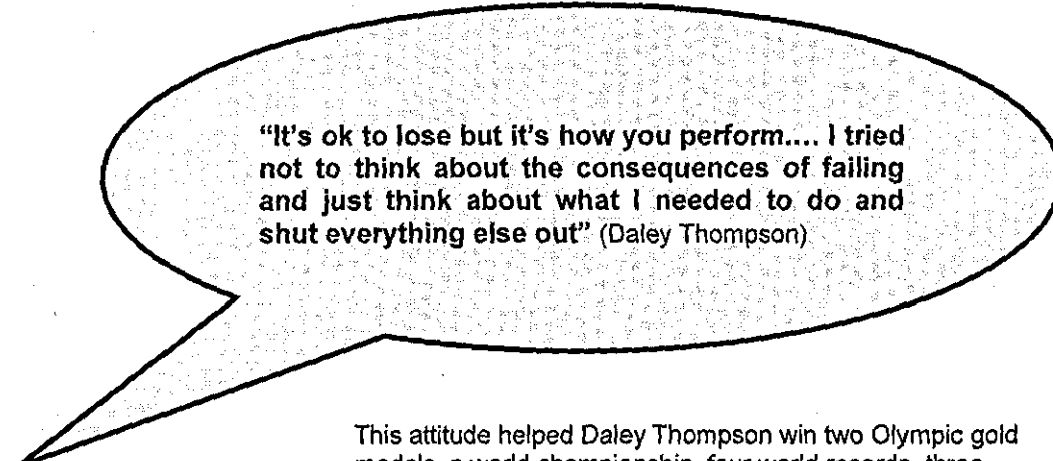
Tip #5: Fears make you think about the future and about things that are out of your control (uncontrollables). So, make sure that you focus only on what you <u>can</u> control (controllables). Also, keep checking your thoughts and concentration and make sure that they are in the present rather than in the future. It's vital that you don't allow the "what if" to stay in your thoughts. When you become aware that you have let them into your mind you must quickly bring your thoughts back to the present and to <u>things that you can control.</u>

Tip #6: Confront and challenge the non-logic of your fears and begin to question them and reject them rather then accept and listen to them. Keep challenging your fears and the non-sensical reasons behind them.

For example:

3) "Yes, I didn't manage to return her last serve, and yes she won the point, but I'm now facing another serve from her and I don't want to be thinking about why I didn't get her last serve and get angry about it, so just forget about it and focus on this serve or else you'll miss this one too!"

4) "Yes, I'm worried about what others will say and think about me if I lose, but what's the worst thing that can happen? There is no way that my coach will think that I'm a bad player 'cos she knows that all players have good days and bad days and today I'm having a bad day, she's not stupid, she knows it and she'll be fine about me losing this match and we'll work out what I need to improve on"

Keep challenging your fears and keep practising it until you are in control of your mind and thoughts. Don't allow your fears to control you and your thoughts, to reduce your self-confidence and self-belief, and to make you anxious.

"It's ok to lose but it's how you perform.... I tried not to think about the consequences of failing and just think about what I needed to do and shut everything else out" (Daley Thompson)

This attitude helped Daley Thompson win two Olympic gold medals, a world championship, four world records, three Commonwealth titles, and two European crowns in decathlon.

Tip #7: Put your fear of failure in perspective by reminding yourself that **failure is necessary for success** and that failure is a feedback on how to get better and progress. Remember, **failure is a friend not a foe,** as there is a lot you can learn from failure and failure can help you improve, develop, and progress.

Successful people (and not just athletes) are people who are willing to take risks and, therefore, fail more frequently, but they use failure in a positive way. They use it as a source of motivation and feedback to improve and this is why they are successful. So, remember to tell yourself every time you fail (or lose or make mistakes) that you can learn valuable lessons from failure and that you need to think of failure as a **friend not a foe, as an opportunity to learn, improve and progress further.**

Tip #8: A key point for you to remember, and to keep reminding yourself, is that **there is no success without failure** and that even champions make mistakes and fail sometimes.

☺ **Being assertive and taking charge**

- At your age you need to take responsibility for your match, practice times, and for organising your gear. Keep a DIARY of your competition and training dates and location.

- If your parents are saying upsetting or unhelpful things to you, be respectful in **telling** them that their comments are not helpful and then tell them exactly what **you need** them to say and do to support you.

- If your coaches are saying or doing something unhelpful, be respectful in **telling** them the impact of their comments or behaviour has on you.

- Feel **free** and **open** to discuss your progress with your coaches. Ask them what you should do to turn things around, improve, progress, etc. For example, if you feel that you need to do more work on your serve, make sure you tell your coach that this is what you think. Don't keep it to yourself. Remember, your coaches are here to help you develop and progress as a player.

What else can you be doing to be more assertive and in charge of your tennis?........

Appendix 16- Session 3 (Jenny): Fear & Visualisation (handout)

FEAR-THOUGHTS LINK
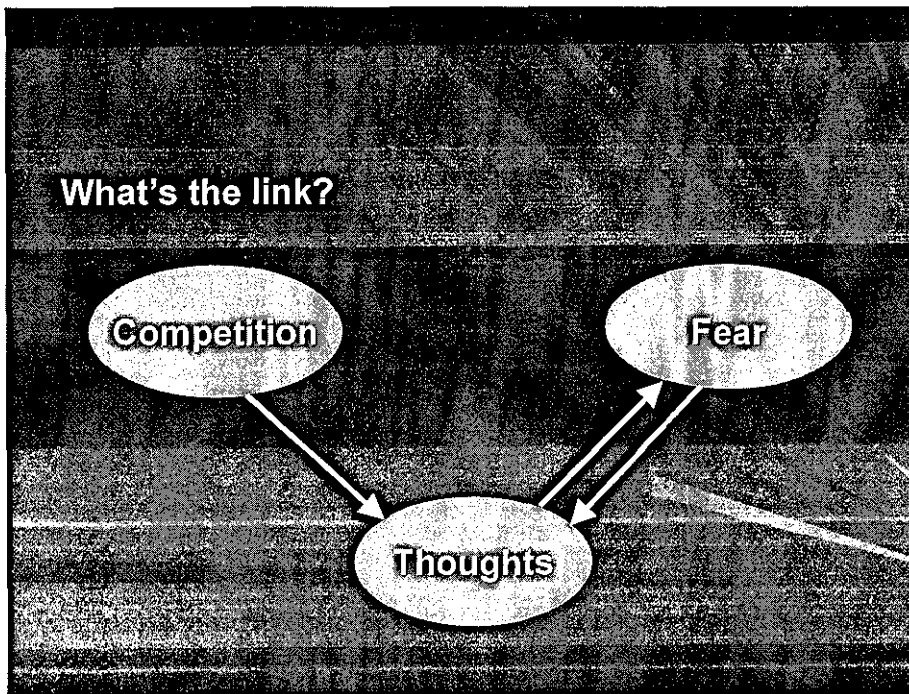
VISUALISATION is a form of mental preparation for your match. Think of it as mental fitness. So, practise it regularly and you'll get good at it. ☺

"Before (the game) I visualize in my head the different plays and options, positions, scoring, and what to do, so I've gone over them in my head and they're clearer.... It just helps me reduce the fear because it makes me more familiar with what I've got to do.... If you visualize past victories and skills that you do it gets you ready to do them in the game and ready and prepared for what's to come.... It helps you and it pushed away the fear because if you're concentrating on doing things right you forget things about the fear of losing.... I visualise before most games.... I think visualizing is a good way to reducing fear of failure because it gets you familiar with everything"

(16 years old basketball

Sam Sagar

Appendix 17- Session 4 (Jenny): Mental toughness (handout)

Player's name:		
Describe a difficult situation:		
Think	**Do**	**Behave**

Appendix 18- Session 5 (Jenny): Self-criticism quotes (taken from study 2)

[A copy given to Jenny]

Jenny's Self-criticism (for not performing well or making mistakes)

During a match

"I don't throw my racket **I just shout at myself**"

"If I miss a shot I go **'that's rubbish Jenny!'** or something"

"I think **negatively about myself** playing tennis.... I think negatively about myself if I miss a shot"

"If I've just let them win I feel **annoyed** with myself because I haven't given myself the best chance to do well.... I'm just annoyed that I've lost and I just say to myself **'what's the point in doing it!?' and 'you're not good enough!' and 'you're rubbish!'**, and stuff like that.

"If I'm missing a lot of balls I'll say **'you're rubbish!' or 'you're not good enough!' or 'you shouldn't be here!'**, or something like that, it's just coming into your head.... I suppose it's <u>normal</u> to come into your head if you've not tried your hardest and not done well".

"I started **shouting and crying** [on court] and my dad walked off"

After losing a match

"I was thinking **'I'm not good enough, and if I'm not'** I just **felt doubt in myself** because I hadn't won a match, and **I was crying** to my dad on the phone"

[After losing] "**I just feel to myself that I'm not very good** or something afterwards when I've lost and that I shouldn't [have lost], **I feel that I'm not good enough anymore**" <<Devaluing self-estimate>>

Summary of Jenny's self-criticism

During a match	After losing a match
"shout at myself 'oh for god's sake!' or 'what are you doing?!' or 'why did you do it, what did you do that for?!', *(saying in a reproaching voice)*	"I'm not good enough... felt doubt in myself"
	"feel that I'm not very good"
"Annoyed with myself... shouting and crying"	
	"that was crap, that was poor, that was bad, I played bad, I couldn't hit a shot, I kept hitting the ball out, I couldn't get the ball in, I missed the easy shots"
"you're rubbish!... you're not good enough!...you shouldn't be here!'	
	"'I was playing rubbish, I can' play"
"what's the point in doing it!?... you're not good enough!... you're rubbish!"	
	"'I played rubbish"
"I think negatively about myself"	
	"I played rubbish, I played crap"
"That's rubbish Jenny!"	

SELF-CRITICISM AND GETTING ANGRY ON COURT

Telling yourself off and criticising yourself after losing or after making a mistake is not helpful to you since it can lead to you:

- Feeling bad and angry with yourself and to sulking
- Not enjoying the match and the experience
- Having negative self-belief
- Having low self-confidence
- Losing your focus and concentration
- Losing your motivation and determination
- Increasing your levels of stress, anxiety and fear of failure
- Increasing your chances of losing the match
- Increasing your opponents' confidence that they can beat you (because you show them that you've lost you mental toughness. So, your poor body language feeds your opponent's confidence and she's more likely to beat you]

Self-criticism is a form of self-abuse. So, **don't** tell yourself off and criticise yourself when you make mistakes.

Remember, you are still a young and inexperienced tennis player and the purpose of your training and competing in the next few years is for you to **learn and to improve your skills**. Being impatient and getting angry with yourself when you make mistakes is not going to help you to learn faster and become a good player, it will only **do the opposite**.

> Learning to be **patient with yourself** is a very important skill to have. Remember, no one becomes a champion or a great player over night. It takes time, patience, making mistakes, losing, and lots of hard work.

Think about this situation:

If you were asked to teach a 14 year girl to play tennis would you tell her off and criticise her when she makes mistakes? Do you think that it will be helpful to her? How do you think she would feel? Would she enjoy being with you on the court? Would your style of teaching help her learn faster? The answers are no, no, and no! She'll probably lose her motivation to learn and not come back to you after the first session because your style of teaching will make her feel bad about herself and not motivate her to learn. But if you're patient with her when she makes mistakes and you instruct her how to correct them every time she makes them, she is more likely to come back to you for help, to be motivated to learn, and she'll feel good about herself and enjoy being with you and learning from you.

> So, do the same for yourself. Be patient with yourself, be kind to yourself, and give yourself a chance to learn. **Impatience is your enemy!**

Remember: **You wouldn't like it if someone was standing at courtside shouting at you, telling you off, and criticising you every time you made a mistake or missed a shot. So, don't YOU do it to yourself!!**

CAUTION

How do I change my behaviour?

ENCOURAGE yourself don't criticise yourself when you make a mistake.

Enjoy playing tennis and remember that you're still learning and that you can learn something new from every mistake that you make and from every match you play, regardless of winning or losing it. Ask yourself after every experience and after every match **what did I learn from it? What do I need to improve on?** Write your answers in a journal and ensure that you often make time to read through your journal from time to time.

Don't think of your mistakes as the enemy that you hate and get angry with. Instead, think of them as **opportunities to learn and to improve your skills.** Always aim to learn from your mistakes and always ask yourself **"what can I learn from this mistake?"**

Encouraging yourself when you make mistakes can help you to **stay focused** on the match, while criticising yourself will take you out of your focus. **Maintaining your focus during a match is vital, so keep encouraging and not criticising yourself!**

INSTRUCT yourself how to correct your mistake in the next shot. This will be more helpful to you and to your performance than self-criticism. Remember, a tennis match keeps moving forwards all the time and it doesn't stop when you make a mistake. So, keep moving on **MENTALLY** with the match rather than get stuck on your mistakes and make yourself unhappy and angry because this will only **serve to harm your performance!**

Have a voice at the back of your mind **instructing** you how to correct your mistake when you've made it. Imagine a person (for example, your coach, your role model, a player you admire, etc) standing on courtside and calling out instructions to you on how to correct your mistakes when you make them. This person is **kind, encouraging, patient, positive and never critical.**

Tap on your thigh (optional) and instruct yourself in an <u>encouraging</u> voice (or silently in your head) 'hit it higher next shot', 'brush up', 'low high', 'bend', etc.

Beware of the language you use to talk to yourself because this can be critical to how you feel and perform and to your motivation, self-confidence, and fear of failure levels.

> **So, always use a positive, encouraging, and energizing language, <u>especially</u> when you've made a mistake or when you're behind in the score.**

Criticising yourself when you make a mistake has become a habit that you now do automatically, without thinking. In order for you to get rid of this bad habit you need to learn new skills that will help you replace your bad habits. This can only happen if you **keep practising these new skills <u>regularly</u> until they become your new good habits that you do automatically without even thinking.**

Remember, practising mental skills are as important as practising your other skills.

- **Mental skill**
- **Physical skills (fitness)**
- **Tennis skills**

All three skills are needed in equal amounts in order to make you a good tennis player. So keep practising all three skills **REGULARLY** and don't neglect any one of them ☺

SUMMARY:

☺ **ENCOURAGE** yourself, don't criticise yourself when you make mistakes. This will help you maintain your self-confidence and focus; both are vital for you to maintain during matches and training sessions.

☺ Learn to be patient with yourself. Impatience is your enemy!

☺ Your mistakes are not your enemy, they are opportunities for you to learn from and to improve your tennis and mental skills. Always ask yourself "what can I learn from this mistake?" and keep a journal with all your thoughts and reflections that you read through **often**.

☺ **INSTRUCT** yourself how to correct your mistake in the next shot, and keep moving on **MENTALLY** with the match rather than get stuck on your mistakes and make yourself unhappy and angry, which can harm your performance.

☺ Have a **VOICE** at the back of your head instructing you how to correct your mistake. Imagine a kind, patient, encouraging person who is never critical, standing on courtside and calling out to you helpful instructions.

☺ Tap on your thigh (optional) and instruct yourself in an encouraging voice (or silently in your head) 'hit it higher next shot', 'brush up', etc.

☺ When talking or thinking to yourself always use positive, encouraging, and energizing language, especially when you make mistakes and when you're behind in the score.

☺ keep practising these new skills **REGULARLY** until they become your new good habits that you do automatically without even thinking.

Exercises aim:
- To reduce your self-criticism, fear of failure, anxiety, stress, and anger.
- To increase your levels of self-confidence, concentration, and motivation.
- To enhance your development and progression as a tennis player.

Exercise 1

❑ Have a small notebook (or a pad) in your tennis bag and remember to write down after every **training session and competition** the self-criticisms that you said to yourself when you made mistakes or when you didn't perform as well as you wanted to.

Later when you get home, list of all these self-criticisms in a table and on the other side write instructions as to how you should correct these criticisms and what you could be telling yourself instead; this is known as "reframing".

Exercise 2

❑ Reframe the list of your self-criticism from our interviews (last year) in the table below. Change your negative self-criticism to positive and encouraging statements.

Self-criticism	Positive instructions, Self-encouragement
I shout at myself: For god sake what are you doing!? What did you do that for!? What are you doing!? C'mon Jo! You're useless! You're rubbish! You shouldn't be here! Angry/annoyed when people are cheating Angry when I make mistakes: missing balls, not play well, hit balls into net, double faulting I let myself down	

Appendix 19- Session 6 (Jenny): Negative vs. positive self-talk (handout)

Positive self-talk: the talk of champions

Negative self-talk and self-criticism (e.g., "I'm rubbish", I can't play", I'm useless", etc), are the negative and unkind things that you say to yourself (out loud or silently) when you miss a shot or hit a bad shot, etc. This contributes to bad attitude on court and to keeping you stuck in a negative mood and negative thinking that is unpleasant and is harmful to your performance.

There are 2 types of self-talk. It can be **positive** and building and enhancing your self-confidence, or it can be **negative** and destroying your confidence. Most athletes don't even realise that they are engaging in negative self-talk until I point it out to them. You can change this unhelpful behaviour when you realise that you're actually criticising yourself and that your negative self-talk is not helping your state of mind or your performance.

Check and watch what you say to yourself. Whenever you talk negatively to yourself and beat yourself up, you need to recognise this behaviour and make effort to change it. For example, when you say to yourself "I can't play this game!", "I'm useless!", or "don't lose another game!" you're reducing your own confidence. Negative self-talk leads to negative thoughts that lead to reducing your self-confidence and motivation. This will make you perform badly as well as feel badly about yourself as a person and as a player.

Learn to be your own coach and pick yourself up when you make mistakes by using positive self-talk. If you think "I'm playing rubbish today", this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, which means, you will be playing rubbish. In other words, instead of focusing on your strengths and getting on with the match, you worry about a part of your game that is not working well for you on that particular day.

TIP: Use positive self-talk to encourage and pick yourself up when you make mistakes and focus on your strengths.

TIP: Think of positive self-talk as the 'good voice' in your head and of negative self-talk as the 'bad voice' in your head. Give them a name each and remember that they want to be in charge of your mind. It's your job to make sure that the 'good voice' always wins and is always in charge of your mind and thoughts.
Most professional players use positive self-talk regularly to help them stay focused, confident, and motivated during their performance, and perform well and win the competition. They talk themselves (silently) through their tactics and routine to stay focused on their performance and talk positively and encourage themselves when they make mistakes.

How do I make sure my self-talk is positive and enhancing my confidence?

1) The first step is to write down your self-talk, the things you tell yourself in general and also before, during after matches. The second step is to determine whether these statements you make to yourself are positive or negative; are you being positive or negative with yourself. Therefore, pay attention to your self-talk in general situations (when you're not on court). Pay attention to what you say to yourself and notice when you begin to say negative statements to yourself and in what situations. Also pay attention to your self-talk during a match and to what situations in the match trigger your negative self-talk. After your match, go back home and think about the times in the match when you were negative with yourself. Write down those negative statements, when they happened and what situations triggered them. Do this in the table in the sheet provided. This exercise will help you to identify your negative self-talk and the situations in which they occur.

2) The next step is for you to change your negative self-talk to positive self-talk. So, in the right column in the table, reframe (change) the negative statements to positive statements. For example, a negative self-talk such as, "I can't believe I missed such an easy shot, I'm rubbish!", you can change to a more positive and encouraging self-talk such as, "I'm a good player, everyone misses easy shots sometimes, I'll get the next shot".

3) Practise changing (reframing) your negative self-talk to positive self-talk on paper first. *The next step is to apply your positive self-talk (instead of the negative self-talk)* when you're competing, training, and generally in your everyday activities.

Ensure that your self-talk is positive and confidence enhancing <u>at all times</u>. That is, when you're performing well, when you're performing less well, and generally in your life. This can help you become more positive, be in control of your mind and thoughts, and be less fearful of losing. In other words, it can help make you a mentally tougher player.

Keep practising this skill regularly until it becomes second nature to you (automatic). Remember, the more you practise this skill the easier it will become until one day you will do it naturally <u>without even thinking about it</u> - this is a true mental toughness that is worth working hard to achieve!!! ☺

❖ Remember, champions don't talk negatively to themselves and *tell themselves off and get down on themselves* when the going gets tough in competitions or when they make mistakes. They use positive self-talk that helps them keep a positive mind, their motivation, focus, and self-confidence up, and their fear of losing down. You can also achieve this mental toughness if you keep practising it regularly.

THE WOMEN OF TENNIS

Sam Sagar
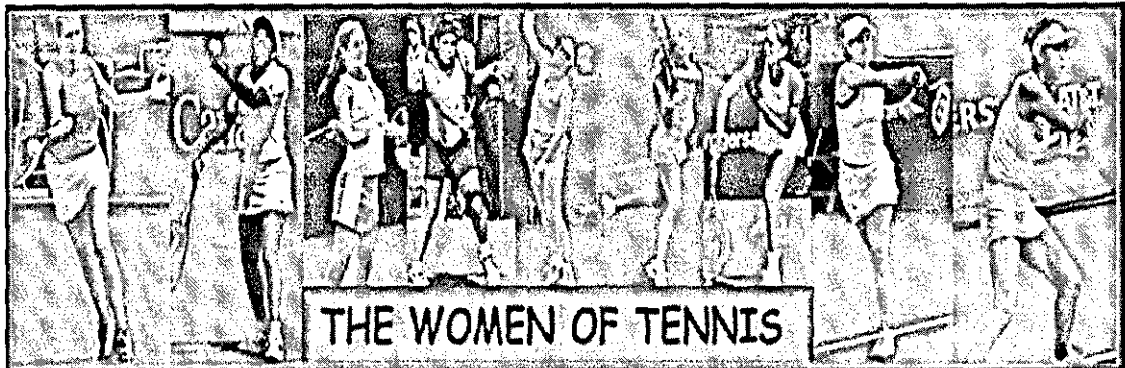
Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk (reframe)

Sam Sagar

Appendix 20- Examples of transcript extracts from follow-up 1 and 2 with Jenny with my comments added (in upper key text) for Jenny

Example 1:

SS: Ok. So you don't like the 24 hours time out and

Jenny: I do, I think that it's better for him not to criticise me and realise what went on and everything so that he won't shout at me, but I'd rather him shouts at me than, 'cos what he's saying is helpful, but the problem is how he puts it across. I'd rather him do that than not speak to me.

[THIS SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU. TRY TO ASK HIM TO CHANGE HIS BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS YOU 'COS IT'S HARMING YOU. ALSO, THINK ABOUT USING YOUR COACHES FOR PROFESSIONAL TENNIS ADVICE AND MATCH ANALYSIS INSTEAD OF YOUR DAD. THIS IS THEIR JOB AND THIS IS WHAT THEY'RE TRAINED TO DO. AS AN ELITE ATHELTE YOU REALLY NEED TO SEEK AVDICE FROM PROFESSIONALS]

Example 2:

SS: Well, you know, all players go through these up's and down's

Jenny: Yes, and this is one of these down's

SS: Yeah, and you just need to be patient and keep your spirit up and//

Jenny: Get through it

SS: Yeah. And it happens to everybody. It's just a matter of how you cope with this down period. If you don't get despondent and you keep your spirit and motivation up you'll get over it and soon be on the up again. But it's all up to you and how you cope with it. You must keep a positive mind and do a lot of visualisations, relaxation, and positive self-talk to help keep your spirit up and keep telling yourself 'I'll get over it, it's just a matter of time'

[I GAVE YOUR DAD A RELAXATION TAPE THAT YOU COULD ALSO USE REGULARLY TO HELP YOU DEAL WITH WORRIES AND STRESS. IT WILL BE VERY USEFUL FOR YOU TO DO IT, ESPECIALLY NOW WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN]

[YOUR GAME MAYBE OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A GROWTH PERIOD. CHILDREN DON'T GROW UP AT ONCE. THEY GROW UP IN SHORT PERIODS OVER A FEW YEARS (UNTIL AGE 18 APPROXIMATELY). WHEN YOUNG TENNIS PLAYERS ARE GOING THROUGH A GROWING PERIOD THEIR TENNIS SHOTS OFTEN GET OUT OF CONTROL AND THEY MISS SHOTS AND CAN'T HIT THEM WITH THE SAME ACCURACY AS THEY USED TO. THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE THEIR ARMS AND LEGS ARE GROWING AND BECOMING LONGER. ONCE A GROWING PERIOD HAS FINISHED THEIR SHOTS COME BACK TO NORMAL AND THEY GO BACK TO HITTING WELL UNTIL THEIR NEXT GROWING PERIOD]