


Cultural Facts & Challenges



Cultural Fact

We live in a world where gendered stereotypes persist

We all hold gender stereotypes about personality traits, role behaviours, occupations, physical appearance, sexuality and type of sport.

We are all sexist!

### Cultural Fact

- Sport still widely considered a male domain where masculine traits are more highly valued
- The admission of females into many elite sporting arenas is relatively recent (few decades)
- Positions of authority are still predominantly male
- More coaches are male
- Sport is mainly organised on a male model
- Most experimental sport science work has used male subjects as the “norm”

### Cultural Fact

- Socialisation pressures toward gender beliefs are pervasive, strong (often subtle) and begin early

Example:

- Independence, efficacy, toughness for boys (toys: trucks, action toys)
- Emotional sensitivity, nurturance, compliance for girls (toys: dolls, babies)

### Cultural Fact

Females are less likely;


- to overtly blame others
- to feel comfortable with their “talent”

Because of relational aspects females are;

- more cooperative rather than competitive
- have a desire not to make others feel inferior
- play down their ability to avoid being a “big head”

These are often socially policed norms that if you transgress can result in negative feedback from other females

### Cultural Fact



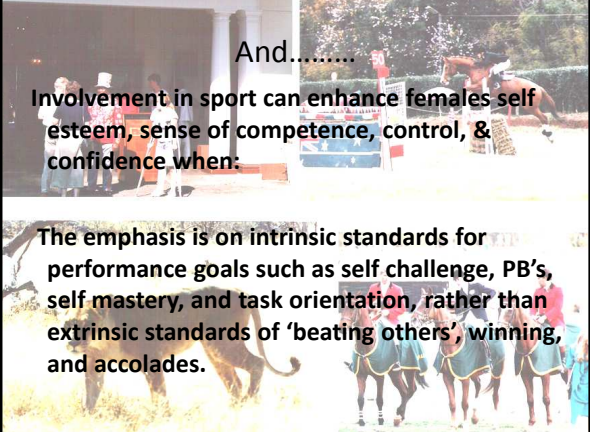
- In the media, athletic ability and accomplishments are emphasised for male athletes
- Femininity and attractiveness are emphasised for female athletes
- Female athletes are often sexualised in media
- Strength is associated more with male athletes
- Emotional reasons for failure more often cited for females than males

### But Females in Sport.....



- Often resist gender typing to participate in sport leading to a lessening of stereotypical gendered identity and greater freedom of individual expression.
- In research this is seen with female athletes being classed as more androgynous than female non athletes.
- Female athletes score higher on masculine measures

### And.....



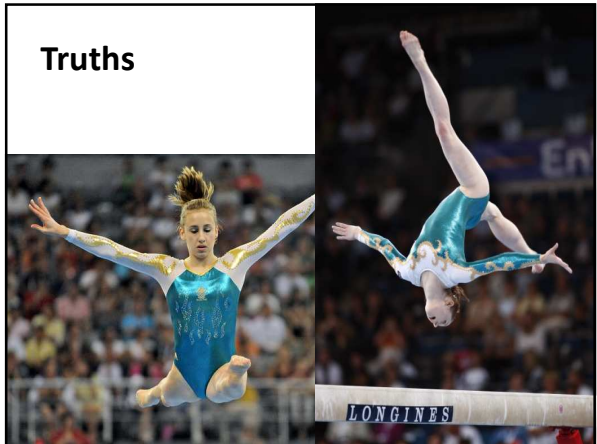
Involvement in sport can enhance females self esteem, sense of competence, control, & confidence when:

The emphasis is on intrinsic standards for performance goals such as self challenge, PB's, self mastery, and task orientation, rather than extrinsic standards of 'beating others', winning, and accolades.

### Self Management


- Learn what the myths are and how to not buy into the ones that are not useful
- Learn the truth
- Learn to become self referenced
- Learn what they need to perform

### Truths



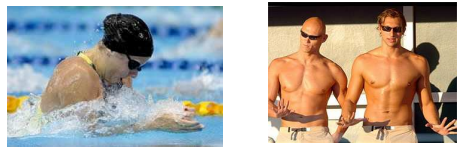
### Truth

- Psychological differences between males and females are small and inconsistent
- Research shows that overlap & similarities are much more apparent than differences



### Truth

- Psychological traits fall on a continuum and differences/similarities between individuals can be larger than between genders.



- E.g. A male and a female can be more similar on a trait than two individuals of the same gender

### BIG truth

How people think males and females differ is more important than actual differences



### Truth

Expectations —————> Outcomes

“If you can imagine it you can be it”

- People treat you differently dependent on expectations
- We act differently based on expectations of how we should act

### Truth

Differences worth knowing

- Females are more likely to attribute success to work effort and failure to lack of ability
- Males are more likely to attribute success to ability and talent and failure to some external factor (umpire, someone else, weather, playing conditions, equipment failure)

Although neither attribution is completely accurate,

The typical male attribution style is;

- More self protective
- helpful in performance
- More in keeping with the fact that ability is stable and performance is unstable.

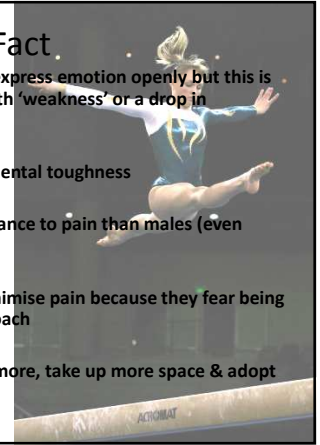
### Myth

Examples:

- Females are weak, girly, soft
- Crying equals weakness
- Females are more talkative than males

### Fact

- Females are more likely to express emotion openly but this is not positively correlated with 'weakness' or a drop in performance
- Crying is not a sign of low mental toughness
- Females have a higher tolerance to pain than males (even female rats)
- Female athletes tend to minimise pain because they fear being perceived as weak by the coach
- Males talk more, interrupt more, take up more space & adopt dominant postures



### Relationships & Cooperation

- Females tend to be more receptive to cooperative rules and environments and when relational conflict is low



- Females may tend to be more distracted by relational break downs and conflict between team members and with the coach and may be more likely to seek resolution

### Sexual harassment

- Girls more likely to be effected
- Not likely to report
- Guilt, withdrawal, silence, depression, anxiety
- Drop in performance
- Negative emotional impact
- Avoid upsetting anyone

### Sexual harassment

- Imperative to educate re. sexual harassment - what it is, consequences, solutions
- Provide safe environment for all athletes
- Coaches (adults) need to lead by example (observational learning and modeling will count more than words)


### Social body image pressure

- Males more concerned with size, strength, and power
- Females more concerned with physical beauty and maintaining the 'ideal' thin shape



### Sport body image pressure

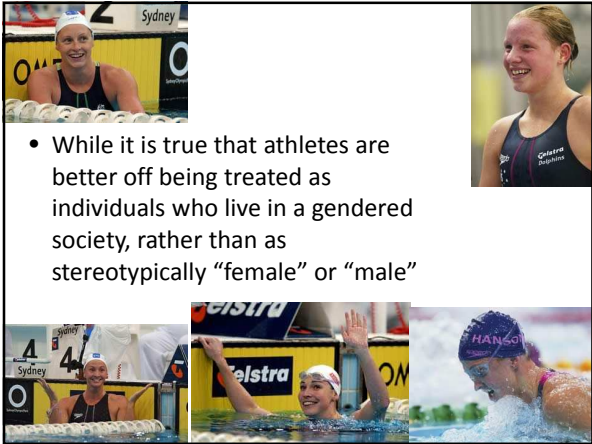
- Female athletes are already under tremendous societal pressure to lose weight and maintain a thin figure that may be neither healthy nor good for performance.
- Enlightened coaches, (parents), etc. follow nutritional guidelines and emphasise healthy eating NOT weight.



### Eating disorders & disordered eating

- Education about effective nutritional strategies, individual differences in dietary requirements, genetic predisposition
- Emphasis on eating for health & performance and usefulness
- Deemphasize aesthetics, fat language, chunky language, solid language, thin language etc.

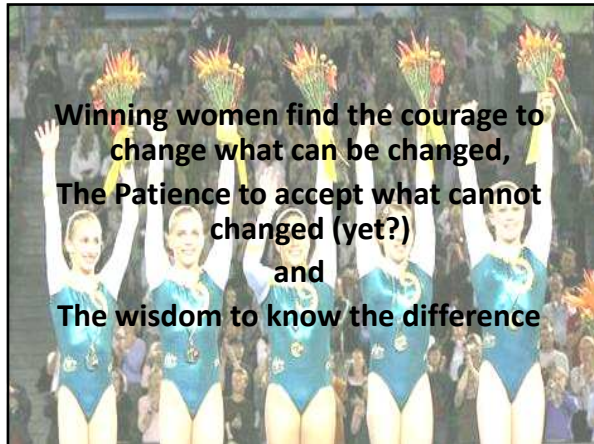
- While it is true that athletes are better off being treated as individuals who live in a gendered society, rather than as stereotypically "female" or "male"



We need to acknowledge that no individual exists in a vacuum.....

We need to be aware of CONTEXT and .....

How our beliefs and behaviour are influenced by perceptions of culture, socio-economic status, ethnicity, education, age, and gender.....



Vincit que se vincit



*She conquers who conquers herself*