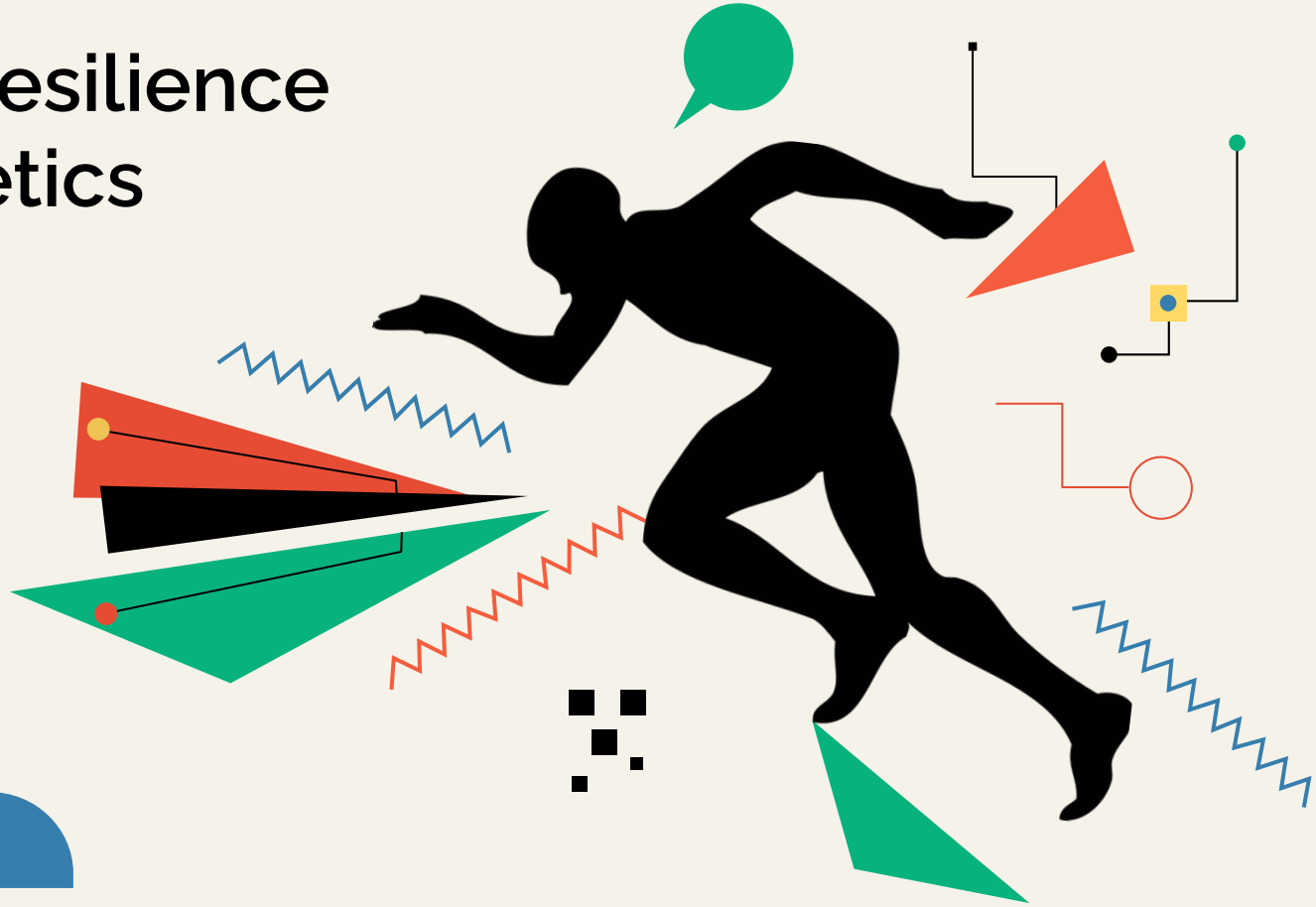
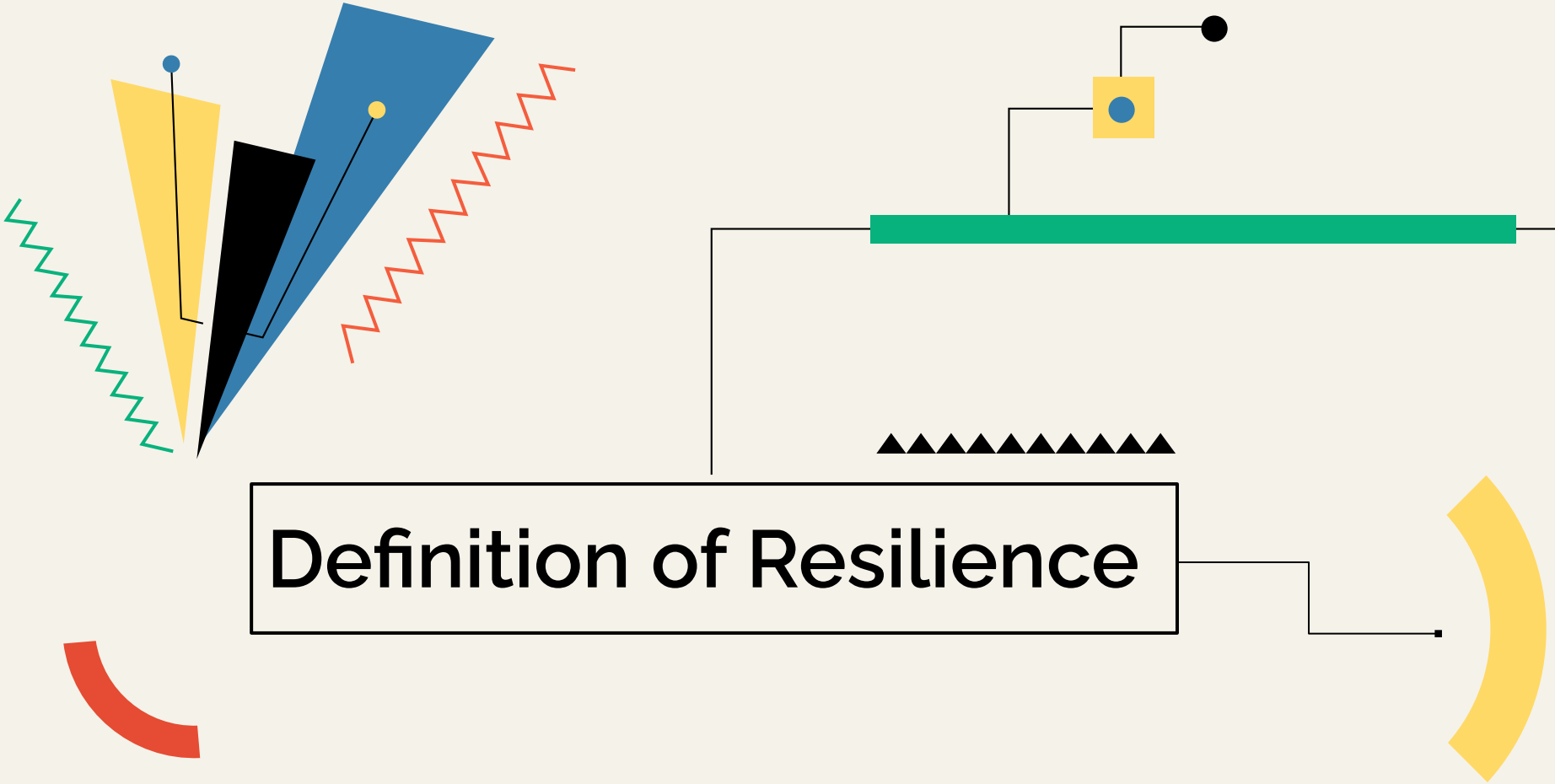
Theory of Resilience within Athletics



Why Resiliency in Athletics


Definition of Resilience

As stated by...

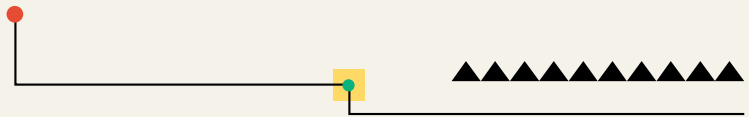
Oxford Dictionary: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

Merriam Webster: The ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens

Dictionary.com: The ability of a person to adjust to or recover readily from illness, adversity, major life changes

What Resilience Encompasses

- Can be individual or group
- Mental, physical, and emotional components
- Internalized process
- Experiential
  - Cannot be gained through formal education or training programs

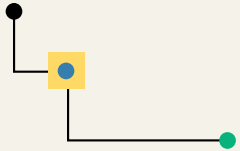




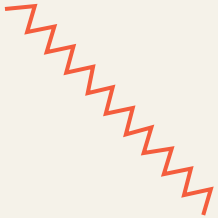
Our Focus

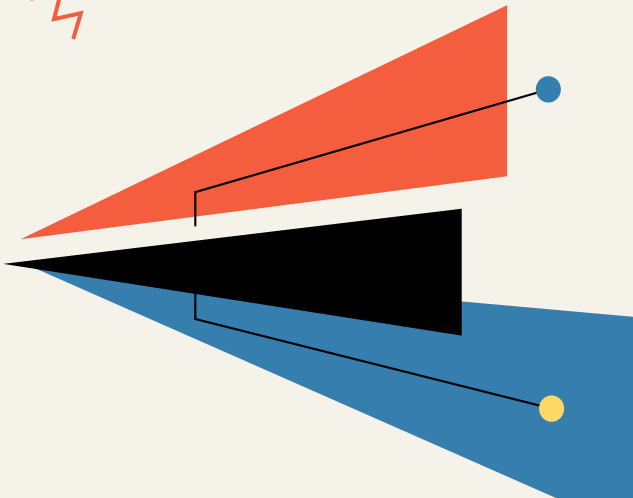
Resilience among athletes:

- Specific focus on injuries and ability to “bounce back” from them
- Other forms of resilience in sports:
  - Lack of playing time
  - Losing streaks
  - Relationships with teammates/coaches









Athletic Resilience Through Appreciative Inquiry

Goal of A.I.

- Focuses on positive experiences
- Conversational interview ⇒ increased comfort for interviewees when talking about experiences
- Allows interviewees to realize experiences and discover solutions
- Helped create theories for the application of resilience in sports



The Stockdale Paradox

- Named after Admiral James Stockdale, an American naval officer who was held captive for seven and one-half years during the Vietnam War

- Keys to Stockdale Paradox:
  - focusing on “now”(problems or expansions facing the present)
  - focusing on the “next” (problems or expansions in the future)

The Stockdale Paradox

- NOT an overemphasis on being cheerful, optimistic, friendly, etc… which is what western culture/society wants now a day
- Mental contrasting: requires individuals to consider both positive and negative features of goal achievement
- Business ideas of exploration and exploitation
  - (optimistic and realistic views on businesses)

Edgewalkers

- Edgewalkers: those who walk between worlds and build bridges between different paradigms and worldviews
    - visionary and passionate about making the world a better place, particularly through the world of work
    - “people who want to succeed in their organizations yet want to live by their values or identities, even if they are somehow at odds with the dominant culture at their organizations”

Organizational Healing

- Work of repairing practices, routines, and structures in the face of disruption and strengthening organizational functioning through social relationships (after significant crisis)

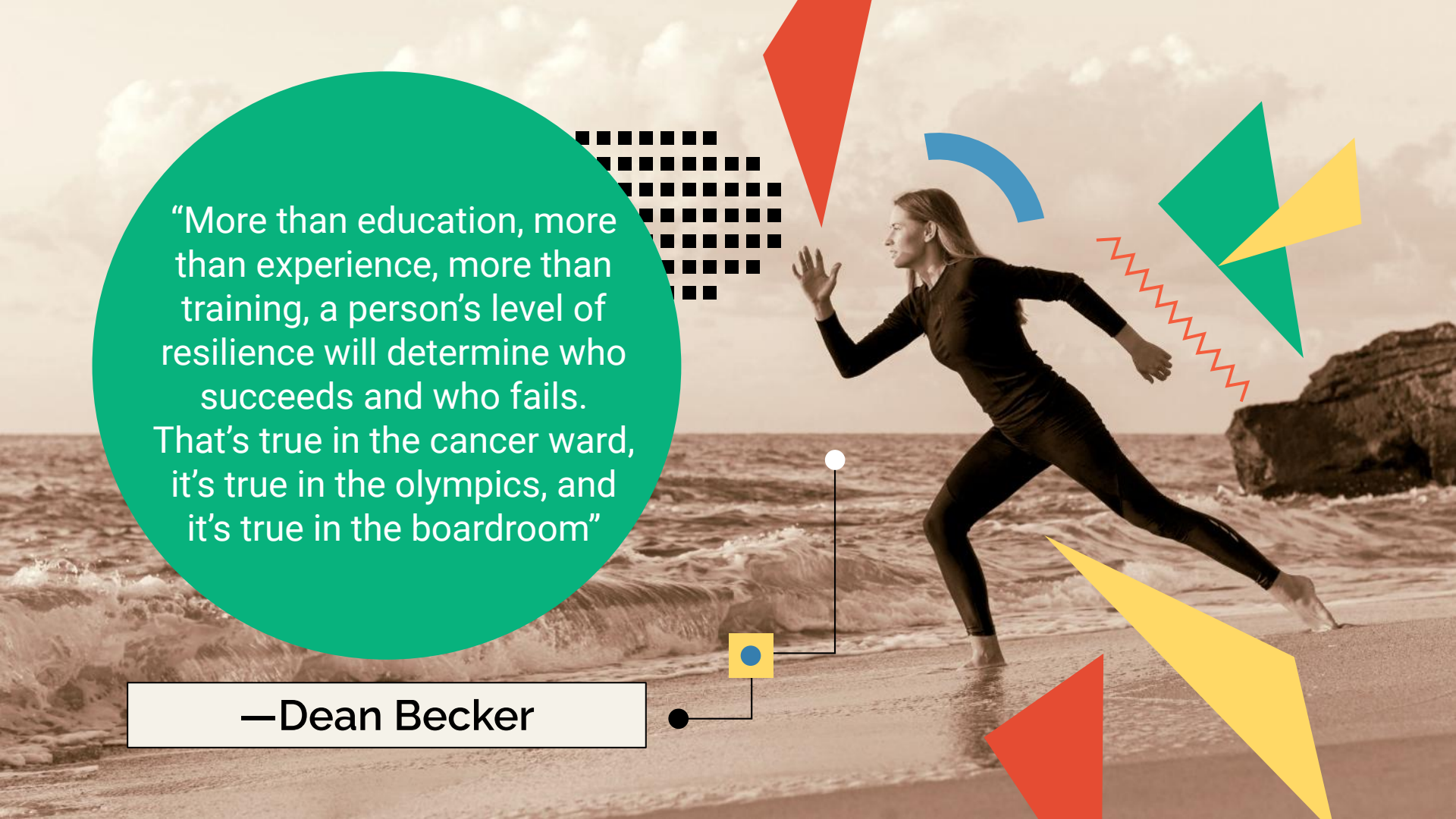
- 4 mechanisms towards organizational healing
    1. Empathy
    2. Interventions
    3. Collective Effort
    4. Leadership

- Healing requires BOTH resilience and growth

How Resilience Works

- Characteristics of Resilient People
  - a staunch acceptance of reality
  - a deep belief that life is meaningful
  - an uncanny ability to improvise

- Resilience is neither ethically good nor bad. It is merely the skill and the capacity to be robust under conditions of enormous stress and change

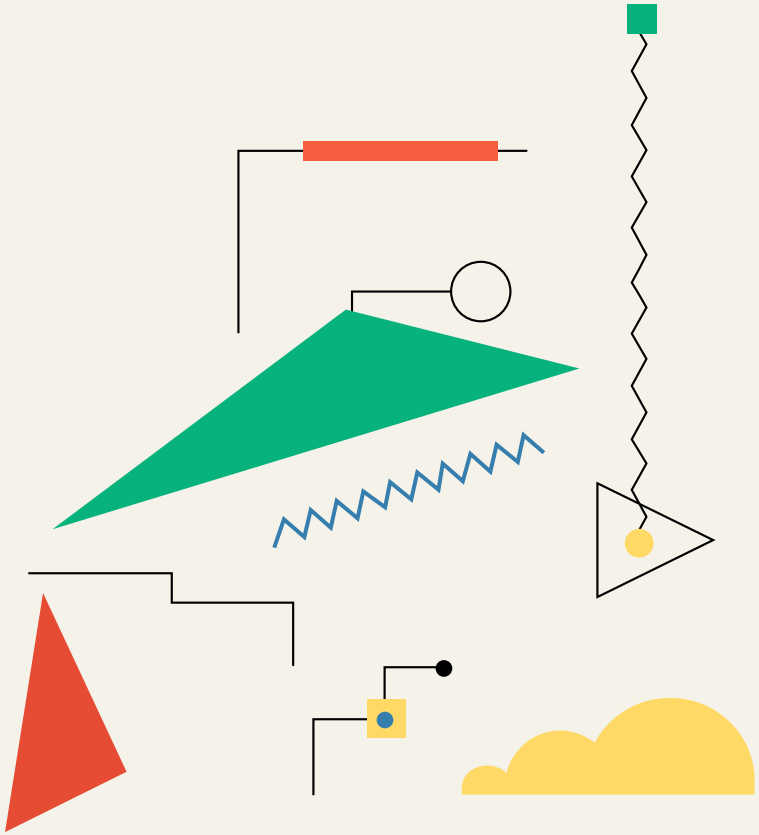

“More than education, more than experience, more than training, a person’s level of resilience will determine who succeeds and who fails. That’s true in the cancer ward, it’s true in the olympics, and it’s true in the boardroom”
—Dean Becker

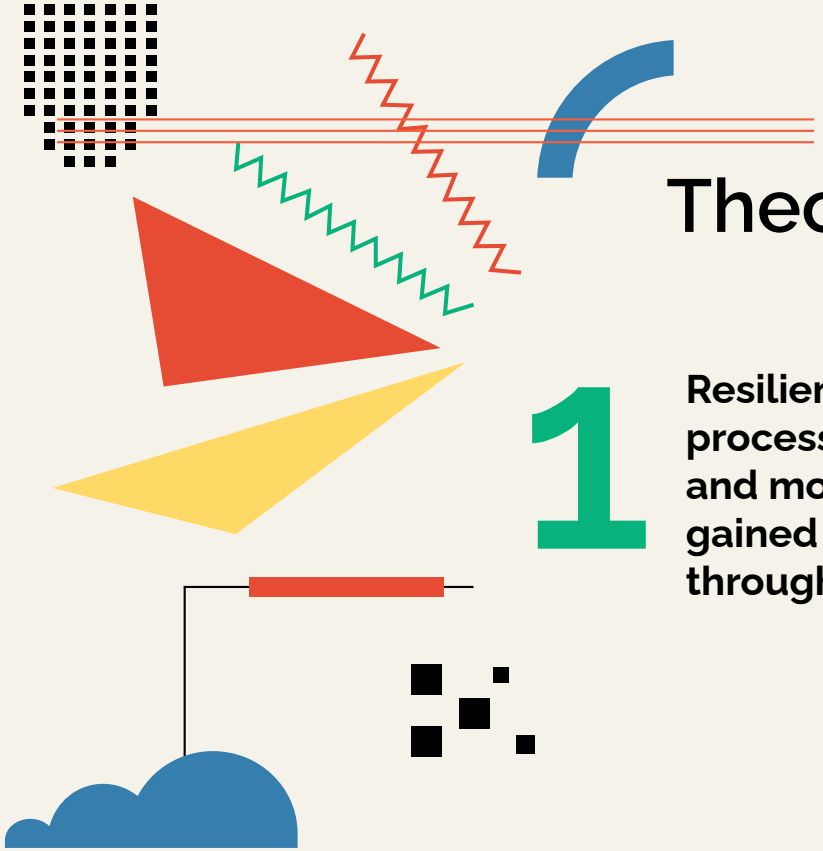
Sample Interview Questions

- How do you define resilience?
- How does resilience apply to your daily life in sports?
- Can resilience be applied in other areas of your life besides sports?
- How has being resilient changed your outlook on life?
- Looking back in retrospect, tell us about some small steps in a recovery/challenge that helped you to define your own resiliency. share story beforehand (prefaced by talk about the injury)
- How did your resilience in the past impact the way you work now?

Interview Population

- 15 Collegiate Athletes
- Various age groups: Freshman - Seniors
- Multiple Sports:
  - Soccer
  - Basketball
  - Field Hockey
  - Track and Field





Theory Breakdown

1

Resiliency needs a process to follow and momentum is gained by working through this process

2

Optimism is an essential element of resiliency

3

Once you are resilient in one area you can translate it into other areas of your life

Analysis of Interviews

Theory 1

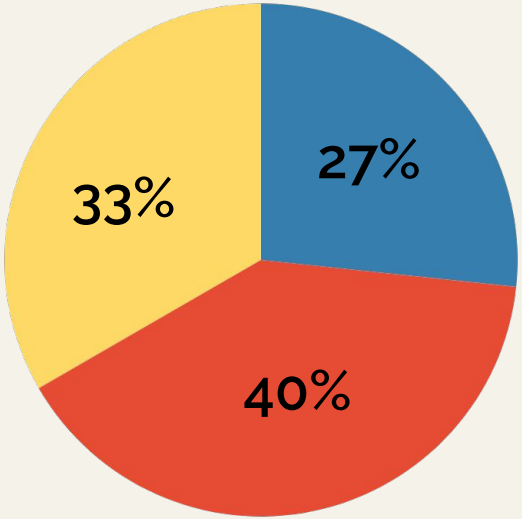
4 interviews out of 15

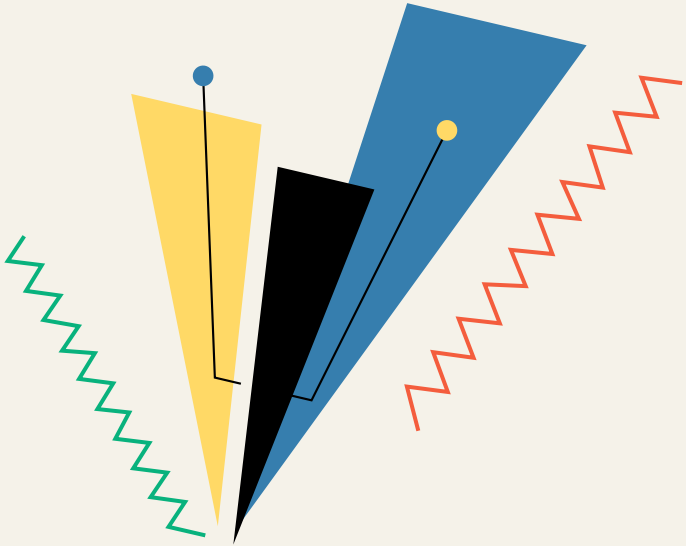
Theory 2

6 interviews out of 15

Theory 3

5 interviews out of 15





1

Resiliency needs a process to follow and momentum is gained by working through this process

What Athletes Think

- Connor Yetman - torn Achilles
  - Expressed a sense of helplessness when looking at his recovery process
  - Explained breakthrough came as he got his leg out of the boot that he had been in and could walk around freely and without assistance
  - How it might have affected his sense of resilience: **“It felt like a boost in morale for me”** and that, **“it reignited my motivation.”**

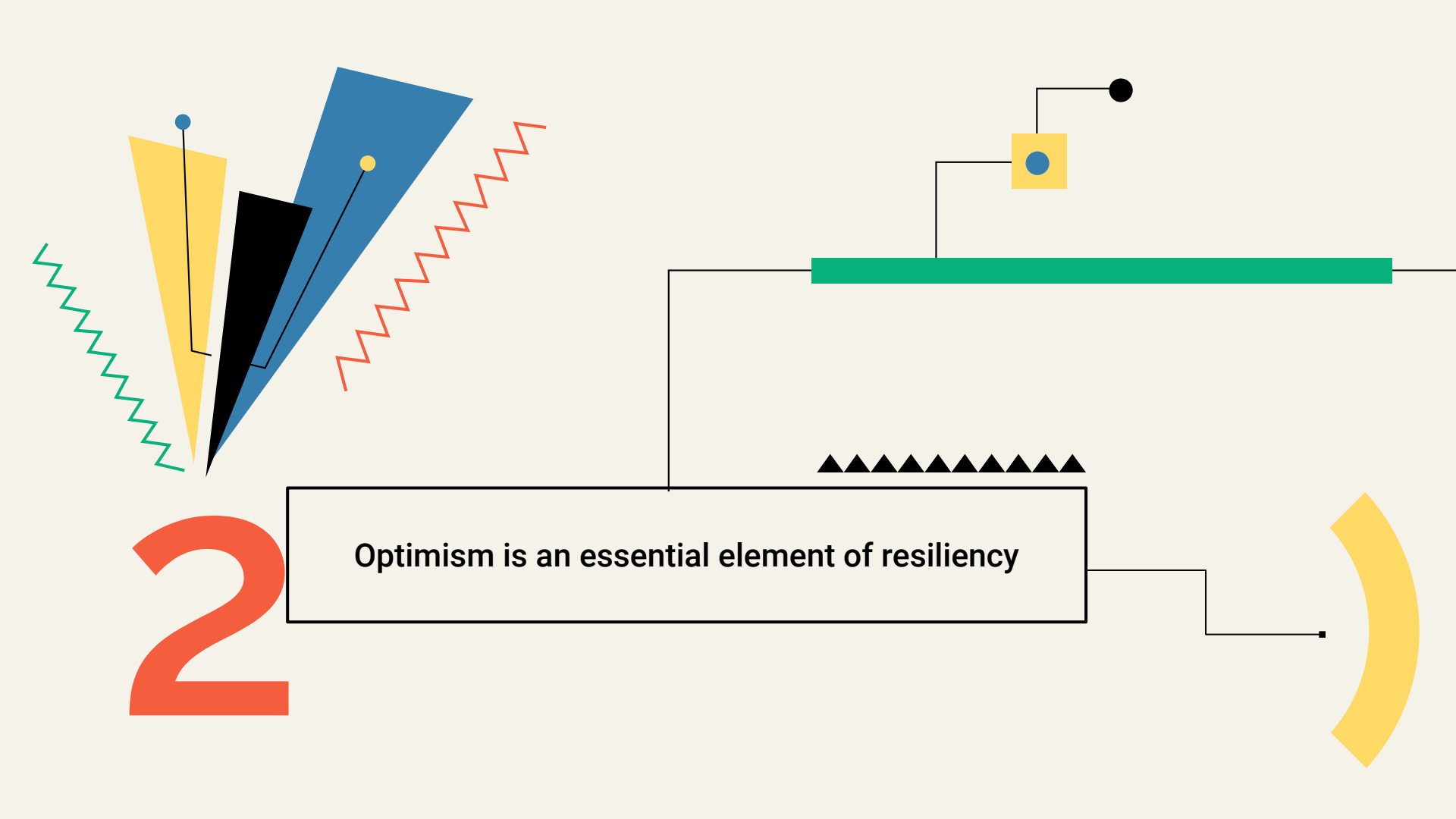
What Athletes Think

- Mel Poulos - torn ACL
  - When first heard it was a torn ACL she couldn't even comprehend the amount of time and work that she would have to put in to return to the soccer field
  - This immediate separation from her sport was overwhelming and anxious making
  - Others described the impacts of this 'crisis' as **challenging to their self-identity**, **detrimental to their self-confidence**, and that it even **extinguished motivation**

Open Discussion

- What do we think about this theory?
- Agree? Disagree?
- How does it relate to our lives as athletes?

Resiliency needs a process to follow and momentum is gained by working through this process


2
Optimism is an essential element of resiliency

What Athletes Think

- Maleah Hess - Field Hockey
  - Talked about how her coach in high school taught his players how to respond to different challenges that arose on the field
  - Encourage **“positivity”** whilst also maintaining an ability to **“focus on the present"**
  - Things that will help **“get the team going.”**

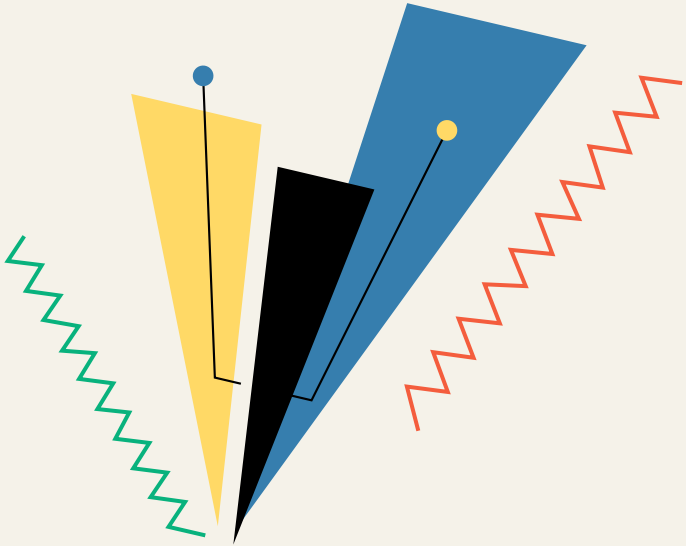
What Athletes Think

- Tommy McGuire - Men’s Basketball
  - Coach Hopkins (Basketball Coach) writes on white board in the locker room before each game the quote, **“DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING.”**
  - “This isn’t a message that comes with connotations of error but is more of a call to the player to not only **be aware of what is happening in the game** but to **move past it** with the mindset that **there will be another opportunity**”

Open Discussion

- What do we think about this theory?
- Agree? Disagree?
- How does it relate to our lives as athletes?

Optimism is an essential element of resiliency



3

Once you are resilient in one area you can translate it into other areas of your life

What Athletes Think

- Athlete A (wishes not to be named in reference to this story)
  - Shared how when they were younger the passing of their dad was, and continues to be, an incredibly difficult thing to overcome
  - To this day when this athlete faces difficulties, and they think back to working through their loss of their dad and how if they were able to do that then they can do anything

What Athletes Think

- Other key quotes:
  - Noam Davidov - Men's Soccer: "It has taught me not to give up no matter what. **In my job now**, I have tasks that are **extremely difficult** or that I don't know how to do, and instead of giving up **I push through to become better**."
  - Tarin Morris - Men's Soccer: "It has made me realize that if I mess up or if I have a bad day **I can always bounce back** the next and **find something better in it**."

Open Discussion

- What do we think about this theory?
- Agree? Disagree?
- How does it relate to our lives as athletes?

Once you are resilient in one area you can translate it into other areas of your life

Conclusion

- Keys to resilience:
  - breaking down of larger challenges into manageable step-by-step processes
  - building of a sense of momentum
  - optimistic outlook on the future while also being firmly realistic about the situation
  - resiliency can become a transferable skill that is utilized in other areas of one's life

- Presenting findings to Athletic Director and “Head in the Game”
  - What can our athletes take from this?
  - Physically? Mentally?