

TOP TIP #5

When Anxiety arrives, it takes Joy away. (Inside Out 2)

It is not uncommon for any performers – sport, music, dance, firefighting and so on – to feel anxious or stressed. Research with various sports officials has also identified number of reasons for stress – most notably lack of experience, lack of confidence, when our own child is about to swim, or when officiating a high-level meet with a lot at stake. Among interscholastic baseball, basketball, and football officials, the biggest cause of stress was “making a bad call.”

Typically, anxiety and stress will impact officiating performance in few pertinent ways: lack concentration and/or focus, hesitation in making calls, inconsistencies in starter commands, or shift in rhythm and routines on the pool deck. And, most notably, anxiety and stress take away the excitement of officiating!

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

Anxiety: An emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure, sweaty palms, and increased heartrate.

Stress: A state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. (World Health Organization, 2022)



Image by Pixar.

Critical Questions:

1. How does anxiety and stress affect me?
2. How do I typically cope with stressful situations?
Are my coping strategies healthy? Or harmful?
3. What gives me joy?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The feelings of anxiety/stress and excitement are physiologically almost the same. Both increase heart rate, create feelings of butterflies in your stomach, and increase bodily tension. Physiologically, your body is readying itself for action. Psychologically they are different – as excitement is connected to the emotion of joy, and anxiety is connected to fear.