

NAVIAIR



Title

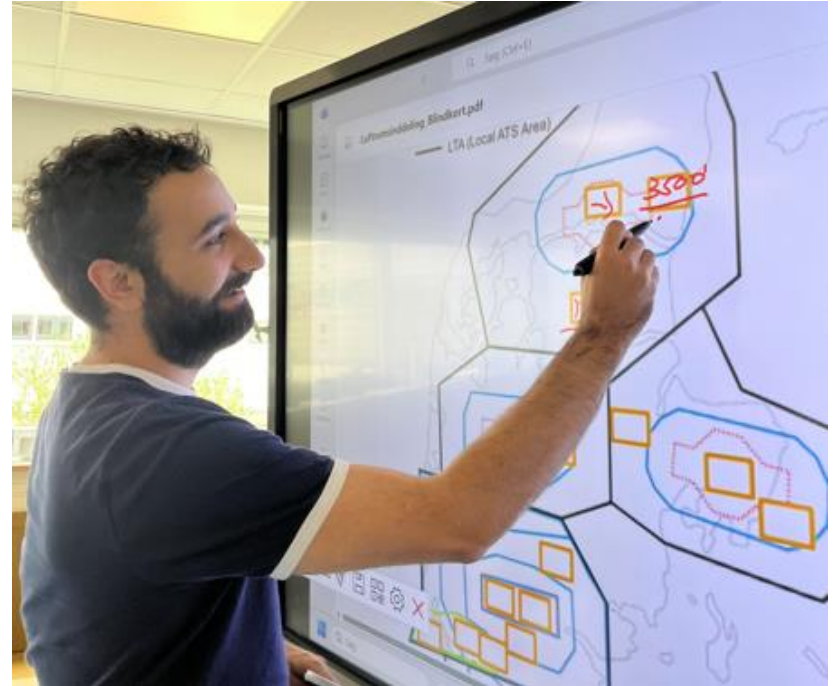


How to use sports psychology tools from elite sports to improve performance and mental health for ATCO students

- what, why and how?

Key takeaways

- Generation Z is less resilient
- Generation Z demands focus on mental health and work-life balance
- Sports psychology tools are useful
- Foster greater openness about mental health in general
- Example of exercise



Speaker Profile

Christina Nordentoft



- Training Specialist at Naviar (ANSP) Denmark
- Certified Mental Strength Trainer and Coach
- High School Teacher
- Soccer Coach and Mental Strength Development Trainer (Ice Hockey Team)

What are we doing?

Mental Strength Development Training

- Since August 2024
- For all our ATCO students
- We train them in groups (8-10 students)
- Each student attends 9-10 sessions

Coaching sessions

- Individual coaching sessions
- Follow-up on the phase report meetings
- Every 3.rd. week

Who is Generation Z ?

Refers to individuals born between 1995 and 2012. Members of Gen Z are less resilient to challenges than their older peers. The psychological resilience of young people decreases over the years

Takács et.al. (2021). Generation Z and stress. *Frontiers in Psychology*

Why are we doing it?



New generation – Gen Z



Provide them with tools



Improve our passing rate



Cultural shift

How are we doing it?

- Training sessions are conducted by a coach with no ATCO background
- Positive feedback



"My new set of tools for developing mental strength helps me handle my tasks better"

"She asks questions free from professional assumptions, prompting me to reflect deeply"

"Especially the "clarifying values – exercise" helped me to feel more clear-minded and calm during training"

Training Environment



- Comparable to elite sports environment
- High-performance demands
- Mental pressure
- Mental strength is needed

Definition

What is mental strength?

The ability to act in a way that is consistent with your values (and gameplan), even when you are under pressure and face difficult thoughts and emotions

What mental strength is not?

Acting based on emotions

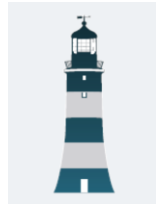
Henriksen and Hansen (2016) Praester under praes

Example

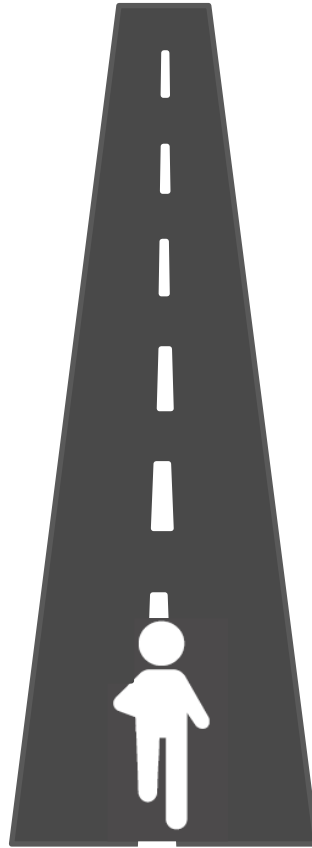
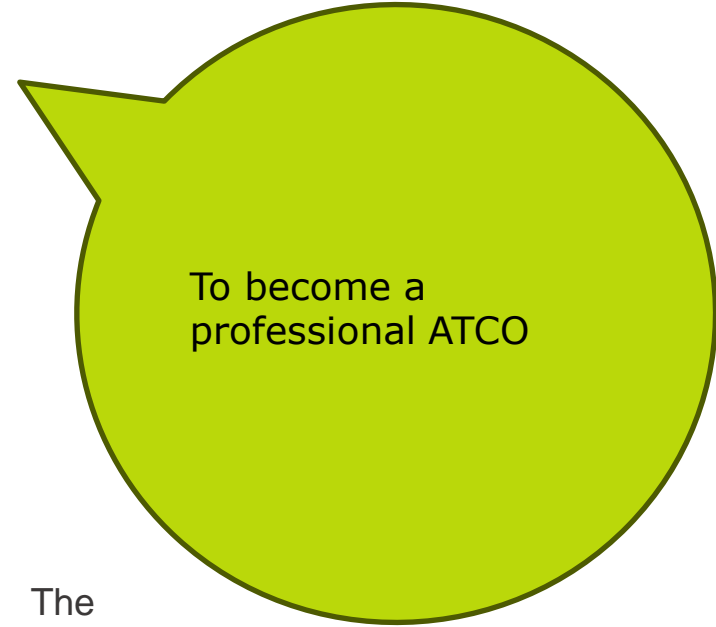
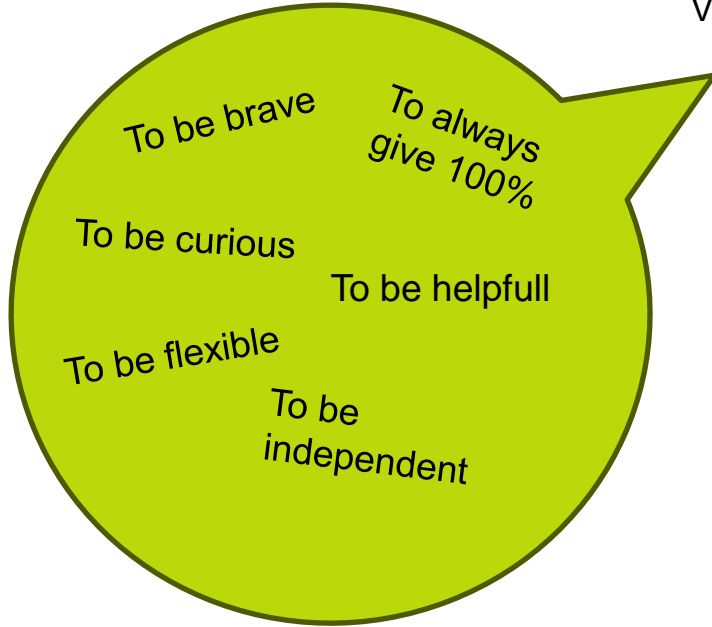
Mental strength development training step 1:

Define your values and your mission...

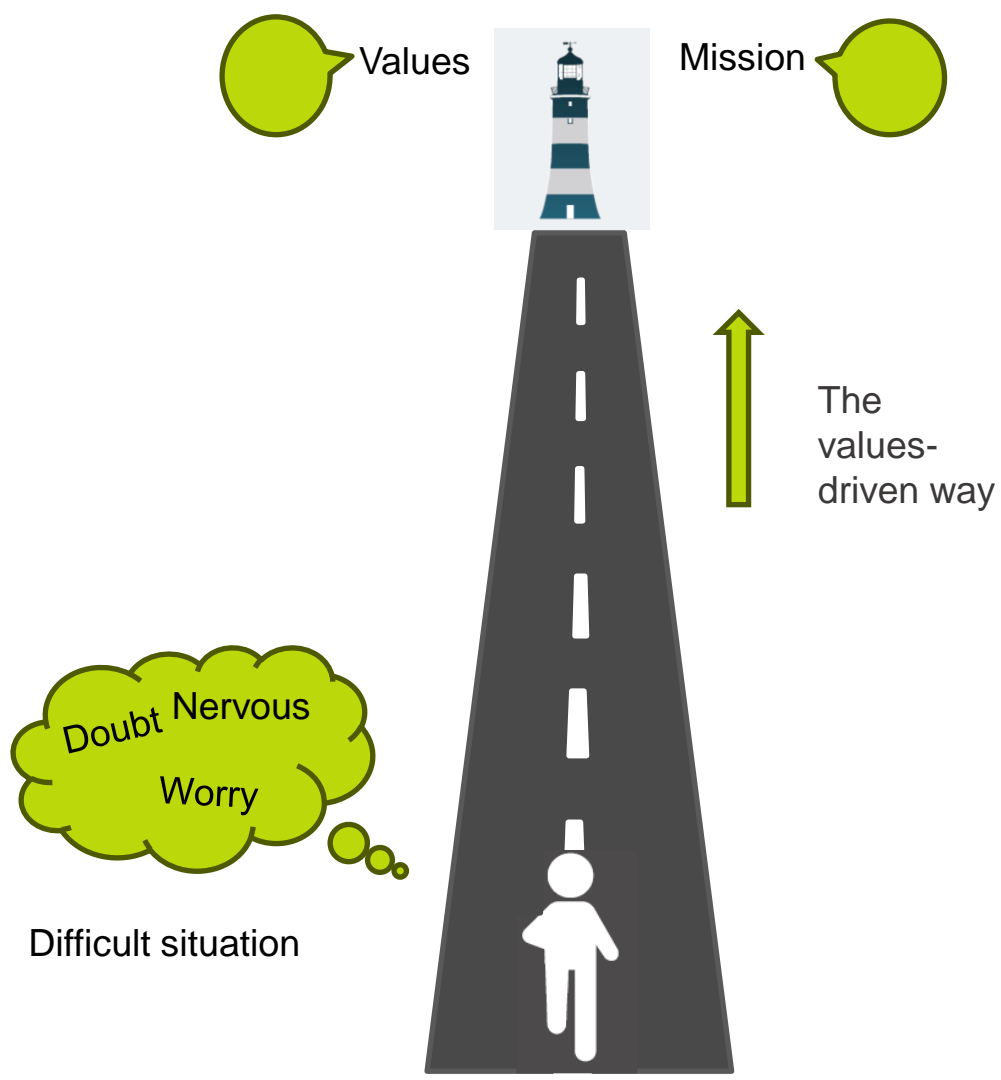
Values

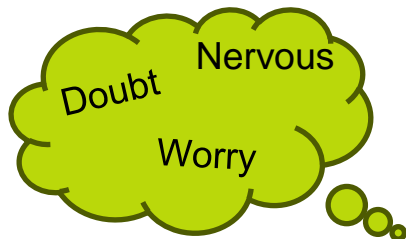


Mission

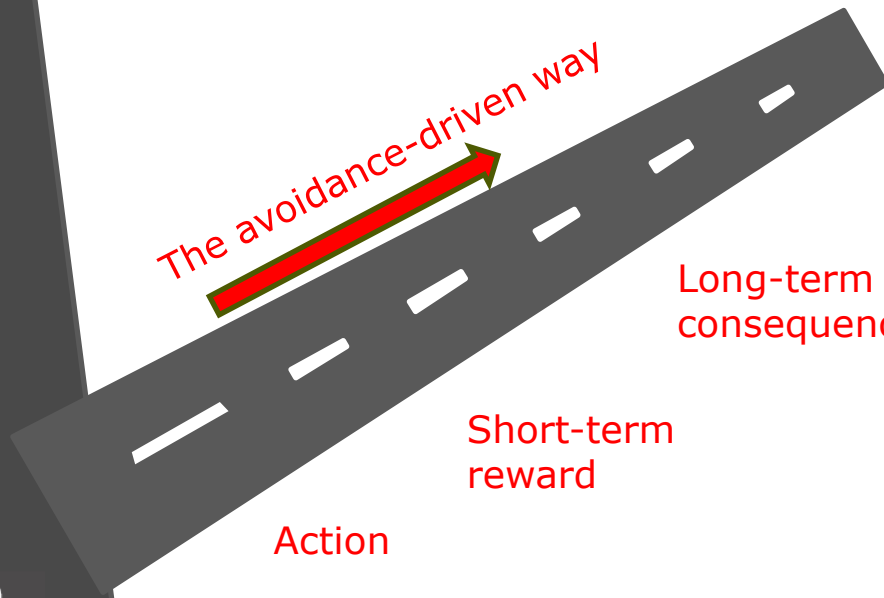
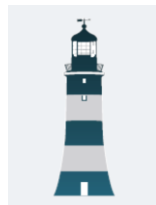


The values-driven way





Difficult situation

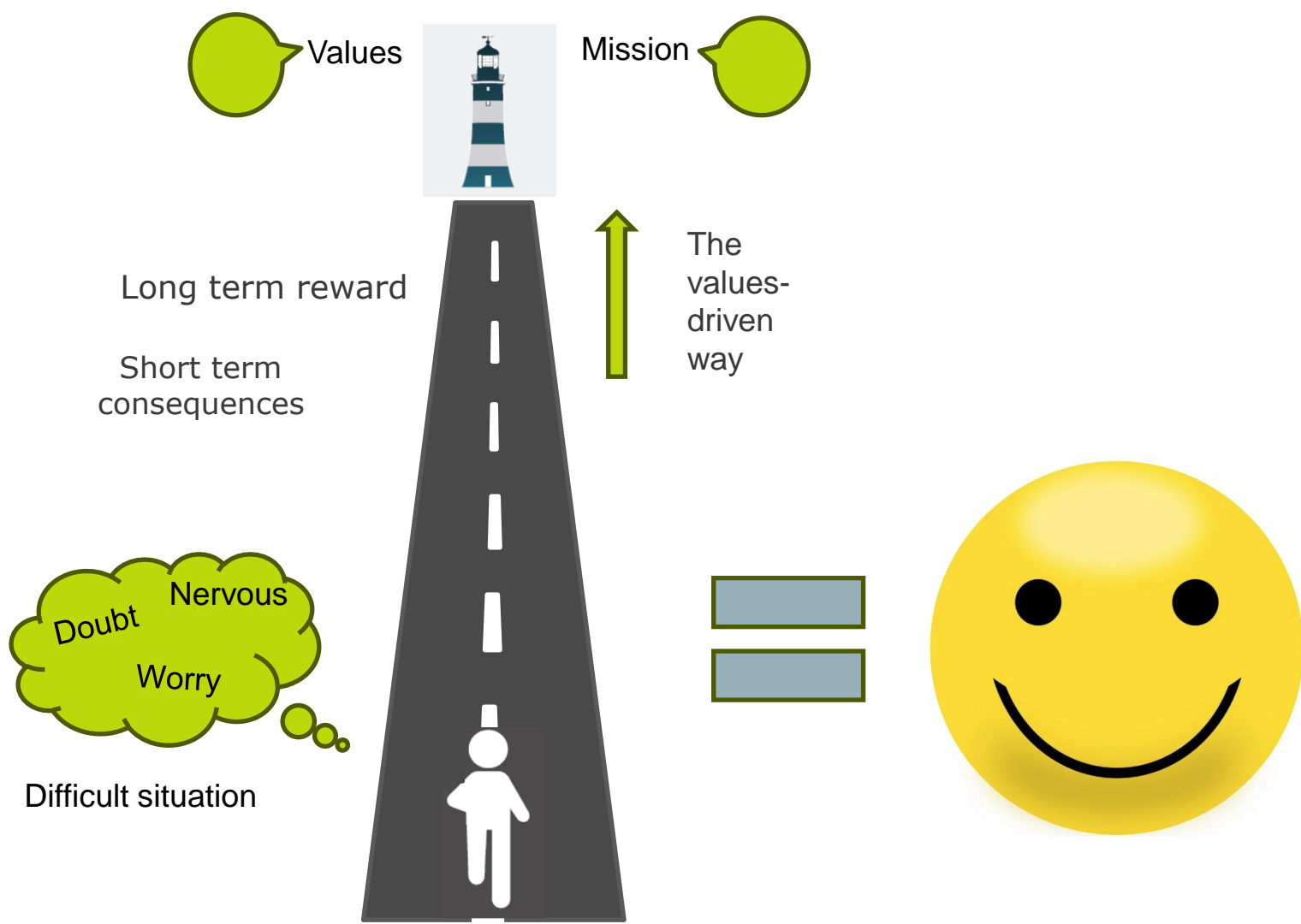


The avoidance-driven way

Action

Short-term
reward

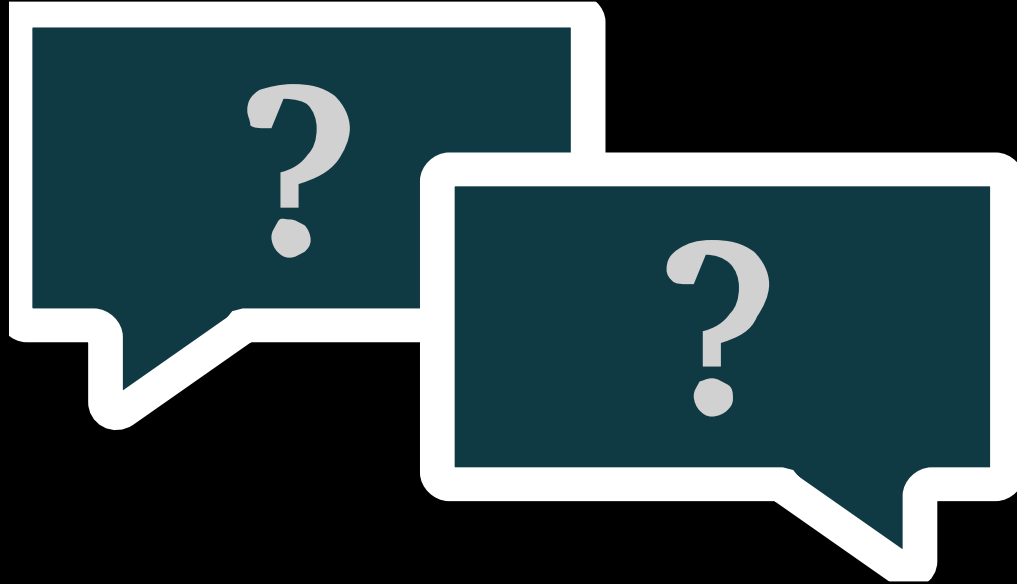
Long-term
consequences



Next steps – more tools...

- Attention to the present moment – Mindfulness
- Diffusion strategies
- Visualization exercises
- Relaxation and breathing exercises
- Circle of concentration





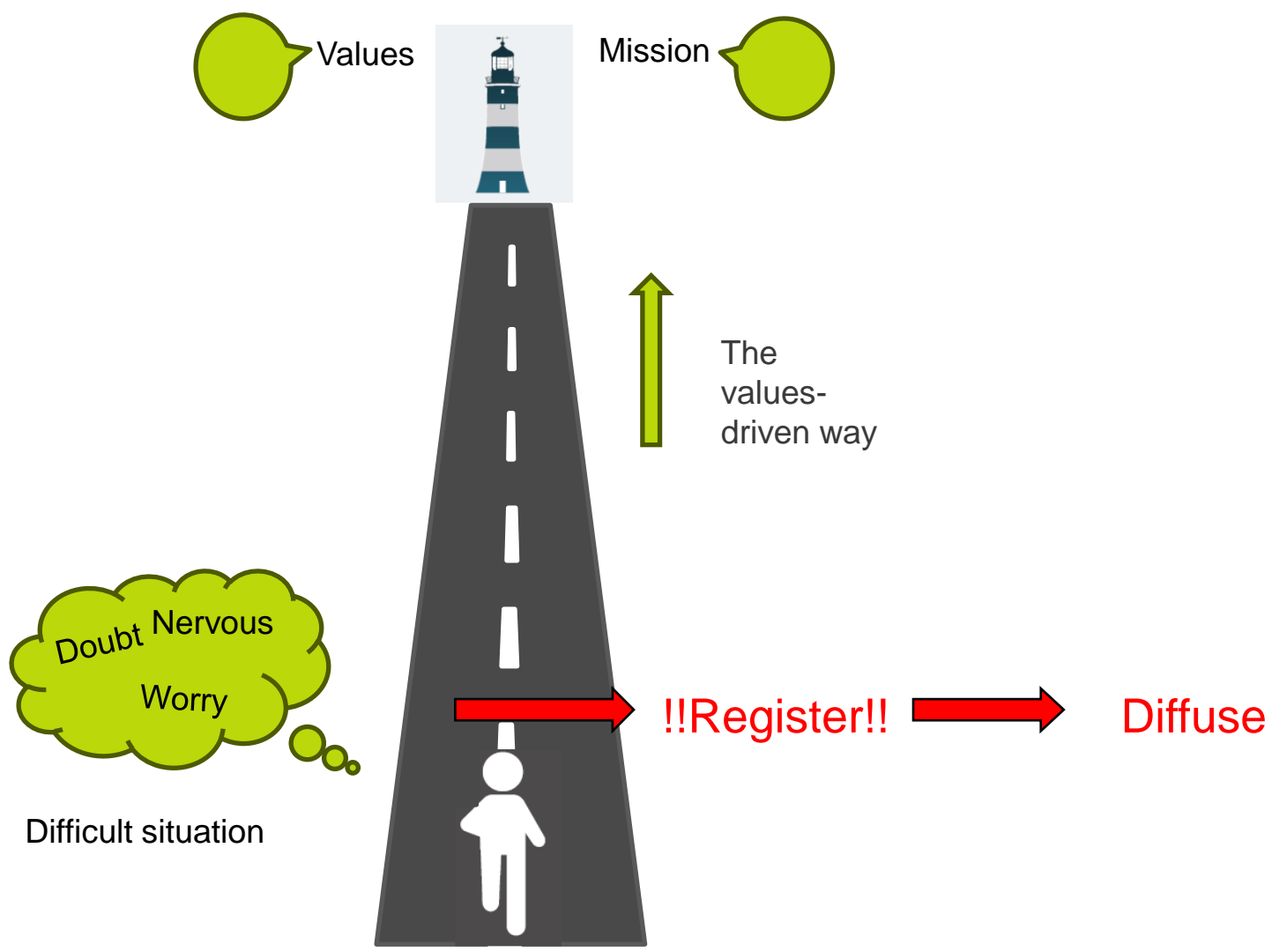
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Contact information

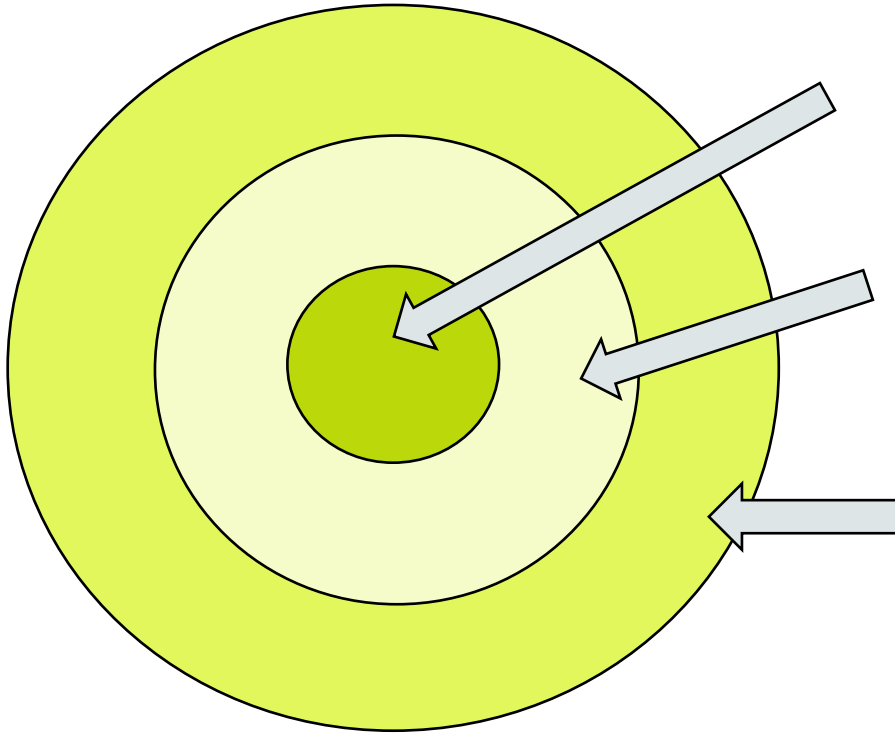
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Circle of concentration



Things I can control How I am handling my traffic, my competences, my values, my attitude etc.

Things I can influence My relation to my instructor, my relation to the people around me: Collegues, supervisor etc.

Things that are outside my control How the simulator is working, how the pilots are working etc.

The Foundation: ATC

- Our mental strength development training is based on the ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) Model
- The fundamental idea is that discomfort, nervousness, and other unpleasant feelings are unavoidable parts of the training to become an air traffic controller—and life in general
- We cannot eliminate those unpleasant feelings but we can learn to accept their presence while still performing our best during training or on the job
- The key takeaway in this model is that developing psychological flexibility should be your goal

