

AN EXAMPLE OF A SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING CURRICULUM FOR
HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS TEAMS



REMODELING SPORTS TO TRANSFORM LIVES



A Product of GetPsychedSports.org, Inc.

DEVELOPED BY:

Khari Roulhac, M.Ed.

Steve Banno, Jr. M.Ed.

Julie Wiernik, Psy.D.

Mitch Lyons, J.D.

Hank Van Putten, M.Ed.

TESTIMONIALS

"I looked over this curriculum and can truthfully say, "Good job!" I cannot believe how much work has been done. I think the content is powerful and something all school systems need!"

—KATHY DELANEY-SMITH,
retired 40-year Women's Basketball Coach, Harvard University

"This innovative and well-researched curriculum for middle and high school sports teams is unique because it addresses hate and bias early in a young athlete's life. It gives guidance on how to conduct difficult conversations, to understand one's own identity and to see our differences and commonalities by setting out multiple ways of approaching these topics.

As Nelson Mandela said, 'Sport . . . has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.' I believe this curriculum moves his vision forward by giving young people concrete examples on how to digest the complexities of living in America today and then taking action to make it better for all."

—RICHARD LAPCHICK, PH.D.,
Often called the "racial conscience of sports," Founder of Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Director at the University of Central Florida, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), President, Institute for Sport and Social Justice.

"The authors' six principles articulate a new vision for how to transform the way in which sports transforms lives. The activities show exactly how to feasibly make this happen and then the Assess for Success Scorecards ensure you will keep on track in a spirit of continuous improvement. This curriculum should be required reading for all teachers, coaches and students involved with high school sports and preparing our young people for the tests of life."

—MAURICE J. ELIAS, PH.D.,
Rutgers University, Co-Director, The Academy for SEL in Schools,
Board President, SEL4US.org

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Khari Roulhac, a Boston native and President of GetPsychedSports.org, has over two decades of experience in athletics and educational leadership. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Social Emotional Learning Alliance of Massachusetts (SEL4MA) and contributed to reshaping the mission of athletics in Boston Public Schools to include social emotional learning.

Steve Banno, Jr. is an award-winning high school educator and author of *Teaching What Matters: Activating Happiness, Kindness and Altruism*, (2022). Steve also works as an educational consultant, presenter, and curriculum developer empowering adolescents, adults, and organizations to proliferate well-being, benevolence, and kindness in their professional and personal lives.

Julie L. Wiernik is a Licensed Clinical Sport and Performance Psychologist and owner of the Texas Center for Sport Psychology in San Antonio, Texas. She trains all levels of athletes on the mental aspects of sport and helps them to improve their mental health.

Mitch Lyons is a retired attorney, veteran basketball coach, and founder of the Social Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts, as well as GetPsychedSports.org. For over twenty years, he has worked on the issues within educational athletics, attempting to convince public high schools that athletics should be taught based on the 21st century sciences of achievement.

Hank Van Putten is a retired middle school principal, anti-racist educator, speaker and author. His TEDx TALK, "When it comes to racism, are you a non or an anti?" has been widely viewed and is recognized for its different categorical definitions of racism and the perspectives they come from.

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PROLOGUE

Students in the U.S. spend about 1,000 hours in school each year (not counting extracurricular activities and before-school, after-school, and summer programs.) This time amounts to 15% of students' waking lives.

In 2019, about 57% of high school students played on at least one school or community sports team during the course of that year. Extracurricular activities are associated with a range of positive outcomes for children and adolescents including higher academic performance, more positive attitudes toward school and fostering higher academic aspirations.¹

Research² demonstrates that social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies can be taught, modeled, and practiced and lead to positive student experiences,³ better management of stress and emotions, positive learning outcomes, and long-term success in careers.

The purpose of coaching extends beyond wins and losses. A good coach realizes that they are not merely coaching a sport. They are developing individuals to succeed in life. A great coach provides a positive, safe, caring, supportive, and nurturing environment where all children feel like they belong.⁴ As John Wooden, legendary basketball coach, said, *"A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life."*

Sport is a great way for young people to feel connected, included, motivated, empowered, and respected. Athletics provides an opportunity for students from different identity groups and backgrounds to come together, share their commitment to the sport, and express their respect and appreciation for each other.

Sports provide countless learning opportunities for personal development. Sport can teach how to:

- Work towards common goals as a team and individually.
- Develop leadership skills
- Enact Fair play and doing the right thing
- Make lasting friendships
- Create community
- Develop resiliency
- Focus on the present
- Manage stress and pressure
- Focus on individual strengths and abilities
- Trust in the process more than any outcome
- Plan accordingly, quickly assessing situations to adapt and adjust when necessary
- Improve concentration
- Problem-solve

This is how we define the purpose of sports. This is the lens for understanding the power sport has to make an impact in communities and to remake athletics to transform the lives of youth.

A curriculum is the written, clearly articulated plan for how learning develops over time. This curriculum provides a blueprint for how students and coaches can learn and develop by integrating social and emotional principles. These principles reflect science-based skills found in sport psychology, social-emotional learning research, and positive psychology. Each of the following principles provide suggested practices, research, and resources for integrating social and emotional competencies in any team setting. The curriculum doesn't have to be followed in order.

HOW MIGHT YOU USE THIS CURRICULUM?

This curriculum is designed to be transparent, read by coaches, athletic directors, parents, and students. The curriculum doesn't have to be followed in order. Ideally, students and coaches should read the document together, identifying ideas, practices, and scientific principles that can benefit everyone.

As a student, re-read the curriculum and identify practices, research, and ideas you would like to integrate and explore. Playing in a student-centered environment will help you realize that you can be the driver, and not simply a passenger, of your development as an athlete and individual.

As a coach, develop a practice plan with **athletic objectives** and integrate some or all of these six core principles as additional objectives. For example, you might add how to learn how to focus as part of a broadened practice plan. If you feel like you don't have the time, remember what best-selling author James Clear wrote, *"The myth is that there isn't enough time. There is plenty of time. There isn't enough focus with the time you have. You win by directing your attention toward better things."* Time can be found in the locker room before practices, during stretching, breaks, while practicing, after practice, and anytime you talk with them.

Playing a sport alone does not transform lives. However, sports can positively affect many aspects of adolescent development. As students learn the skills to play a sport, they should also learn how to maintain a positive culture; promote anti-racism, anti-misogyny, and anti-homophobia; learn how to improve their focus and concentration; maximize their effort and increase motivation; learn how to manage stress, anxiety and pressure; and lastly, commit to a process to achieve meaningful goals.

Taking these skills and applying them outside of athletics is what every good coach strives to do. While it is up to the student to harness the power of sport into their lives, the most important factor determining whether this will happen effectively is the quality of the coaching.⁵

There is no need to put all of these skills in practice at once. Starting with the skill of creating a positive environment, even if for an entire season, will make the other skills more easily understood and embraced. Teams should progress at their own pace. These tips and learning strategies should be looked at as examples of what might be done. Nothing contained herein is THE ANSWER, but are suggestions. This curriculum is offered for you to try, adapt, and integrate piecemeal by both students and coaches.

This curriculum is also not a panacea for the ills seen in school sports today. This free curriculum is our particular offering to begin a conversation about the benefits of including the knowledge gained from decades of research in teaching adolescents how to achieve their best selves in any endeavor.

WHAT IS ABUSIVE COACHING?

Abusive coaching in sports can take many forms. Whether it's physical, emotional, verbal or sexual, it causes serious emotional scarring that can last a lifetime. It steals children's confidence at a stage in their lives when they need it the most. It can cause long-lasting anxiety and stress, among other problems. Abuse almost always involves a power imbalance between coach and player. This curriculum guide is meant for both coaches and students so they can recognize abusive behavior and what actions to take against it.

Abusive coaching is not about crossing the line between "tough love" coaching and abuse, but whether "tough love" is the correct methodology at all, especially since it has been shown that people play better in safe and supportive environments.

In a survey of 370 elite and club athletes, 31% of female athletes and 21% of male athletes indicated that they have experienced sexual abuse before they were 18. Research shows that athletes experience abuse in sports, with rates ranging from 38% to 72% for psychological abuse, 9% to 30% for sexual abuse, and 11 to 21% for physical abuse.⁶

According to The United States Center for SafeSport, studies show that between 40% to 50% of athletes have experienced some form of abuse.⁷ These incidents increase as athletes advance into higher levels of competition.⁸

Emotional abuse is the most widespread and is underreported. Emotional abuse involves deliberate, prolonged, and repeated non-contact behaviors that occur in unbalanced relationships of power such as a coach and athlete.⁹

Some examples of emotional abuse include the following:

- Name calling
- Promoting disordered eating
- Belittling
- Threatening
- Humiliating
- Scapegoating
- Ignoring
- Rejecting
- Bullying
- Taunting
- Shunning
- Isolating
- Gaslighting
- Insulting
- Quick oscillation between praise and criticism
- Refusing to give corrections to an athlete
- Shouting

Sadly, these forms of abuse are accepted coaching practices even though they are proven to be less effective in improving performance. Negative cultures can emanate from the coach or the players, but if it is the players, the coach bears the responsibilities to check in regularly with athletes (especially the younger ones) and to put a stop to that culture.

As a coach, it is important to have high standards, teach resilience, and build toughness through encouragement while at the same time, providing challenging situations for students to train and improve their performance. Coaching is a challenging job and students should appreciate its difficulties. However, there are ethical boundaries that coaches **must** maintain. There is no excuse for techniques and practices that are abusive.

PREVENTION

The whole school should be put on notice that there is zero tolerance for abusive conduct or toxic cultures. This can be accomplished by signage in the halls of the school, locker room, and the gymnasium, but also through mail to parents. The signage should include a clear path for victims including who should be contacted, where they are located in the school and that they will be listened to and respected. If nothing is done, then victims should have a clear indication as to who would be the next person to address. Signage shows potential perpetrators that the school is quite serious about reporting such incidents.

No one should stay on a team where abusive behavior is the norm. No one player should be asked to keep a secret by a coach. Everyone should recognize or understand what “grooming” is.¹⁰

Any adult who witnesses abusive behavior by another adult or child should report the behavior to the school administration, as per many state laws.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU NOTICE, ARE TOLD ABOUT, OR EXPERIENCE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR:

- Depending on your state, coaches may be mandated reporters of any signs of abuse, harassment, and mental health concerns. In those states, any adult who is in regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to law enforcement.
- Report any behavior that is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually abusive **immediately** to at least two trusted adults. A trusted adult could be a parent, guardian, a teacher, a mentor, guidance counselor, school psychologist, an adult outside of a school setting, an athletic director, and/or another coach. Be as specific as possible to help others identify and stop the behaviors in question. Ask them to intervene on your behalf.
- Call local law (911) enforcement immediately in cases of child abuse or sexual misconduct (regardless of the age of the parties involved).
- Report any information to the Courage First Athlete Helpline by texting or calling: 888-279-1026. Specialized sports crisis counselors are available Mon-Fri, 12pm-8pm PST. Calls outside of business hours are routed to the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline available 24/7. The Courage First Athlete Helpline is there to help support student athletes every step of the way.
- Also consider reporting information to the U.S. Center for SafeSport online (<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/>) or call 720-531-0340. If you need crisis intervention, referrals, or emotional support at any time, contact the 24-hour SafeSport Helpline at 866-200-0796.
- Consider sharing your story; find resources and support by visiting EndAbusiveCoaching.org
- Because child abuse reporting laws vary from state to state, a federal law was enacted which established a nationwide standard duty to report suspected child abuse. The *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Act of 2017* or *Safe Sports Act* has created nationwide policies and procedures to protect amateur and young athletes from abuse by authority figures like coaches. These policies include procedures like mandatory reporting, oversight, training and proactive child abuse prevention.
- Find allies who have witnessed this behavior to back up your claims.

PRINCIPLE

1



PEOPLE PERFORM BETTER IN A POSITIVE, SAFE, AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

"We're relaxed. We have fun. It's energetic. We don't have coaches out there screaming at people. That's not allowed on our field. It's about having energy and positivity and the belief that no matter what happens on one snap, the next snap's the next best one you can have . . . I think guys come in, they believe in it, and they appreciate that opportunity to be in an environment where they're encouraged to just be themselves."

**—ANDREW WHITWORTH, SUPER BOWL
CHAMPION, L.A. RAMS**



Everyone wants to win. That is a given in competitive sports. At every level of team and individual sport, there are teams that thrive by cultivating a positive and unified team culture. From seven-time NBA champions like the Golden State Warriors to the Navarro College Bulldogs, the competitive cheerleading team showcased in the Netflix documentary *Cheer*, teams must build trust between coaches and teammates to thrive. Working hard, being inclusive of everyone, setting high but realistic standards, and having fun creates a massive competitive advantage.

A positive team culture is the foundation for all successful teams. When adolescents feel safe, supported, engaged, accepted, seen and cared for, they are more likely to learn and perform¹¹ to the best of their ability.

THE PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: A positive team culture is fundamental to every action that you take. A positive environment directly influences how you think, behave, and perform. People not only perform better, but they learn faster¹² in positive settings.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Scared brains don't learn. Scared brains don't lead to optimal performance. We can become overwhelmed when confronted with anger, aggression, anxiety, and fear. Instead of focusing on your performance, your energy and attention goes to protecting you from the perceived threat or danger. Conversely, positivity broadens¹³ our thinking and actions. Positive attitudes actually do make our brains work better.¹⁴

Decades of research show that experiences of positive emotions lead individuals to engage with their environments and partake in activities in meaningful ways. Positivity broadens awareness and then builds¹⁵ various personal, psychological, intellectual, and physical resources that help your brain function optimally or at peak capacity. Thoughts, actions, awareness, and ideas expand, building new and better ways¹⁶ to live,¹⁷ work, and play.

Coachs' Role: The coach's primary purpose in teaching this principle is to develop students' long-term well-being by fostering the following experiences:

- Teaching them explicitly HOW TO create positive and inclusive environments for all.
- Model behavior that supports a positive environment.
- Admit when there are inevitable failures.

Students' Role: The students' primary purpose in athletics is to understand, develop, and practice the skills that will allow them to create a positive environment on their team and then extend these lessons into other areas of their lives: (1) In their community; (2) Within oneself; (3) At home; and (4) Possibly at work. These are great skills to possess in any setting where people are expected to work collaboratively.

Athletic Directors' Role: Athletic directors set standards, fortify values, and lead by example. An athletic director helps to create environments across all teams with the unified expectation of instilling a positive culture that inspires all participants. Visit practices and have conversations with students and coaches to ensure that the goal of creating positive learning experiences is being met. If not, take corrective action. The athletic director is the head of a school department that teaches skills derived from sport psychology and social and emotional learning. Look for the following elements of a positive team culture:

- A positive, safe and respectful team culture is prioritized, free of bullying, angry yelling and harassment;
- A place where coaches and students have a relationship where smiling and laughing are commonplace;
- A team that warmly welcomes new members with positive rituals that promote bonding;
- A model for inclusive practices that not only respects differences but where players are inquisitive of each other's backgrounds and feelings. It's a setting where the comfort level is so high that conversations come freely among all team members;
- An environment that exhibits a zero-tolerance policy for racism, sexism, misogyny and homophobia;
- A community that rewards hard work, resiliency and where players accept constructive criticism as a way to improve;
- A setting where progress is made daily, thereby building confidence in one's ability to get better;
- A venue where students actively participate in decision-making and coaches encourage students to give them feedback;
- A positive environment isn't one that promotes toxic positivity, a belief that no matter how difficult or frustrating a situation is, people should maintain a positive mindset. There shouldn't be pressure to display positive emotions suppressing any negative emotions, feelings, reactions, or experiences. Negative emotions, like positive emotions, need to be felt and dealt with openly and honestly to achieve acceptance and greater psychological well-being.
- And, at the end of the year, players and coaches can look back with satisfaction on how they grew as people and athletes.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR BUILDING A POSITIVE, SAFE, AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

PRACTICE

1

Develop Team Norms To Build a Successful Team

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Create a team charter.

Time:
30 minutes
to 1 hour

Create a team charter of shared norms.

STEP 1: Make a list of positive norms. Divide students into groups and give each student a notecard. On the notecard everyone should brainstorm expectations, acceptable behaviors, and boundaries for individuals and the team. There are a number of standard formal norms that every athlete in every sport needs to follow in order to be successful. **Here is a list of questions to help the brainstorming process:**





- What are the goals for the season?
- What might a successful season look like after it has ended?
- What are factors that will drive the team forward, especially during difficult times?
- How will you manage conflict?
- What are the roles for every member of the team?
- What are the expectations and norms of behavior for every member of the team?
- What quotes, sayings, or mission statements will guide you?

STEP 2: Make a big list of all brainstormed norms. Vote on the ones that should guide your team charter.

STEP 3: Create a team charter or list of team norms with students writing them out on a big poster board. Everyone from the team should be involved in this process of creating the charter so that a sense of ownership and pride is felt in the finished product.

STEP 4: Create the charter on a large poster board with every team member's signature as a sign of their commitment. This provides a great visual reminder of how and why your team was formed. Keep it visible for the team. Make sure coaches sign the charter, too.

LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip 	<p>A team culture is more than what you say. It is the result of what you do. A culture is determined by everyone, not just one person. A team culture is developed by sharing common values and then living by those values every day. A culture establishes norms of acceptable behavior. The clearer the norms, the more likely everyone will follow them. Students must take primary responsibility¹⁸ for both creating a positive culture and should enforce the norms.¹⁹ Unless norms are embraced by each team member,²⁰ the norms will not affect behavior. When team members jointly develop and implement norms, it shifts some of the responsibility for a positive team environment from adults to the students.</p>
Learning Tip 	<p>Don't let norms be controlled by the few. Creating team norms and values can be unfairly shaped by one, or a few, team members. When the process is dominated by a small number of team members, it can make other members of the team feel marginalized and powerless. Students who partner in composing norms are more likely to experience a level of ownership and engage in mutually respectful relationships.</p>
Learning Tip 	<p>Revisit and maintain these values continuously. How is your team charter holding up? How is your team culture? Check in regularly with players and the team. Ask, "how well are the norms we established creating a positive team culture?"</p>
Learning Tip 	<p>You know your norms and team charter is working when there is cohesion and trust. When a coach and team align their efforts and focus on achieving a common goal, progress is achieved and a team becomes unified.</p>

PRACTICE 2

Build More Than a Team, Build Positive Relationships

The quality of the coach to student relationship and student to student relationships does affect performance.²¹ Research at every level of sport shows that if you sacrifice the relationships on the team, it will negatively affect the level of play.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Practice active listening.	<p>Practice active listening.²² Effective communication consists of both speaking and listening. Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding. There is a difference between hearing and listening. Active listening allows you to connect effectively with other people. Communication is also key for better team collaboration and cooperation. Use this practice throughout the season.</p>
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WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Practice active listening. <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>How to do it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain eye contact; focusing on the other person. Leaning forward a little or nod to affirm. Sit or stand still. Let the other person finish what he, she, or they are saying without interruption. Create space before replying or interrupting, giving a person time to respond. ▪ Restate what someone says. Reflect what someone is feeling. Ask open-ended questions like, "What happened? How did you feel about that?" Help clarify what is said. Get more information. Show interest by asking questions like "Can you tell me more about that?" ▪ Encourage people to elaborate on their thoughts. ▪ Use positive body language. Show that you are engaged and interested by nodding and facing the person. ▪ Show empathy. If the person expresses negative feelings, try to validate them. Consider why they feel this way and put yourself in their shoes. ▪ Avoid judgment. Understand the person's perspective. Try not to interrupt them with your own opinions while the other person speaks. ▪ Don't give advice too quickly. Allow the person to finish speaking before attempting to give advice. You want to make sure that you fully understand them. ▪ Listening may be enough. You may be tempted to fix the problem, but sometimes, someone just wants us to listen. ▪ Evaluate the conversation. After you have fully taken in what the person has said, take a moment to evaluate the conversation.
<p>Capitalize on good news.</p>	<p>Capitalize²³ and celebrate teammates' good news. When people close to us—friends, family members, significant others—tell us about positive experiences that happened to them, these moments have the potential to make us feel significantly closer to one another, depending on how we respond to them. Try to celebrate good news at least once a practice.</p>
<p>Create inclusive team games.</p>	<p>Create fun team games and plan team events which require you to come together. Develop inclusive ways to welcome new members. Incorporate this after a game or practice at least once a week. Try any of these²⁴ team-building games.</p>

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

<p>Make everyone feel like someone.</p>	<p>Take time to get to know everyone individually. Ensure that everyone feels like a somebody. Seek moments of positive connection. Positive social connection depends on having shared positive feelings or experiences, and demonstrating that you care. Implement these techniques to enhance positive connections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the beginning of the season, ask students to fill out a self-introduction. You might ask students their future goals, personal and team goals for the season, or what are athletes' interests or hobbies. ▪ Or have them finish the sentence: "A good coach _____," ▪ Or, have athletes share songs or musical artists that express information you need to know about them at this stage of their lives. (Listen to all the songs students share and ask if you identified things about them correctly.)
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LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Effective communication consists of both speaking and listening. Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding. When we pay attention to others, you show the person, or people, that they are being heard. This helps build trust and allows people to know that what is being said matters to you.</p>
<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>2</p>	<p>The people close to us need our support when things go right, not just when they go wrong. Talking about a positive event together creates a shared positive experience that can enhance overall relationship satisfaction.</p>
<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The beginning of any season is a critical time for a coach to establish rapport with students and for students to do the same with coaches. What most students remember about their school and sport experience is the connection they had with their coach and teammates, more so than any skill taught at practice. The more you understand your students, the better you can help them succeed. It is also important for coaches to be consistent and dependable. Show up early to practice and establish predictable routines. Show that you care by being there.</p>
<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Once relationships are established, you can focus more on fine-tuning team systems and tactics; accordingly, you can focus less on team dynamics in order to elevate the level of your team's performance.</p>

PRACTICE 3

Integrate Positive Messaging, Team Meetings, and Positive Communication

Communication is more than telling people information. It is about relating to people. Good and constructive communication breaks down barriers and strengthens relationships. When you communicate well, it helps eliminate misunderstandings and encourages a healthy, positive environment and culture.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Opening Circles or Team Meetings.	<p>Conduct opening circles²⁵ before and/or after practice. and/or create daily and weekly short meetings as check-ins, sharing successes, positives and concerns.</p> <p>STEP 1: Make sure you and students are present and able to listen to each other.</p> <p>STEP 2: Decide with students on a topic ahead of time.</p> <p>STEP 3: Invite students to connect with the circle of teammates by sharing stories from their own lives. Go around the circle and have each student share something.</p> <p>STEP 4: Practice active listening. Acknowledge, paraphrase, summarize, and practice empathy to what students share.</p> <p>STEP 5: Introduce information, stories, and other voices that might shed light on the topics you discuss. Look for examples of people who took action to help others. Invite students to connect to this information by sharing their thoughts, feelings, and related experiences.</p>
Check ins.	<p>Use the first and last moments of practice to check in with everyone. Ask students how they are doing. When, and if, students say “fine” ask “In what way?” Share with them how you are doing.</p>
Email families.	<p>Establish two-way communication with students’ families. The most positive environments are those where students see all the important people in their lives working together to support their goals and best interest. Send an introductory letter or email to families. Consider doing so consistently. Sample email templates can be found here,²⁶ here,²⁷ and here.²⁸ You can also include the zero-tolerance policy.</p>
Zero-Tolerance policies.	<p>Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for any adult who disrespects the team, individual students, or the sport by their behavior or comments. Emphasize that negativity and criticism from the sidelines run counter to the benefit of the team, its values, and goals. Share this information with parents. Communicate to spectators that attendance at any sporting event is a privilege and does not allow them to verbally abuse others or act obnoxiously. Emphasize what it means to be a fan, not a fanatic.</p>

WHAT COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Conflict resolution.	Don't ignore conflict. Address any issues on the team immediately and openly. Conflict resolution can be defined as the informal or formal process that two or more people use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute. Try using this resource ²⁹ for resolving any conflicts. Continue to monitor and follow up on the resolution.
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LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip 1	Coaches can help with facilitating conversations about issues that arise on the team. For the team to come together to focus on progress, a solid foundation between students has to be established. Investing time in this process early in the season helps build relationships, skills, and practices that can be drawn on throughout the season—especially if the going gets tough.
Learning Tip 2	Encourage students to be interdependent, motivated, and knowledgeable enough to take ownership in all minor conflicts that may emerge. Help students address and resolve all issues that arise among themselves. Check in with their resolution.
Learning Tip 3	Students will disagree with decisions; however, small types of dissensions or complaints must be dealt with and an acceptable resolution to the team and its norms must be made. Try using this resource. ³⁰
Learning Tip 4	When players can put aside their individual conflicts and ideals, that's when teams come together and become one. When a coach and team align their efforts and focus on reaching a common goal, progress is achieved.
Learning Tip 5	Shared meetings and constant communication allow for cohesion between students. When this happens, group harmony develops. Most importantly, team members begin to trust each other because their level of communication and collaboration allows them to let their guard down and believe in others' motives and intentions. As a result, motivation toward pursuing team goals and objectives increases.

Respond to Adversity Constructively Instead of Destructively

It is easy to be a team player or positive teammate when outcomes go your way and you receive positive feedback. Do you have the same level of emotional flexibility when things don't go your way? What happens to team norms and values when difficulties arise?

Students will behave based on what they think adults and other students endorse, especially students they admire. Students who are also sensitive to peer rejection³¹ often conform to anti-norm behaviors. Behavior is information. Bad behavior is often a desire to be seen and find acceptance.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Test your norms.

Test your team norms. With your coach and as a team, discuss appropriate ways to react in various situations. Use your norms and values as a guide. Is there consensus on how to respond? What do your norms suggest?

STEP 1: Break up into small groups.

STEP 2: Using your team norms and values as a guide, consider the following scenarios and discuss them.

STEP 3: Have each group share their responses to each of the scenarios.

Scenario #1: You receive feedback from coaches and it isn't what you want to hear. How should you respond?

Scenario #2: You lose playing time or don't get a lot of playing time. How should you respond?

Scenario #3: You receive a bad call from an official that negatively impacts the team. How should you respond?

Scenario #4: You see a parent, player, or coach saying critical things about other players, a referee, or a teammate. How should you respond?

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Always be respectful of officials, opponents, coaches, teammates and oneself. When you disrespect the game, you disrespect yourself, your teammates, your school, and your community. Blaming the officials rather than taking responsibility for poor play can lead to a negative mind state for the whole team. Directing attention on the referees' calls also means you are not focused. Treat referees with respect. One tip: Create a great environment for officials at your home games. When you host a game, you should greet them and make them feel as comfortable as possible. Here³² are other suggestions.


WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Show up for teammates.	Show up and be there for your teammates when and if they experience adversity or disappointment. After Harry Kane missed a game-tying penalty kick for England during the 2022 World Cup, Kane was devastated. While other English teammates expressed their own disappointment by holding their heads in their hands, Jude Bellingham sprinted to console Kane. After the game, teammates like Jordan Henderson stayed alongside Kane. As sports psychologist, Geir Jordet, noted: <i>“Being a teammate is about being there for the ones who need you the most.”</i>
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WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Honor the game.	Challenge the “win at all costs” mentality by emphasizing good sportsmanship. Teach students what good sportsmanship should be, which includes playing fair and not dirty. No cheating. Accept decisions by the referee. Model good sportsmanship as a coach. Students will watch what you say and do.
Lose and win well.	Teach players how to lose. To lose well does not mean enjoying losing. It means accepting a loss as part of playing sports and moving on from it. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Don’t take the results personally. Put the loss in perspective. Use losing and winning as information on how to improve.▪ Stick to your team values and norms no matter the situation, regardless of whether you’re winning or losing.▪ Discuss with students what winning and losing means to you.▪ Pay attention to how teammates support each other.▪ After a loss, ask players to come to practice with a list of ways they can improve and/or the team can improve.

LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip 	Self-control is the ability to manage inappropriate impulses. Practice staying composed and thinking clearly under pressure. We all have a motivation to protect ourselves from threats to our self-esteem. This is what psychologists call self-integrity or avoiding the dangers of embarrassment or failure.
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ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. Some examples might include:

- Writing an open-ended prompt or question on an index card and each student responds to the prompt answering in less than a minute.
- Send out an electronic focused feedback form.
- Students write a brief description of a successful experience they had.
- Students complete a long one-sentence summary.
- Students select one word to describe their experience with specific criteria and explain the word choice using specific examples.
- Students answer two questions: “What was the most important thing you learned this week?” and “What important question remains unanswered?”

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
I made being positive a personal goal during practice and games.		
Our team norms held up well this week.		
I feel connected with the team. I feel like I belong.		
I practiced being empathetic with teammates and others.		
An effort was made to make all athletes feel they are known personally.		
I feel a sense of inclusion and team cohesion.		
Good sportsmanship was displayed.		
Players, spectators, and coaches acted appropriately and consistently with our team norms.		
We won and lost well.		

PRINCIPLE

2



DEVELOPING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN SPORT

"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair."

—NELSON MANDELA



Addressing social problems has always, and will always, be intertwined with sports. Athletes have a long history of bringing about social change by helping to raise awareness and foster dialogues around issues of inequality and injustice inside and outside of sports. Given the history of racial injustice and social inequality in the United States, as well as events unfolding every day, it is incumbent on all of us to address these issues, especially as it relates to sports.

Racism, homophobia, sexism, misogyny, and other forms of hate have no place in American society. Despite broader cultural changes surrounding the visibility and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community, homophobia is present in athletics. Girls leave sport at twice the rate³³ that boys do. Demographic information continues to show³⁴ a greater representation of students in sports with diverse identities and backgrounds.

Sport is a way to instill positive community values, making sure everyone has access to the joy, fun, and health benefits that come from sport. As coaches, athletic directors, teachers, parents and students, we have a responsibility to build spaces where *all* students and adults can perform, compete, and enjoy athletics without feeling like they need to deny parts of who they are. Inclusive and equitable environments are built by working together and creating them.

If you are new to this work, you might be worried. Often people are worried that difficult conversations are unpredictable, as they fear they will make mistakes, not knowing enough to say the right words. They fear being accused of pushing a political agenda on students, or that they might not know how students, parents/guardians, and administrators might react. The good news is that you don't have to take on all of this weight at once. You begin where you are. There are many strategies you can use that can help you do the work that ensures an inclusive and equitable environment for all.

THE PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: There is an opportunity in sports to develop the capacity to care for one another deeply. It is critical to challenge structures and practices that students and adults experience that are unwelcoming, hostile, or dehumanizing. Future and current coaches, students, and athletic directors need to possess culturally relevant knowledge and skills in order to achieve equity, cultural engagement, and inclusion in sports. “Culturally relevant” means incorporating awareness, understanding, and responsiveness to the beliefs, values, customs of others, including disabilities.

New approaches³⁵ that incorporate anti-racism,³⁶ anti-sexism,³⁷ anti-homophobic³⁸ and culturally responsive practices are needed to achieve equity and inclusiveness in sport and in our society. When you commit to diversity, inclusion, and social justice, you honor the humanity of your teammates, coaches, opponents, friends, and peers. Consider the following:

- The 2019 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to experience bullying, three and a half times as likely to skip school because they feel unsafe, and four and a half times as likely to attempt suicide than non-LGBTQ youth.
- There are differences in the rates³⁹ at which black and white students are disciplined. Black students are more likely to be seen as problematic and more likely to be punished than white students for the same offense. There is consistent evidence⁴⁰ that black students’ behaviors are both perceived as more problematic and are punished more harshly compared with white students.
- More than 40% of youth⁴¹ now live in a household struggling to pay for basic expenses. It is difficult to experience inclusivity with consistency if one’s family struggles to pay bills, put food on the table, or are unable to obtain medical care when and if it is needed.
- In March 2021, Sedona Prince, a player for the University of Oregon women’s basketball team, posted a video contrasting the elaborate weightlifting equipment provided for men to the meager weights provided for the women at the start of the tournament. The video went viral and prompted an in-depth investigation into gender inequities within the NCAA. A subsequent report laid out the NCAA’s systemic sexism in which women were “less than.” Among other information, the report found⁴² that women’s basketball is vastly undervalued as a potential moneymaker.
- We live in a multicultural society. Immigrants today account for 14% of the total U.S. population.⁴³ The population of immigrants is also very diverse, with just about every country in the world represented among U.S. immigrants.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Experiences of discrimination and bullying harm⁴⁴ student's mental health and well-being. When someone is treated negatively based on aspects of one's identity such as race/ethnicity,⁴⁵ religion,⁴⁶ or sexual orientation,⁴⁷ research shows that the effects are even more harmful. All students need to feel safe and supported. It is critical that schools and athletics promote positive, inclusive school environments. Studies prove that we perform better when we feel psychologically safe.⁴⁸

Coach's Role: Beyond the classroom, sport is another place to allow young people to explore and discuss ideas about racism, sexism, and homophobia. Coaches should challenge the normalization of many forms of racism, sexism and homophobia. Coaches can also provide opportunities to learn and grow together, as well as be allies to historically marginalized groups.

Coaches support diverse students by trying new coaching strategies, learning about other people, cultures and perspectives, as well as by exploring their own identity. You can also help students set and manage goals that are important to them. But most of all, take the time to build strong supportive relationships in which students feel known, valued, and supported.

Appreciating and enriching the assets (strengths) of students is how you can show that you actively care for them, instead of being indifferent to who they are. Ask yourself, what can we do as a team or as a school to make sure our community is welcoming of people from different backgrounds (different races, ethnicities, religions, disabilities, gender and sexual orientations)?

Students' Role: Empathy plays a crucial role⁴⁹ in human, social, and psychological interaction during all stages of life. Empathy, in simple terms, is the ability to understand and feel the emotions of others. Empathy helps to develop openness to other people's perspectives, viewpoints and experiences. Our country has a long history of youth-led movements that have brought about significant social change. When you become empowered with the knowledge to understand discrimination, you are more likely to push back against injustices you know are wrong. Ask yourself, what can we do as a team, or as a school, to make sure our team welcomes people from different backgrounds?

Athletic Director's Role: It is the job of everyone to create an anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic environment. Consider that diversity within athletic departments not only better reflects and serves the needs of students, but is also a strength. Therefore, make inclusivity and diversity a mandate in your hiring practices. The goal for every school should be to create a place where diversity and inclusion are a fundamental part of the values of your community. Bringing together varied life experiences and perspectives adds significant value to any community.

Also, assure that all students have opportunities to play and that financial costs do not exclude students from lower income families. Ask yourself, what can we do as teams, a school, and as a community, to make sure our community is welcoming of people from different backgrounds — different economic means, different races, ethnicities, religions, disabilities, gender and sexual orientations?

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-SEXISM, AND ANTI-HOMOPHOBIA IN SPORTS

PRACTICE

1

Create a Foundation for Brave Conversations

Having open discussions about race, racism, sexism, and homophobia helps to prevent forms of racism, discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Create a brave space to talk.

Develop a set of guidelines that create “brave spaces” for everyone to share their feelings, experiences, and to speak honestly. Guidelines will help everyone feel they can contribute to all team meetings and have their voices heard.

STEP 1: In order to have honest conversations, you must work to create brave spaces⁵⁰ instead of safe spaces. Brave is defined as: *“To have or show physical, emotional or moral strength in the face of difficulty, danger or fear.”* The point of brave guidelines is to allow everyone to rise to the challenge of talking about social justice issues. At times, using your voice to create an equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist world requires bravery.

STEP 2: Read aloud, *How We Treat Each Other*⁵¹ a resource from The Peace and Justice Institute, Orlando, FL that helps foster the space for courageous conversations.

Principle #1: Create a hospitable and accountable community. We arrive in isolation and need the generosity of friendly welcomes. Bring all of yourself to the work in this community. Welcome others to this place and this work, and presume that you are welcomed as well. Hospitality is the essence of restoring community.

Principle #2: Listen Deeply. Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. Strive to achieve a balance between listening and reflecting, speaking and acting.

Principle #3: Create an advice free zone. Replace advice with curiosity as we work together for peace and justice. Each of us is here to discover our own truths. We are not here to set someone else straight, to “fix” what we perceive as broken in another member of the group.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Create a brave space to talk.
(continued)

Principle #4: Practice asking honest and open questions. A great question is one that allows for different views, is personal, and thought provoking.

Principle #5: Give space for unpopular answers. Answer questions honestly even if the answer seems unpopular. Be present to listen, not debate, correct or interpret.

Principle #6: Respect silence. Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words. This applies to the speaker; moreover, be comfortable leaving your words to resound in the silence, without refining or elaborating on what you have said.

Principle #7: Suspend judgment. Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to the other, and to ourselves, more fully.

Principle #8: Identify assumptions. Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they undergird our worldview. By identifying our assumptions, we can then set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

Principle #9: Speak your truth. You are invited to say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. Own your truth by remembering to speak only for yourself. Using the first person "I", rather than "you" or "everyone", clearly communicates the personal nature of your expression.

Principle #10: When conversations get difficult, turn to wonder. If you find yourself disagreeing with one another, becoming judgmental, or shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what brought her to this place?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"

Principle #11: Practice slowing down. Simply the speed of modern life can cause stress. By intentionally practicing slowing down, we strengthen our ability to extend non-violence to others—and to ourselves.

Principle #12: All voices have value. Hold these moments when a person speaks as precious because these are the moments when a person is willing to stand for something, trust the group, and offer something they see as valuable.

Principle #13: Maintain confidentiality. Create a safe space by respecting the confidential nature and content of discussions held in the group. Allow what is said in the group to remain there.

As you read, them aloud, notice if any of them are resonating with you.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Create a brave space to talk. <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>STEP 3: Reinforce guidelines for courageous conversations. Explain what a dialogue is and what it is not. Different from a debate, dialogue⁵² is a type of <i>interactive</i> communication. Here are some key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purpose is to facilitate understanding, rather than dismissing other people's perspectives and proving them wrong. 2. Disagreements can take place during a dialogue, but the purpose is not about convincing others that one side of an argument is right. 3. The goal of a dialogue is to add diverse perspectives that build a shared understanding while providing more knowledge to everyone. Dialogues are intended to support intergroup understanding, relationships, and action.⁵³ 4. Intergroup dialogue has the potential to equip everyone with critical knowledge, awareness, and skills to support the diverse identities of students. Research⁵⁴ shows that there are elements of intergroup dialogue that are central to its effectiveness. Dialogue requires learning to listen, asking questions, and committing to understanding the perspectives of others, even if not agreeing.
<p>How to talk with each other.</p>	<p>Use these supportive tools from the University of Colorado, Boulder, for having effective dialogue with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share <i>your</i> perspective; Appreciate differences by <i>actively</i> listening to others. ▪ Steer clear of judging, guilt, humiliation, shame, blame, coercion, or threats, and staying honest and compassionate in our consideration of ourselves and others. <p>Try this: Utilize the following prompts when sharing your views, feelings, reactions, or experiences to maintain civility within controversial topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I observe . . . ▪ I feel . . . ▪ I need . . . ▪ I request . . . <p>Try this: Here are some tips you might use to <i>avoid</i> saying hurtful words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slow down to give yourself time to think, be okay with silence or even ask for time. ▪ Manage your curiosity. Do you really need to know? ▪ Apologize, and say it another way. ▪ Ask, "what is a better way to say . . .?" ▪ Ask if it's okay to ask.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>How to talk with each other. <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Try this: Here are some tips you might use to <i>respond</i> to hurtful words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Can you explain that to me? What are you really trying to say?" ▪ "Can I help you reword that question or comment?" ▪ "That (joke, word, comment) isn't worthy of you." ▪ "When I hear you say that, it makes me feel sad. I've had a different experience with . . ."
<p>Discussion scenario #1</p>	<p>Consider and discuss as a team the following scenarios from the Anti-Defamation League's <i>School Sports and Bias Best Practices</i>:</p> <p>Scenario #1: Prior to the new school year, several members of Team A communicate on social media anti-LGBTQ+ slurs to members of Team B whom Team A will play at the first game of the season. When their behavior is questioned by the coach, the members of Team A say, "it's just trash talk," "everybody does it," "it's how you get in the heads of your opponents," or "it happened before the school year started."</p> <p>Try this: Hold a small-group discussions based on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What should be said and/or done in this situation? ▪ Have you heard anti-LGBTQ+ slurs in athletics before, during, or after a game by a member of your school community or the opposing school community? If so, did you (or someone else) respond? ▪ How did you feel when you heard it? ▪ Why do you think some people direct anti-LGBTQ+ slurs at other people? ▪ How do you think anti-LGBTQ+ slurs impact people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer or transgender? <p>Consider and discuss these statistics. Have your views changed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A recent study⁵⁵ found that 46% of LGBTQ employees are closeted in the workplace, for reasons ranging from fear of losing their job to being stereotyped. ▪ 1-in-5 LGBTQ+ workers report having been told, or had coworkers imply, that they should dress in a more feminine or masculine manner; ▪ 53% of LGBTQ+ workers report hearing jokes about lesbian or gay people at least once in a while; ▪ 31% of LGBTQ+ workers say they have felt unhappy or depressed at work;

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Discussion scenario #1 <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The top reason LGBTQ+ workers don't report negative comments they hear about LGBTQ+ people to a supervisor or human resources is they don't think anything will be done about it — and they don't want to hurt their relationships with coworkers. ▪ Schools remain hostile⁵⁶ for LGBTQ+ students. The vast majority of LGBTQ+ students who attended school in-person at some point during the 2021-2022 academic year (83.1%) experienced in-person harassment or assault based on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, religion, actual or perceived race and ethnicity, and actual or perceived disability.
<p>Create a supportive climate for LGBTQIA students</p>	<p>Pass and implement comprehensive policies around key issues for LGBTQ students. It is crucial to ensure that LGBTQ+ students can learn and grow in a supportive environment. Inclusive efforts such as the presence of a student Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club have been shown to reduce homophobic victimization⁵⁷ in schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students are more likely to report victimization⁵⁸ and intervene in bullying⁵⁹ that they witness when they experience a positive, inclusive school climate, with specific policies in place against bullying and discrimination, and when teachers, coaches and other adults set an example by refraining from discriminatory behavior themselves and model standing up against discrimination. <p>Try this: Use GLSEN's (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) Changing the Game resources for coaches, teachers, and students that ensure inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ individuals. https://www.glsen.org/changing-the-game</p>
<p>Discussion scenario #2</p>	<p>Scenario #2: During practice, a coach tells a Jewish student to “run as if your life depends on it, or you’ll end up in the oven.”</p> <p>Try this: Small group discussions based on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the remark, “you’ll end up in the oven,” referencing? How did you feel when you listened to the scenario? ▪ How do you think the coach’s remark impacted the Jewish student to whom it was directed? ▪ How might the comment impact the team differently depending on whether the Jewish student is the only one, or one of very few Jewish students, on the team? ▪ Should members of the team who heard the remark respond? If so, how? If not, why not?

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Discussion scenario #2 (continued)</p>	<p>Consider this: As the ADL notes, <i>“It is not uncommon for people to use or connect Holocaust references, comparisons and so-called “jokes” to contemporary situations. This appropriation is disrespectful to the millions of people, including approximately six million Jews, who were systematically murdered during the Holocaust, and to the survivors and their descendants, and the Jewish community in general, by minimizing and trivializing the genocidal atrocities and their short and long-term impacts. It also sends a clear message about who is deserving of respect by communicating biased ideas about a person or group based on identity. It also communicates that this biased idea is not harmful because “it’s just a joke.” In reality, biased humor makes bias and bigotry seem more acceptable and normalizes oppression against targeted groups.”</i></p>
<p>Discussion scenario #3</p>	<p>Scenario #3: During a game, a member of the opposing team, and some of the spectators associated with that team, direct the N-word at a member of your team.</p> <p>Try this: Small group discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you see or hear the N-word? ▪ What does the N-word communicate? ▪ How do you think the N-word impacts the people who are targeted? ▪ What is the impact on the school and community whose students and spectators communicated the N-word? ▪ Should your team, or your team’s coach, respond in the moment? If so, how? If not, why not? ▪ What, if anything, should the opposing team do? ▪ What, if anything, should the coaches, referee(s), or other adults do? ▪ What, if anything, do you think can be done prior to athletic events to help prevent offensive, biased and harmful behavior by spectators? <p>Consider this: As the ADL notes, <i>“Language is one tool that reinforces systems that discriminate against, harm and oppress groups of people. Slurs are harmful language designed to degrade targeted individuals and groups. One such slur is the N-word. Dating back to seventeenth-century colonial America when slavery was legal, this slur was directed at Black people and has been used over time to justify disrespect, bias, discrimination and violence. Non-Black people should never use the N-word in any context, period—regardless of whether they are in the presence of a Black person or not. When non-Black people use the N-word unchecked among other non-Black people, they normalize the term among themselves, communicating that the N-word is acceptable.”</i></p>

Strategies for Understanding Your Identity

If you have never thought about your own identity or experiences, it is important that you begin. You cannot expect or ask others to share parts of themselves that you yourself have not unpacked. As a coach, it is difficult to help guide students to develop their personal identities or address their biases if you are not familiar with your own.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

"We all think of ourselves in a variety of ways. Sometimes being female, male, or intersex is uppermost. At other times it might be ethnic background or religion, geographic location, hobbies, or the way we fit into our families that matter most. And on still other occasions, it is the people we are attracted to or close to, or the political or social issues we find connection with that dominates our sense of self. We are all a combination of many ingredients."

—PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE, ORLANDO FLA.

Remember that one should never be made to be the ambassador of their race, ethnicity, sex, or orientation. Numerous studies have shown that actively considering another person's point of view⁶⁰ is a powerful method for bridging divides between people of diverse backgrounds.

Reflect on your identity.

Discuss as a team the following questions: What does it feel like when someone else defines your identity? In what situations do you find yourself checking your identity at the door (situations where you give up a part of yourself?)

Try this: Reflect on the meaningful aspects of your identity.

- When it comes to my identity, what's something you're proud of?
- What's an aspect of your identity that is painful to talk about?
- What is a quality about me people wouldn't know by looking at me?
- How does your identity impact you on a daily basis?
- What obstacles and/or hardships did you experience/overcome in your life, your neighborhood, and/or your community?
- What hopes, aspirations, dreams, or achievements did you strive for?
- Who was your biggest supporter, and why? What did your supporter do that was the most beneficial?

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>The danger of a single story.</p>	<p>Watch novelist Chimamanda Adichie talk about the danger of a single story. Adichie notes that our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. She warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. Adichie's talk can be found here:</p> <p>Chimamanda Adichie's TedTalk "The Danger of a Single Story"</p> <p>After watching, discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Think about a time in your life when you have encountered a single story about yourself or someone else. What stories were left out? ▪ What are the dangers of leaving these stories out? How can you include them?
<p>Identify the difference between equity and equality.</p>	<p>Understand the difference between equity and equality and why this is important.</p> <p>STEP 1: Watch or show the video: "Sometimes You Are A Caterpillar" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiWgx4sHGg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the following: <i>Talk about a time when you were a caterpillar or a snail. What did it feel like?</i> <p>STEP 2: Explain the difference between equity and equality. Equity is promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. ▪ Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. For example, equality is giving everyone the same pair of shoes. Equity is giving everyone a pair of shoes that fits them.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Unpack all of our privileges.</p>	<p>Unpack privilege. For some students, the word privilege carries a very strong negative connotation. This often makes people less willing to share and participate. Having privilege does not require feeling guilty for your privilege. We all have an element of privilege that shapes our lives. The point is to recognize it, so we can challenge systems, norms, and practices that perpetuate unearned privileges.</p> <p>Try this: Define privilege. Privilege is a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or made available only to an individual or group of people. We all have different identities, and some make us privileged while others do the opposite. Privilege reveals both obvious and less obvious unspoken advantages that people in the dominant group may not recognize they have, which distinguishes it from overt bias or prejudice. These advantages include cultural affirmations of one's own worth, presumed greater social status, and the freedom to move, buy, work, play and speak freely.</p> <p>Try this: Self-reflect on the way privilege has affected your life and the lives of others. In today's American society, each of us has an identity that shapes how we see ourselves and others.</p> <p>Try this: Take a short quiz: https://movingupusa.com/calc/ What is Your American Dream Score? This quiz will help illustrate your privileges. It calculates your "American dream score," which takes into account the factors that were working in your favor and those you had to overcome to get where you are today.</p>
<p>Know your privileges to make change.</p>	<p>Make an autobiographical list of your privileges. You can use the following as a guide. (https://division45.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CulturalPsychology.pdf) For example, your list may include the following factors: Sexual orientation; place of employment; families' relation to language spoken; nation of origin; gender; gender identity; Ethnicity; families' languages of origin.</p> <p>Try this: Acknowledging privilege in conversations can help make room for people to express themselves. The more willing you are to think critically about your privilege, the more comfortable you can become using your privilege to help enact change. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What did you learn? ▪ What surprised you? ▪ What might support look and feel like? ▪ What would it mean to take responsibility for your privilege? ▪ What is one action you can take to use your privilege to address disadvantages?

Exploring Differences and Commonalities

How do we consider perspectives different from our own? How do we challenge our own biases and prejudices? Research has shown that interventions to reduce prejudice⁶¹ among students can be effective, especially when students focus on increasing empathy and perspective-taking. Learning about other people from personal stories can be a powerful way to do this. This can also be an effective way to improve relationships.⁶²

Numerous studies⁶³ have shown that actively considering another person's point of view is a powerful method for bridging divides between people of diverse backgrounds. And remember, there is more variation *within* self-identified racial groups than between groups. Racial categories were invented to divide human populations into groups often based on physical appearance, social factors, and cultural backgrounds.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Recognize and challenge gender stereotypes.
Recognize and challenge gender stereotyping to nurture a positive, empowering environment for females and males to grow and prosper.

Gender stereotypes reinforce beliefs about acceptable and expected behavior from people who identify as women and men, boys and girls. Stereotypes are harmful and negatively impact people. When people apply stereotype thinking, they place arbitrary limits on people. Stereotypes prevent individuals from being who they want to be and what they want to do.

Try this: Challenge sexist language when you hear it and, where appropriate, use incidents as 'teachable moments' by having a discussion with the team about the language and the impact it has. Discuss the problem with phrases like 'you throw like a girl!' What's wrong with phrases like 'man-up' and '... like a girl'? These phrases reinforce the prejudicial view that girls and women are weak and inferior. This can be hurtful by undermining the status and strength of women while reinforcing the stereotypes about men and boys.

Try this: Educate yourself about girls in sports provided in Adidas' "Keep Girls in Sport" Initiative.

Try this: When someone says, what is wrong with American soccer, consider that the U.S. Women's National Team has won the World Cup 4 times! Watch ESPN's 30 for 30 film *The '99ers*.

Try this: Create safe and welcoming spaces. Ensure that girls see pictures of female role models or girls being active. When coaches give an example of a successful athlete, are they always men? Do you use only male pronouns? Are there pictures of female athletes around? Do you highlight the background of accomplished female coaches as much as male coaches?

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Zero tolerance policies.</p>	<p>Operate Zero-Tolerance for sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. Over a third (36.7%)⁶⁴ of girls at mixed-sex secondary schools have been sexually harassed while at school. This harassment can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical.</p> <p>Try this: Familiarize yourself with your school's policy and procedures on sexual harassment. Ensure students are aware of the school's zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination and empower students with information on how to report incidents.</p> <p>Try this: Discuss online safety policies. These should include details of how online platforms can be used to facilitate harassment, bullying and discrimination. Most schools have students sign acceptable use policies.⁶⁵ An acceptable use policy is an agreement between the student, parents/guardians, and the school district to keep students safe online.</p>
<p>Discuss forms of inequity.</p>	<p>Talk about discrimination, inequities and inequalities, and why it's wrong. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/07/opinion/sunday/adam-grant-and-sheryl-sandberg-on-discrimination-at-work.html</p> <p>Have students examine the following at home. Or they can read/examine these indicators on their smartphones. Hold a discussion next practice.</p> <p>Try this: Read about the Masai Ujiri incident: Masai Ujiri story. https://andscape.com/features/masai-ujiri-incident-equally-haunting-as-it-is-redeeming/</p> <p>Try this: Examine this infographic: Inequality and opportunity gaps. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/19/opinion/politics/opportunity-gaps-race-inequality.html?referringSource=articleShare</p> <p>Try this: Examine this infographic: Punishing reach of racism. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html</p> <p>Try this: Examine this infographic: Money, Race, and Success https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/29/upshot/money-race-and-success-how-your-school-district-compares.html</p> <p>Try this: Discuss, what does it mean to be discriminated against? Why do people discriminate? How can we stand up against discrimination? How can we stop acts of discrimination?</p>

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Anti-racism is a verb.</p>	<p>Watch Hank VanPutten Jr's Ted Talk either before practice or after practice: <i>When It Comes to Racism, Are You A Non or An Anti?</i></p> <p>Try this: After viewing, discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What stood out to you? ▪ What was easy to understand? What was challenging to hear? ▪ How does the speaker define anti-racism? ▪ What does that mean to you? ▪ What's an example of anti-racist behavior in sports, in school, outside of school?
<p>Educate yourself on others' experiences.</p>	<p>Read and watch first-person accounts of another's experience in magazines and newspapers, on social media, and in podcasts and documentaries. Racist ideas and policies target⁶⁶ many different people within racial groups. Racism results in racial inequities and disparities in every part of private and public life. That includes politics,⁶⁷ health care,⁶⁸ criminal justice,⁶⁹ education,⁷⁰ income,⁷¹ employment,⁷² and home ownership.⁷³</p> <p>All individuals have identities which are unique to them. These identities include our ethnicity, but also our gender, sex, sexuality, disability, class, and religion or belief system. There is usually more difference within racial and ethnic groups than there are between them.</p> <p>Try these recommended resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man with Emmanuel Acho https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8jUA7JBkF4&t=11s ▪ A Conversation about Race (First Person Documentaries about Race) https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/your-stories/conversations-on-race?module=inline ▪ Watch Clint Smith's Crash Course, Black History ▪ The University of California, Berkeley's division of equity and inclusion has more suggestions for reading, watching and listening. https://diversity.berkeley.edu ▪ Learning for Justice, www.learningforjustice.org ▪ <i>Code Switch</i>, podcast created by NPR ▪ <i>Nice White Parents</i>, podcast created by Serial and the <i>New York Times</i> ▪ <i>Intersectionality Matters!</i>, a podcast created by the African-American Policy Forum ▪ <i>Good Ancestor Podcast</i>, created by Layla F. Saad ▪ <i>Asian Enough</i>, podcast created by the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> ▪ <i>Disability After Dark</i>, podcast created by Andrew Gurza

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Educate yourself on others' experiences. <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Try this: These resources raise questions that can lead to self-reflection. What choices do we make, consciously or unconsciously, to treat others with respect and dignity? What should we do as schools, communities, a nation, and as a global society to make sure that all people are treated with dignity and respect? What can I do in my life to make sure others are treated with respect and dignity, and not based on stereotypes and biased judgements? What can we do as a team or as a school to make sure our community welcomes people from different backgrounds—different races, ethnicities, religions, disabilities, gender and sexual orientations?</p>
<p>Use an asset-lens to view others instead of a deficit lens.</p>	<p>Practice viewing students, coaches, families and communities through an asset lens. American history has benefited from the skills and talents of people from every race, religion, orientation, and ethnic background. Coaches are role models and students should pay close attention to the manner in which the leader addresses problems.</p> <p>When we look at students from a deficit-oriented perspective, as opposed to an assets-oriented one, it can be like seeing the glass half empty. It impacts how we relate to others. A deficit-oriented lens can cause harm by reinforcing our biases and cloud what we think others are capable of doing. When we focus on similarities and strengths, research⁷⁴ confirms that we tend to respond more fairly and favorably.</p> <p>Try this: Diversify your media diet,⁷⁵ not just with stories of historical figures but also people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people “doing normal things, enjoying their lives.”</p> <p>Try this: Put on an assets-oriented lens by consistently asking yourself the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What about this student or this coach do I appreciate? ▪ In what ways has this student or coach demonstrated abilities, strengths, or resilience? ▪ What gains has this student or coach made this year? ▪ What is this student or coach excited or passionate about? ▪ How is this student’s unique background and lived experience showing up in practice, in competitions, and/or in the classroom? <p>Try this: Watch, Rita Pierson’s TedTalk “<i>Every Kid Needs a Champion</i>”</p> <p>Try this: Coach and actively interact with people from an asset-based perspective. Also known as strengths-based teaching,⁷⁶ this approach helps unlock one’s potential as opposed to highlighting perceived inadequacies.</p>

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Commit to doing one thing.

Commit to taking one action as often as you can that promotes inclusivity, equity and respect. Remember that you don't need to understand every aspect about someone to make them feel respected.

Try this: Advocate for experiences that will help others, even if they don't directly affect you, and even if you're not part of that community.

Try this: Speak up when someone makes a discriminatory comment.

Try this: Don't make assumptions about people based on what your life is like. When you're asking people about their lives, don't assume their lives, habits, and preferences mirror your own.

Try this: Form relationships. Connecting to others as people is vital to being culturally responsive. Learning about individual interests, likes, dislikes, family members, and aspirations are all ways to build relationships. And remember to share about yourself. The best relationships are mutual, built on transparency and trust.

ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. (See Scorecard in Principle #1 for more information).

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
I gained more awareness and understanding of the importance of identities, equity, equality, bias, and discrimination.		
We held brave conversations to discuss examples of bias in sports and what we can and should do about them.		
I understand the influences of biased, racist, sexist, and homophobic systems and structures on mindset, behavior and actions.		
I reflected on my identity and privilege.		
We assessed our zero-tolerance policies for bullying, harassment, and discrimination.		
I educated myself on others' experiences.		
I used an asset-based perspective to view others I perceive different than myself.		
I committed to taking one action to promote inclusivity or make someone feel respected.		
I take pride in my culture, gender, and/or sexual orientation.		
I am developing the capacity to navigate cultural differences; form connections with people from different social, racial, and cultural backgrounds in ways that honor their identity and culture.		

PRINCIPLE

3



**MOTIVATION
AND EFFORT**
IS INTENTIONAL
AND COMES
FROM WITHIN

"You dream. You plan. You reach. There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, with belief, with confidence and trust in yourself and those around you, there are no limits."

—MICHAEL PHELPS



People love to get better at doing things they enjoy. Everyone loves the satisfaction felt from progress and personal achievement. That is why lasting motivation⁷⁷ and effort depends more on internal factors than external factors. Motivation is an internal drive, a feeling of increased confidence in your ability, skills, and your belief that you can achieve what you intend to do.

Determination is like a muscle that grows stronger the more it is exercised. Effort and persistence are influenced by your beliefs in performing specific tasks effectively. When you believe that you can perform a task proficiently, you become more engaged, work harder, and sustain higher levels of effort even when encountering obstacles. Believing you can, motivates you to keep going.

What is effort? Effort is intentional.⁷⁸ It is knowing you have given your best, consistently practicing, training your body and mind, your level of conditioning and expertise in the skills necessary to perform well. Effort is situational and specific to the activity itself.

What is motivation? Motivation⁷⁹ is a process of goal-directed behavior that is started and sustained. Motivation affects effort, persistence, and why we choose to do any task (from brushing our teeth, to running, to swimming 100 meters.) The most effective and lasting motivation comes from within us.

THE BIG PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: Any athlete wants to perform well and be successful. You can achieve this by developing an inner drive that helps keep you focused, motivated, and having the confidence to embrace challenges instead of shying away from them. This inner motivation helps you persevere.

At some point, somewhere in our lives, we need to learn that we can do more than we think. The simplest way of acquiring positive beliefs about your capabilities is to test them day after day in practice or outside of sports. You counter doubts in your capabilities by eliminating those doubts. Athletes do this by practicing until the skill or knowledge becomes familiar. You learn to do your best by doing some action repeatedly well, with intention and effort. With most experiences, improvement is a process, realized by small steps.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Based on research, intrinsic motivation⁸⁰ is any activity done for its own sake. There is no anticipation of external rewards. The motivation to do an activity is fueled by the satisfaction you feel while you are doing it. You are motivated to continue because the activity challenges you while validating your sense of control and willpower. It also strengthens your can-do attitude.

We have a deep need to feel control in our lives. Control is a basic psychological need.⁸¹ Believing that you are in control is a source of motivation. Research reveals that people whose lives are dominated by others are less healthy and happy. Environments that are not under our control lowers life satisfaction. Effort stems from one's ability to make simple choices and take control rather than being controlled.

External motivation is the desire to achieve some goal because doing so leads to a certain result. Wins and losses are sources of external motivation. The problem with external sources of motivation is they don't sustain over time. Short term motivation can be achieved by fear and punishment. But lasting motivation that sustains comes from within.

Coach's Role: Understand the impact a coaching style has on motivation. Inexperienced coaches often lead by autocratically micromanaging. This style of coaching is based on the following traits:

- Control and power
- Developing fear through punishments and intimidation
- A coach's ego and insecurities
- Accepting the appearance of effort

The key to motivation is not yelling and screaming. It does not help create internal motivation. Fear, control, and power fails⁸² to motivate over the long term.

Build motivation by not destroying it in students. Motivation rests inside the students. Independent thinking athletes⁸³ perform better than those micromanaged. Coaching is using knowledge of the sport to intentionally strengthen an athlete's agency, helping them be their own coach. Coaches can aid internal motivation by praising what was done correctly that confirms the abilities of the the player.

When athletes need to learn technical or specialized knowledge, this is a good time to provide direct coaching to accelerate learning. Provide knowledgeable input in two-way conversations where you can affirm an athlete's effort and help them think constructively for themselves. Compared to positive feedback, negative feedback decreases⁸⁴ intrinsic motivation. People want to improve when it's clear you care. In 78 different studies, constructive criticism helped people improve when they made time to talk face-to-face, have detailed constructive suggestions on how to improve, and didn't compare students to anyone else.

Students' Role: Effort is like an internal conversation with yourself. If you become aware that some task feels easier than expected, you ratchet up your effort. If it feels more difficult because you experience fatigue, for example, you are more likely to ease up. Your brain internally calculates whether your performance feels difficult or easy. This causes you to adjust accordingly. During any performance, you can't control the outcome, but you can control your effort.

To increase effort, you need information. You need to test your capabilities. Can you do the skill again, better than before? In some ways, you have to relearn what you are capable of doing. From this knowledge, you can increase your effort.

Take advantage of the power that comes with making choices. Choose how you will train, adjust, and practice. When you fail, learn from failure. Don't fear it. Real confidence and lasting motivation come from the knowledge of lived moments of success. Especially if these experiences are challenging or are the result of failure.

Focus on the process of improving, not solely the outcome. Redefine success as getting better daily. Improvement is how you achieve results.

Athletic Director's Role: Oftentimes athletes are 'motivated' by following the orders of coaches. Failure to do so results in punishments, threats, and intimidation. Fear becomes the foundational method to motivate. These methods are destructive and counterproductive. Belittling, threatening, humiliating, punishing young people verbally or physically, or causing psychologically harm is child abuse.

It is the job of the athletic director to ensure that this does not happen. Check in regularly to see if your coaches are employing methods that ensure the well-being of students at all times. Take the time to watch practices. Verify that opportunities for student agency are being utilized and students are learning to play a sport in developmentally responsive spaces. Talk with students.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR INCREASING MOTIVATION AND EFFORT

PRACTICE

1

Develop a Process-Centered Environment to Increase Motivation

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Focus on the process.

Focus more on the process than merely outcomes.

Try this:

1. Results matter, but as a coach deprioritize them and focus on the process to achieve them.⁸⁵ View results as opportunities for analysis, learning, feedback, and growth. Help students do the same. Communicate this to students frequently. Help students understand why they performed well or didn't.
2. Assess students who are not performing up to their expectations.
3. While it is natural to compare ourselves to others, reframe achievement as personal mastery, rather than by comparison. Encourage players to use themselves as a benchmark comparing themselves to who they were yesterday. When it comes to improving as a team, use the phrase where appropriate, "It's us vs us, not us vs them. How well can we execute what we have learned?"

Use the magic ratio.





Communicate constructively instead of destructively.

1. Emphasize positive feedback to increase intrinsic motivation.⁸⁶ Use the magic ratio of five positive interactions to every negative one.⁸⁷ Begin any feedback to students stating truthful, specific, and constructive comments before offering any specific critical or negative comment.
2. You can even double the ratio of positive feedback to negative feedback.
3. When communicating with students who are acutely sensitive to judgment, positive communication will help pave the way for constructive coaching.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Encourage.	Spark motivation by commending small achievements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find opportunities to regularly commend success and small victories in training and during competition. Don't just say, "Good job!" Explain why a student is specifically performing well. 2. Begin with some action like a positive phone call home.⁸⁸ 3. Identify students who might need a little extra encouragement and praise them. You can also praise them to parents or guardians.
Be culturally responsive.	Develop a culturally responsive lens to motivation. Effective coaching is culturally responsive and is an on-going process. <p>Cultural responsiveness enables individuals and organizations to respond respectfully and effectively⁸⁹ to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values their worth.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being culturally responsive requires having an ability to understand cultural differences, recognize potential biases, and look beyond differences to work productively with students, families, and communities whose cultural contexts are different from one's own. 2. As a coach, you can influence the motivation of students by taking the time to know their perspective, who they culturally are, and by seeing them as unique individuals. Research⁹⁰ shows that intrinsic systems of motivation⁹¹ can accommodate⁹² cultural differences. 3. The following conditions are necessary for developing intrinsic motivation that are culturally responsive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating inclusive environments in which students and coaches feel respected and connected to one another. ▪ Creating personal relevance and choice towards practice experiences. For example, let students decide what skills they need to practice. Help them create an individualized practice plan. Let them identify the skills they want to improve before shifting to a team practice plan. ▪ Creating challenging, thoughtful experiences that include student perspectives and values.

LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip 	Some students tie achievement and training to self-worth. Recognize that positive development comes with rewarding effort rather than solely focusing on wins and losses or personal success or failures.
Learning Tip 	A good way to spark motivation is to commend small achievements collectively and individually. As a coach, you can identify ways in which athletes have improved instead of merely focusing on mistakes or shortcomings. Positive reinforcement brings out the best in anyone. ⁹³
Learning Tip 	In student-centered environments, students are active participants in decision-making. This agency and empowerment help students make the choices necessary to develop and improve.
Learning Tip 	The causes of student apathy are unlimited; however, the following are fairly common reasons for demotivation: Lack of positive relationships with either adults or peers; learned helplessness; awareness of disrespect to one's culture or ethnicity; perception of threats, real or imagined; perception that tasks or activities are irrelevant.

PRACTICE

2

Train Your Mind to Increase Effort

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Be your own coach.	Learn to become your own coach. Try this: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teach yourself how to adjust, adapt, and manage various external scenarios. Your prefrontal cortex (responsible for critical thinking and decision-making) in your brain becomes active and strengthened when you do so. 2. Take the time to create solutions and corrections yourself. Inside your head is the best way to practice and visualize difficult skills and situations. Consult with your coaches and teammates if you need feedback. 3. Think about what you want to happen. Visualize all the details. For example, what do you look like when you are running at your full speed? Now try to match that when you sprint to the end of the field. How much effort you give is a choice. Before each repetition of any drill, ask yourself, "how much effort am I going to bring to this rep?" 4. Distinguish between the appearance of effort and performative effort. Examine <i>why</i> students are working hard at practice.
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WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Believe!	<p>Trust your talent and decision-making. Overthinking can be dangerous, leading to the perils of perfectionism and paralysis-by-analysis syndrome.</p> <p>Try this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trust your training and yourself. Confidence grows when you alleviate any doubts in your abilities. Trust is essential for performing at your best. 2. Practice the fundamentals. Apply effort to improve because you enjoy the process of getting better. 3. Celebrate when you master a skill.
Use positive self-talk.	<p>Learn to use positive self-talk.</p> <p>All training to increase effort really comes down to brain training. Our brains evaluate information all the time to help manage our effort. Research⁹⁴ suggests that we have thousands of thoughts a day and the majority of them are negative. Elite athletes train their minds to adapt to these negative mental messages. They train their minds to respond with non-judgment. Shift to more positive, compassionate inner self talk for better performance. When positive thoughts are generated, when you're feeling happy, or optimistic, cortisol decreases and the brain produces serotonin, creating a feeling of well-being.⁹⁵</p> <p>Try this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use motivation cues. Professional athletes use fist pumps, whisper positive affirmations and motivational cues because it helps them stay focused and relaxed during competitions. 2. Notice how you talk to yourself in stressful situations. Positive self-talk can help motivate⁹⁶ any athlete through high pressure and stressful situations. It can also help in self-training⁹⁷ by sharpening your focus and improving your awareness and self-control. Examples: I am happy and confident, I enjoy my friends, I'm a good person. 3. Find the right mantras or positive affirmations.⁹⁸ Affirmations are encouraging (e.g. "I feel good about myself" or "I can make this shot" to keep your spirits up and push yourself harder. 4. Positive affirmations are built on trust. You can't just say them. You have to believe them. Affirmations are reminders of what you can do because you have worked hard training to do it. 5. Replace negative thinking with thoughts that contribute to improved self-confidence and that increase effort. Talk out loud or internally to yourself, whatever you need at that moment.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO *(continued)*

Identify the thoughts that affect you.

Lead With Your Mind. Identify thoughts that affect your effort and performance. Changing your point of view or your perspective⁹⁹ when analyzing any situation enables you to have a better understanding of that situation.

Try this:

- Look at every experience¹⁰⁰ as a learning opportunity. This will help you have a positive attitude when you experience a set-back.
- Think about the pathways to obtain success rather than the obstacles in your way.
- Switch your focus from the emotions of a loss or adversity and assess what you might need to do to improve for the next moment.
- Engage in effective thought replacement. This occurs when you decide what you want to have happen and then think more often about what it will take to make it happen.
- Whenever unproductive thoughts occur that negatively affect your performance, replace them with productive ones. The key to using thought replacement is to identify what thought is most helpful to increase your performance.
- Determine what you want to accomplish in any given situation. Then focus your mind on what it takes to achieve it. This will become the fuel needed to muster the effort to achieve it.

LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip

1

Confidence comes from the repeated experience of success.

Learning Tip

2

Believe!¹⁰¹ People will rise to the expectations they set for themselves.

Learning Tip

3

We often don't realize how much we're negatively judging ourselves (and others), every minute of every day, until we attempt to stop doing it.¹⁰²

ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. (See Scorecard in Principle #1 for more information).

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
The environment is structured that allows for choice, autonomy, and agency.		
I practiced using positive self-talk.		
Practices were designed to stimulate and support control and make effective choices.		
I made a list of mental concentration cues and used them as needed.		
I notice my confidence, motivation and effort are improving.		
Communication is positive; the magic ratio is often employed by coaches and teammates.		
Students feel motivated to assess conditions and make appropriate choices with and without the help of coaches.		
Students engage with high energy and put forth maximum effort.		

PRINCIPLE

4



CONTROLLING AND MAINTAINING FOCUS IS CRITICAL FOR SUCCESS

"When you get in the Zone, things just slow down. Everything slows down. You have supreme confidence. When that happens, you really do not try to focus on what's going (around you) because out there (in the crowd), you could lose it in a second. Everything becomes one noise. You're not paying attention to this or that noise. You have to really try to stay in the present, not let anything break that rhythm. You just stay here. You're kind of locked in."

—KOBE BRYANT



Focus is simply one's central point of attention. Attention means observing or bringing conscious awareness to something. Concentration is the ability to perform with a clear and present focus. It also means controlling your attention. Practicing concentration and controlling your focus are essential instruments for learning and success.

When we say someone is focused, they have their concentration and attention directed clearly and presently on the task at hand. To concentrate means focusing your mind on one target: an object, a thought, or a task while blocking from your mind unrelated thoughts, ideas, and sensations. You are in the moment. You are not distracted. That is focus.

THE BIG PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: All athletes practice to obtain an unbreakable focus. When you are focused, your mind relaxes, and your body responds. When your mind and body are relaxed, it allows your mind and body to be in sync. Relaxation provides you ease under the pressure of game situations or in other stressful situations. Focusing your mind so your body can do what it is trained to do is the foundational element of any sport.

Focus and awareness are skills we use in everyday life.¹⁰³ Practicing and exercising control over attention helps you to obtain the best possible results in many areas of your life: relationships, competitions, work, and school. When we are in the present moment, we have better relationships with ourselves and the world around us. Our brains, however, are designed to focus on one experience at a time. Working on multiple tasks simultaneously comes with a cost – a reduction in performance, accuracy, or speed.

Concentration involves two primary functions: our ability to focus on what matters and our ability to block out things that don't. When we focus, it means doing only one task at a time. Every time you focus, you are practicing it. This increases your capacity to focus your mind in the future.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Studies on children have shown that the capacity to focus is one of the strongest indicators of whether a person will be successful¹⁰⁴ later in life. Focus includes the ability to control impulses, keep track of changing information, sustain attention and ignore distractions, and switch attention between tasks when needed.

The ability to focus involves developing executive functioning skills. Executive function skills are the mental processes that are needed to focus, plan, and control behavioral responses. These basic skills are foundational¹⁰⁵ for academic achievement, interpersonal skills, perseverance, critical thinking, and achieving goals.

To perform under pressure, you need to have the ability to selectively process information and to quickly focus and broaden your attention. Performance anxiety can impact your ability to perform at your best under pressure situations. Anxiety often impairs your ability to process information in important moments. As anxiety increases, your attention often narrows. Your judgment becomes impaired, you make poor decisions, your muscles feel stiff and heavy, and hand eye coordination diminishes. See principle #5 for practice to better manage pressure, stress, and performance anxiety.

Coach's Role: Design practices to help students focus and be more present. Creating supportive practice situations that have complex but challenging triggers can help students improve focus. Simulated environments of external triggers help students experience the internal triggers associated with them. To improve one's focus and concentration requires effort. Getting started is the difficult part. Help establish a routine for practices. Build consistency. This helps build habits effectively. Focus is an antidote to performance anxiety because of learned habits that help students cut through the mental distractions of uncertainty, ambiguity, and fear.

Students' Role: When we are present, not in the past or thinking about the future, we are fully ourselves. Focus helps you to be intentional with your attention. It is what is most valuable. Instead of exhausting yourself by being distracted by things that are insignificant, you can have more energy to focus on the experiences that matter. This is true for sports and in our lives.

Focus is a skill that can be strengthened, not unlike a muscle. Focus is a skill that develops through daily practice. Recognize that you are responsible for your focus. Focus doesn't just happen. Focus is one of the elements in your life you control. Maintaining focus and concentration is critical to performing at your best. The best athletes redirect their focus more often and under the most challenging of circumstances. Repeated practice develops concentrated attention, and you will find that you can control your mind and direct your thoughts.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR GETTING FOCUSED

PRACTICE

1

Train Your Mind to Increase Effort and Perform Better

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Practice mindfulness meditation.

Practice mindfulness¹⁰⁶ throughout the day. Almost all professional athletes practice some form of mindfulness meditation as a way to strengthen their attention and focus. Mindfulness helps any athlete become present in the moment and centered, especially during high-stress and high-pressure situations. Mindfulness, however, is not about clearing the mind or preventing any thoughts. Mindfulness meditation helps create space between thoughts and your reaction to them. This is how you can become the driver and not the passenger of your focus.

Try this: Focus your attention on your breathing. You are not controlling breath, simply noticing.

1. Inhale, notice where you feel your breath. With each exhalation switch your focus to the number 1.
2. Inhale again, focus on your breathing; exhale, say to yourself the number 2. *When you first find your mind distracted or wandering, gently return your focus to your breathing.*
3. Concentrate on the feeling of the inhale. Feel your stomach rise and fall as you exhale.
4. Try to count to 10 (for example count 1 for an inhale and 2 for an exhale).

Try this: Lengthen your breath. To help relax in stressful situations, try controlling your breath by expanding the length of your inhales and exhales.

1. Take a breath, sipping in more air as you count to 4.
2. Then pause.
3. Then slowly exhale, counting to 7 as you empty all the air from your body. Repeat.

Try this: Other guided practices can be found here.
<https://www.mindfulschools.org/inspiration/mindful-coaching-student-athletes/>

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO *(continued)*

Learn how to relax.	<p>Teach your body to relax. If you are not relaxed, it is really difficult to focus and concentrate. When stressed, our thoughts run wild. Our attention feels like it is beyond our control. Your mind is what allows you to focus so your body can perform the task at hand. Your mind instructs your muscles to start working or relaxing. Your mind listens to your body.</p> <p>Try this: Sit in a chair, lie down on the floor, or stand.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Now inhale and tense every muscle in your body.2. Raise your shoulders to your ears. Tense your fists and hold this pose for 5-10 seconds as you inhale and hold your breath.3. Then let out your breath and release all of the tension.4. Practice this until you feel like you can release tension and the tight muscles in your body.
Control what you can control.	<p>Distinguish between what you can control and what is uncontrollable. Teach yourself to focus on what you can control. Intentional attention is one of the many things you can control.</p> <p>Try this: Prior to a game or practice session, make two lists.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. One list should be the factors you can control, which are things you can do something about or learn from, like how to respond to a bad call by a referee.2. On the other list should be factors out of your control. These are things you can't do anything about, like the weather or what calls the game officials make.3. Learn to recognize the difference between the two. This will allow you to shift your attention and focus to what you need to do to perform optimally.
Cue focus	<p>Develop your own list of concentration reminders.</p> <p>Try this: When you begin to recognize how you respond to distractions, develop a list of focusing cues (reminders) to help you shift your attention back to the present moment. Practice using a word or phrase that helps you refocus in practice. Simple reminders like "Refocus," or "Focus on the now" can help you refocus your attention.</p>

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Respond differently to distractions.</p>	<p>Teach yourself the causes of <i>your</i> distractions and different ways to respond to them.</p> <p>Try this: Brainstorm and write down your internal triggers (or uncomfortable emotional states) and external triggers (e.g. spectators yelling) that often lead you to being distracted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The goal is to recognize the sensations associated with them. Don't push the urges away. Notice them, but don't act on them. Develop new ways to respond to them. For example, when you are in the car at a stop light do you feel the urge to check your phone? 2. Getting focused requires understanding both kinds of triggers and stopping the habit of impulsively giving in to the sensations associated with your triggers. Recognize when you get distracted. Reflect: Why does this trigger distract you? Why does this distraction matter to you? Why does it demand your attention? 3. Practice focus in the classroom and in conversation. Recognize when your mind wanders and pull it back to what the teacher or the other person is saying.
<p>Visualize</p>	<p>Visualization is a useful way to increase focus.</p> <p>Visualization has been used to help athletes build confidence and overcome performance anxiety. Athletes train themselves by visualizing several situations that could take place during a competition. Commit to replacing all thoughts of weakness or self-doubt with thoughts and images of what it takes to be successful and what it feels like to be successful.</p> <p>Try this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The key is to focus on preparation and the process of improving. Rather than visualizing yourself crossing the finish line in first place, visualize yourself performing the movements and strategies needed to run the race. 2. Rehearsing these actions in your mind helps to solidify them in your memory. By visualizing, the brain creates new neural pathways¹⁰⁷ aimed to create consistency between your bodies' actions and what you have imagined. 3. Do this repeatedly. It is easier to accomplish any task when we repeatedly do it. When you experience the situation for real it will provide you confidence because it will feel familiar.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Help students master their triggers.	When it comes to triggers, design supportive practices for students to master them. Most athletes tend to lose focus when fatigued. Arrange practices where athletes practice concentrating while being fatigued. If the pressure of timed situations is a source of stress, design practices to concentrate under time pressure.
Simplify coach speak.	Simplify, simplify, simplify. Constant information can be exhausting and lower a student's ability to focus on the skills they want to perform. Set one benchmark and then set another. Too much information can lead to students feeling overwhelmed with attention overload.
Let the mind rest.	Take scheduled breaks. ¹⁰⁸ Try this: Schedule breaks so the mind has a chance to rest. If introducing new technical information, let students rest and get their concentration powers back. Brain breaks should take place before fatigue, boredom, distraction, and inattention set in.

LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

Learning Tip 1	Mindfulness is defined by mindfulness expert, Jon Kabat-Zinn, as "paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." Mindfulness is a practice that allows us to ground ourselves in the present moment. By focusing our attention on something specific, like our breath, sensations in our bodies, emotions, or any of our senses, we begin to control our attention. When the mind wanders, mindfulness allows us to anchor our attention intentionally back to the present moment. A focused-attention practice is a brain exercise for quieting the thousands of thoughts that distract and frustrate us. When your mind is quiet and focused, you are able to be present.
Learning Tip 2	Understand the nature of distraction. Distraction can be caused by any factor in our external environment. However, most distractions begin from within. ¹⁰⁹ Distraction is often an unhealthy escape from bad feelings or internal triggers. Boredom, uncertainty, fatigue, loneliness, anxiety, and stress are internal triggers. Our brains are wired to seek escape from these kinds of discomfort.
Learning Tip 3	A progression for learning could be focusing on breath, focusing on coach's voice, focusing on what teachers are saying, and focusing on a friend's conversation with you. Each time, practice recognizing the distracting thoughts and bring your mind back to the object of your focus. Practice until you notice distracting thoughts immediately.

ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. (See Scorecard in Principle #1 for more information).

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
I incorporated mindfulness into my daily routine.		
I felt greater awareness and connection to the present moment.		
I practiced relaxing my body.		
I identified my internal and external triggers and practiced strategies to better regulate them.		
Practices were designed to simulate and support practice in focusing and attention.		
I recognize the sensations associated with stress and triggers learning to better manage them.		
I developed a list of things that I can control versus a list of things that are outside of my control.		
I understand how to redirect my focus and attention.		
I notice that my focus is improving.		

PRINCIPLE

5



LEARN TO MANAGE PRESSURE, EMOTIONS, AND STRESS

"Sport can teach us how to set and achieve goals, solve problems, cope with stress, manage our emotions, refocus after mistakes, and build self-confidence."

—NOEL BRICK, THE GENIUS OF ATHLETES:
WHAT WORLD-CLASS COMPETITORS
KNOW THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE



The mind-body connection is often overlooked in sports, although professional athletes have begun to talk about mental health in increasing numbers. Your mental well-being affects every aspect of your life, including sports. A healthy state of mind is an extremely important skill for athletes who hope to attain high performance and personal development.

Emotions are information. This information is received via physiological sensations (for example, goosebumps or butterflies in the stomach or physical tension), cognitively via thoughts, or narratives that develop to help explain the sensations. These result in changes in our behaviors (for example, we burst into tears, shut down, or lash out at someone).

Emotions are like a conversation with yourself. Emotions are always trying to give useful information to stay regulated, resilient, and show up as your best self. You can develop the tools and ability to manage¹¹⁰ stress, feeling overwhelmed, or frustrated. Self-awareness is the ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence your behavior across different contexts and situations.

Emotional intelligence—or the ability to read, distinguish, and understand your own and others' emotions—is a skill. Social emotional learning is the educational process that results in emotional intelligence. Knowing and naming your feelings and emotions gives you the ability to choose whether to give them attention, let them pass right through you, or utilize the information they provide you.

THE BIG PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: Mental health issues in society mirror that in sports. Depression is the leading cause¹¹¹ of disability worldwide. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, rates of clinically significant generalized anxiety and depressive symptoms in students were increasing. About 70 percent of students¹¹² see the problematic effects of anxiety and depression on their peers. Before the pandemic, anxiety and depression were becoming more common¹¹³ among students.

Former #1 ranked professional tennis player, Naomi Osaka, withdrew from the French Open and skipped Wimbledon to deal with depression and social anxiety. One of America's great gymnasts, Simone Biles, withdrew from the Olympics citing mental health concerns. She was quoted¹¹⁴ as saying, "I'm still struggling with some things. It just sucks when you are fighting with your own head."

Famed Olympic NBA player, Kevin Love, and decorated Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps, are among the prominent athletes who have been outspoken about their mental health struggles. There are many other athletes in many other sports who have spoken about receiving help to maintain a healthy emotional balance during the course of a professional season.

The NBA made a mental health public service announcement launching its Mental Health and Wellness Program to help players¹¹⁵ with a wide range of mental health challenges¹¹⁶ and issues.¹¹⁷ As Kevin Love wrote, “Mental health isn’t just an athlete thing . . . this is an everyone thing.”

There are countless stories of athletes who learned to develop perseverance and greater resiliency to stress and adversity. These athletes improved their coping skills, learned to develop greater resiliency to stress, anxiousness, and pressure.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Using emotional management strategies,¹¹⁸ like identifying and understanding emotions, builds self-awareness and confidence to manage difficult emotions. You can train yourself to turn pressure into information and motivation.¹¹⁹ Self-awareness is associated¹²⁰ with higher job and relationship satisfaction, personal and social control, and greater well-being.

Self-regulation is a process of learning how to process emotions and respond with appropriate behavior.¹²¹ Emotional dysregulation is when you struggle to manage emotions in a healthy way. Emotional dysregulation happens when a person interprets emotions or events in a way that makes them feel overwhelmed. Everyone dysregulates at times.

During an athletic performance, athletes experience a variety of emotions with different degrees of intensity. The most common emotions¹²² experienced in sport include excitement, anxiety, anger, and surprise. Feeling strong emotions is healthy. Emotional self-regulation is the learned skill¹²³ of applying conscious thought to events that prompt strong emotions.

Self-management refers to the ability to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations that lead to positive outcomes. If a person lacks emotional self-regulation skills,¹²⁴ they may express this by overreacting to situations, having emotional outbursts, overreacting quickly, and experiencing negative emotions that last longer than what is necessary or helpful. It is normal for people to find themselves unable to manage their emotions from time to time.

Coach’s Role: Athletes at all levels experience pressure during competition. Pre-competition anticipation, or what is often referred to as “a case of the butterflies”, is natural and can fill a player with excitement and energy. However, these nerves become an obstacle when an athlete does not know how to adequately control these physical sensations. When a person feels pressure their heart rate usually accelerates. An increased heart rate frequently causes people to rush what they are doing. This is why people tend to talk faster when they are nervous. A player who gets nervous will feel like their internal and external worlds are speeding up. This can have a negative impact on performance.

Sports psychology has identified self-efficacy or self-confidence as the most influential mental variable in controlling performance. This means that if students have a strong belief in their ability to perform well, then the chances that they actually perform well greatly improves. Providing opportunities to practice and rehearse the mental processes that strengthen the ability to regulate emotions will help students to reach their potential and beyond.

Research¹²⁵ shows that a coach can facilitate the growth of mental resilience by helping an athlete to address the following:

- Recognize what needs to be improved to develop performance.
- Overcome barriers that impede performance improvement.
- Sustain long-term positive changes.
- Develop strategies to attain their potential.

Help students embrace adversity instead of shying away from it. When things get tough, these are opportunities for growth. Teach them to see challenges as opportunities for growth that help us succeed now and in the future.

Students' Role: In competitive situations, there are high levels of stress, pressure, or adversity. Athletes must be able to think clearly, and broadly. Elite athletes go towards the discomfort, deliberately focusing attention on the feelings and sensations to better interpret, understand, and choose how to respond.

Anxiety is a common experience for athletes when they're under pressure. Anxiety can also reduce concentration and self-control, such as being able to stay calm, and it can cause overthinking. All athletes experience performance stress. Performance stress occurs when you feel the demands or the skills that are necessary to succeed are greater than what you can handle. Recognize that thoughts are thoughts and emotions are information. People use emotions as information to guide their behavior. Thoughts are not commands, but suggestions that can be evaluated.

There are many ways you can respond positively under pressure. With repeated experience, you can readily decide what mental tools to call on for different situations. The key is to simplify-free your mind from mental clutter, negative thinking, and your body from distractions. This will allow you to perform with ease, greater confidence and passion.

Athletic Directors' Role: Evidence¹²⁶ has suggested that emotional intelligence has implications for the mental and physical well-being of individuals in leadership positions. Research¹²⁷ has shown that coaches are more effective if they are able to recognize and comprehend their emotions, those of others, and the probable after-effects of their interactions with students. It is evident that emotional competence may be an essential skill for coaching effectiveness.

Take the time to observe how each coach outwardly expresses their emotions. Look for the effects of how coaches consistently express their emotions. Are these emotional expressions counterproductive to each team's mission or to student well-being? Discuss your observations with each coach and set boundaries for acceptable behavior during practice and competitions.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES TO MANAGE STRESS, PRESSURE AND EMOTIONS

PRACTICE

1

Learn to Recognize and Manage Stress and Pressure

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

Use your breath to relax.

Practice deep breathing to calm yourself. Noticing and controlling your breath can be a brake pedal for a stress response. Deep breathing exercises can help you to relax¹²⁸ and prepare for any situation with decreased stress and anxiety.

Relaxation¹²⁹ means releasing bodily tension that occurs in reaction to an emotional situation. This is often used to calm an overactive nervous system. This strategy can be helpful when physiological responses to the situation are heightened. It is an easy strategy to learn, but takes time.

Try this: Try triangle breathing exercises. Breathe in and hold as you count to 3. Hold your breath for a count of 3. Breathe out as you count to 3. Repeat until you feel calmer and breath slows down.

Try this: Try breathing square exercise. Breathe in and hold for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 4. Breathe out, counting to four. Hold your breath as you count to 4. Repeat. Practice doing these exercises throughout the day and weekly.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Shift your focus to the external to combat anxiety.</p>	<p>5-4-3-2-1, Blast Off away from Anxiety.</p> <p>When we have anxiety, the body will show physiological systems such as shaking, heavy breathing, and heightened brain activity. This will lead to feeling that your anxiety is out of control. Most anxiety is caused by your thoughts being out of control. Anxiety often persists because we resist.</p> <p>Avoidance will only add to the problem. Any experience that you can control, deal with it at that moment. By accepting anxiety, you will allow yourself to select how best to deal with its impact. Learn to focus on what you can control at that moment.</p> <p>How to do this: Sit quietly. Look around you and notice . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 things you can see: Your hands, the sky. ▪ 4 things you can physically feel: Your feet on the ground, a ball. ▪ 3 things you can hear: The wind blowing, laughter, your breath. ▪ 2 things you can smell: Grass, the air. ▪ 1 thing you can taste: Gum, the fresh air. <p>This exercise helps you shift your focus to your surroundings in the present moment and away from what is causing you to feel anxious. It can help interrupt unhealthy thought patterns.</p>
<p>Slow down and relax.</p>	<p>Take a few minutes at the beginning of practice or during a transition between activities to build in opportunities to simply be more relaxed.</p> <p>Try this: Close your eyes and visualize your day going really well. Create a mental image of an experience working out exactly the way you want it to.</p> <p>Try this: Close your eyes and visualize a really happy moment that you have experienced in the past. What feelings do you recall from that experience?</p> <p>Try this: Think about an accomplishment you have had recently that you are especially proud of. Allow yourself to feel those feelings of self-pride for a few moments.</p> <p>Try this: Power Pose: Stand tall, place your hands on your hips, head up, chest out, shoulders back. Hold this pose for two minutes. Allow stress to fall away and your confidence to boost.</p> <p>Try this: Close your eyes and listen to the sounds all around you. Can you name the sounds that you hear?</p> <p>Try this: Take a silence break. Sit in silence for a minute or two. Allow yourself to enjoy the peace and calm that silence can bring.</p>

Develop Reappraisal Strategies and Build Your Support System

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Reappraise.

Try reappraisal to change the emotional impact of a situation. Cognitive reappraisal¹³⁰ is a strategy whereby an individual thinks about a situation to lessen the impact of anxiety or stress. Emotional suppression does the opposite. Cognitive reappraisal involves explaining events to yourself in ways that help rather than hurt. It is fundamental for athletes to regulate their emotional states prior to, during, and after competitions. You reframe an event to reduce the negative emotions you feel. This internal dialogue is constructive rather than destructive.¹³¹

1. Think of the stress event from the perspective of a third person to remain detached. Rather than immersing oneself in negative emotions and thoughts, cognitive reappraisal entails taking a step back and viewing a provoking event in an objective way. Is a skill or performance a challenge or a threat?
2. Try picturing the emotional event from the perspective of a third person¹³² and considering any positive features or lessons learned from the event.
3. Ask yourself these questions to help you reappraise: Were there, or will there be, any positive outcomes that result from this situation? Are you grateful for any part of this situation? In what ways are you better off than when you started? What did you learn? How did you grow and develop as a result of this situation?

Ideally, cognitive reappraisal is most effective if it takes place prior to a full-blown emotional response.

Reframe success.

Be your own support system. What you do matters only in how you feel about it.¹³³ Reframing is about choosing the meaning you want to attach to some experience. Content reframing involves:

1. Relaxing thoughts about perfection. High expectations can hold you back¹³⁴ as an athlete.
2. Don't worry about being the best. Think about the ways you can get better at simply being the best at getting better. Practice like it matters. Aim at being consistent. Compete because it is fun.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO *(continued)*

Ask for help.	<p>If you feel overwhelmed, ask for help.</p> <p>Think about who you can lean on in good times and bad. When you find yourself needing support, already knowing your support system can be helpful. Lean on others for support and encouragement. Ask for help. This is not a sign of weakness, but of courage and strength.</p> <p>Try this: Get and receive the right kinds of support from the right kind of people at the time when you are ready. It's very easy to get caught up in the mindset that we need to do everything ourselves, and that individualism is the most important quality. The truth is that we are stronger when we support each other. Asking for help when you need it is a strength that will serve you throughout your life. It is also a critical part of being a member of an athletic team. Social support helps¹³⁵ you cope with stress. Supportive friends and teammates can change our view of a difficult or challenging situation.</p>
Write about it.	<p>Engage in expressive writing. Reappraise a negative event as being less negative. Or reframe a negative event as a positive by writing about it. Ask yourself these questions to reappraise: Were there, or will there be, any positive outcomes that result from this situation? Are you grateful for any part of this situation? In what ways are you better off than when you started? What did you learn? How did you grow and develop as a result of this situation? Also consider writing from a 3rd person perspective.¹³⁶ This will help you evaluate yourself and situations more clearly.</p>

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Support students.	<p>Be more than a coach, be a support. A coach can support students by establishing an open-door policy, where all students feel comfortable approaching coaches in order to seek out resources for coping with challenges related to stress and fear. Ask for help from a mental health expert if you need it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teach some basic ways for students to reappraise their emotions. The jitters, nerves, anxiety, butterflies are only those the sensations our bodies produce in anticipation of a challenge. 2. Listen. Talk with students about what their fears are and how it might cause their minds to overreact. Work together to reframe it.
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WHAT COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Look for the signs.

Look for signs of repeated performance anxiety in students; fast breathing, elevated heart rate, sweating, butterflies in the stomach, muscular tension, negative self-talk, poor concentration, nausea/vomiting, and feelings of weakness. Go from playing not to lose to playing to win. Help students to overcome anxiety.

1. Remind students of their actions, what they have done well in practice.
2. Keep routines in place. Don't introduce anything new. Routines make us comfortable because it is familiar.
3. Help students reframe anxiety. Is it anxiety or excitement they are feeling? Remind them of their individual and group preparation and why they are ready.
4. Reduce outside distractions. Prior to the performance, maintain a calm environment so students can get focused and relaxed.
5. Help students channel energy and focus. Encourage them to use visualization, mindfulness, and other techniques like listening to music to channel their focus to help keep them calm and prepared.
6. Hit the switch. Mimic the energy you want in the competition. 10 minutes before a competition, begin building excitement about the competition. Urge everyone to get in the zone and give it their best effort.

PRACTICE

3

Use Your Capacity for Self-Awareness

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Make sleep sacred.

Take care of yourself. Maintaining optimism is easier when you feel healthy. Lack of sleep, depleted energy from poor eating habits, and too little exercise are all factors that interfere with one's ability to moderate mood and positive energy. For optimal mental focus and performance, take a holistic approach to physical and mental health—sleep, rest, low stress, good diet, and exercise.

Try this: Make sleep sacred! Make sure you get enough sleep. Make at least 8 hours of sleep a goal.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Learn to identify and navigate your emotions.</p>	<p>Use an emotion planner. These planners help to identify and navigate feelings about activities that may occur throughout a day and identify strategies for supporting yourself in managing difficulties that may arise. Mental clutter is all the stuff that goes through your mind that interferes with important thoughts about a performance. Pressure tends to cause you to think about what not to do, instead of what you should do to succeed.</p> <p>Try this: How to use an emotional planner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For any given day, list the activity (for example, a math test), the emotions you are experiencing or anticipate experiencing, and what you can do to manage your emotions. 2. Keeping track of your emotions will allow you to assess your mood over a period of time. It will also allow you to evaluate any changes that you might want to make regarding how you respond to stressful events and what affects your mood during the day. 3. Reflect. What bodily sensations are associated with these emotions? What seems to give rise to these emotions? Determine whether the emotions energize you or saps energy from you; whether they are pleasant or unpleasant.
<p>Learn to assess your strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Self-awareness includes not only assessing your emotional awareness, but also whether your self-assessment is accurate.¹³⁷ We all have weaknesses. We all have strengths. In terms of your sport, try this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write down what you regard as your strengths and then ask yourself if what you wrote down is accurate and why you think that it is a strength. 2. Write down what you think are your weaknesses. Then ask if your assessment is accurate and why you think so. 3. Self-reflect. Be honest with yourself. Take responsibility for your performance. If you think you should be getting more playing time, re-visit whether that thinking is accurate.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Help students conquer the fear of failure.

Understand that fear can influence students to quit.

Fear is a protective mechanism. Fear heightens our awareness, pushing us towards a stress response that leads us to fleeing, fighting, or freezing, depending on what gives us the best chance of survival. When students are faced with an uncertain situation, be it a game or a test, their fear mechanisms activate in an attempt to protect them. When we face fear, we often don't want to experience it again. That is how thoughts of quitting arise. Teach students to attach a different label to the feeling of fear in order to respond differently.

Try this:

1. Help students focus on what they want to happen, not what they don't want to happen.
2. Take the fear out of failure. Redefine failure as just information on how to improve.
3. Help students face their fears, embrace the challenge. If students feel fearful before a competition, it is only because what they are doing is important to them. Remind them that fear and anxiety can be minimized by using relaxation strategies.
4. Keep track of students' individual victories along the season. Remind them of all that they have done, especially when they feel like they can't do something.

ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. (See Scorecard in Principle #1 for more information).

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
I am better able to name specifically the emotions I am experiencing.		
I utilized my support system.		
I practiced relaxing my body.		
I recognize the sensations associated with stress and I am learning to better manage them.		
My coach helped me with self-management and self-regulation strategies.		
I am better able to manage my emotions.		
I incorporated mindfulness into my daily routine.		
Training under pressure and practicing under pressure has helped me in managing performance stress and anxiety.		
I understand my emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence my behavior.		
I recognize how my emotions are information I can choose to harness and use.		

PRINCIPLE

6



COMMITTED GOAL PURSUIT HELPS TURN HOPE AND DREAMS INTO A REALITY

"I always try to start out with some type of goal. Then I work backward and think of what I need to do to get there, and give myself smaller goals that are more immediate."

—KRISTI YAMAGUCHI, OLYMPIC FIGURE SKATER



Goals are how we turn our dreams and values into a reality. Good things don't merely happen. They have to be earned by planning, thinking, and by constantly pursuing them.

All successes come from small beginnings. Goals help connect us from the present to the future. Goals give us direction, a sense of purpose. Goals also give us a sense of control, confidence, and agency over our daily lives. Our successes are a byproduct of overcoming setbacks that occur. Lastly, goals help us to structure our time, prioritizing how we devote energy to things that are meaningful. Goal-setting is a tool to help with self-motivation and drive.

When we have a clear vision of what we want to achieve, goals make it easier to advance towards them. A goal, an explicit commitment, focuses our attention on a target. By setting goals, we create roadmaps. This helps discover ways of getting there. The more effective the map, the better our chances of achieving what we aim to accomplish.

THE BIG PICTURE



WHY IT MATTERS: The process of working towards goals makes you feel good because they are consistent with your values and needs. Goals often function as a motivational force¹³⁸ that energizes and directs our behavior in purposive ways. Oftentimes, simply beginning leads to increased motivation. Begin where you are. Any type of action helps thwart inertia. Goals related to performance are usually based on specificity, difficulty, and intensity. Given adequate ability and commitment to the goal, the harder the goal, the higher the performance.¹³⁹ However, while goals should be challenging, they must be realistic.¹⁴⁰ Goals should always be personally meaningful and authentic to you. Without a sense of ownership, you are less likely to be fully committed to the goal setting process.



WHAT SCIENCE SUGGESTS: Setting goals and working toward them are linked with higher motivation,¹⁴¹ self-esteem, self-confidence, and autonomy. Research has established a strong connection between goal-setting and success.¹⁴² When we make progress towards our goals, we learn that success is in our control.

Studies have shown that when we train our mind to think about what we want in life, work, or sports and how we plan on reaching it, the brain automatically rewires itself.¹⁴³ Working towards a goal becomes an essential part of who we are. Our brain responds accordingly. Our brain coaxes us along until we achieve it, despite obstacles and setbacks. Setting and working to achieve goals leads to autonomy, efficacy which help us to overcome procrastination.

Process goals are specific actions or 'processes' of performing. They are about the journey, not the final destination. Outcome goals – the results of a competition, your stats, the opinion of others – hurts performance. These kinds of goals increase pressure and anxiety. The more worries you have, the less likely you are to be in the moment performing at your best. Process goals are 100% controllable by the individual. Research¹⁴⁴ shows that process goals are more beneficial for increasing performance and self-efficacy than other goal types.

Beliefs that you hold about yourself and your abilities play an important role in your motivation and achievement of your goals. A recent study¹⁴⁵ showed that your desire for comfort could be holding you back when it comes to personal growth. Actively seeking out discomfort¹⁴⁶ could help you achieve your goals.

Coach's Role: Coaches should stress the value of goal setting for students. Help students set a variety of goals. Outcome goals deal with specific results in competition, while performance goals help an athlete make improvements over a period of time.

Adults can sometimes maintain an environment that reinforces¹⁴⁷ and rewards fixed mindsets or false-growth mindsets.¹⁴⁸ For example, telling athletes that winning is everything is a fixed mindset. Fixed feedback also has the same effect. What is being communicated to athletes is that they should focus on outcomes (a fixed mindset) and not the process of learning to play a sport effectively (a growth mindset).

Athletes may believe that failing to achieve a certain goal means that their entire process or plan has failed. Coaches mistakenly respond to an athlete's mistakes or failures; hence, influencing students to develop fixed mindsets (for example, believing that they can't improve) about their abilities. Coaches should promote growth in both their words and actions.

To prevent students from abandoning the goal setting process, it should be clear from the beginning of the season that goals are fluid and can be modified over the season as needed. To help do this, set up regular benchmarks to check on individual or team progress. Make necessary adjustments as needed. Progress is non-linear. Nothing goes according to plan or in a straight line. There are bumps along the way. Take the long view. Obstacles are usually there to test how bad we want to achieve some target.

Students' Role: Goal setting can be one of the most important skills in order to help you optimize your performance. It can help you focus on what is important and give you a sense of control and positive self-direction. Athletes often set goals at any time and for any purpose (e.g., learning a new skill), but goal setting is particularly useful at the beginning of the season. You can collaborate with coaches, teammates, and by yourself to set team and individual goals prior to a new season.

Pre-season goals can help you focus, individually and collectively, on desired outcomes. Goals can create strong team bonds around shared aims. Goals can also help maintain motivation during the season. There may be a time where certain goals may not work for you. The goal itself may no longer align with who we are, and is no longer helpful or meaningful. If the goal is not working, change or adapt it. Occasionally, you may decide that the goal no longer is realistic or possible at this time. This is good self-awareness. At this point, consider adopting a different goal and plan.

Believe in your ability to change and improve. Developing a growth mindset at times will help you gain the confidence to persevere. Psychologists call this a self-fulfilling prophecy, a belief that confirms itself, leading to its own fulfillment.

Make a plan to set goals that are short-term so you can find success daily, process-oriented, specific as to what you want to accomplish, measurable, and realistic but challenging. Don't set the bar too low or you won't feel the satisfaction of achievement. Rely on others to help. Celebrate hitting benchmarks. Use feedback to help keep you on track. Example: "Better defense" is not a good goal because it is not specific enough, but "Bend your knees and get low" is a good and measurable goal. Process, reflect, and learn from inevitable mistakes and set-backs.

Begin where you are. Take action. Psychologists have determined that simply doing something can change how we feel about it. Small steps towards your goals, helps to diminish any doubts. And when you experience small successes, you will feel good, creating an upward spiral¹⁴⁹ of continued effort and motivation. Enjoy the view, not just the ending. The process of working towards a goal, in many ways, is more enjoyable than the contentment felt when we achieve a goal.

Athletic Directors' Role: The core responsibility of an athletic program is to provide resources for coaches and students to attain their goals. Many important kinds of wins won't appear on the scoreboards, especially when it comes to character, sportsmanship, and personal development. The most important aspect of an AD's job is to create a culture that empowers coaches and staff members to nurture students in becoming successful and contributing members of society. Consider providing small spiral notepads to students for coaches to evaluate so each student writes down three goals every day and then feel good when crossing out those that have been achieved

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR COMMITTED GOAL PURSUIT

PRACTICE

1

Setting Goals

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

What is your best future self?

Engage in your best possible future self-writing exercise. How to do this exercise. https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/best_possible_self

This exercise works because you learn about yourself, what you want in life, and what you need to prioritize in your life in order to reach your goals and achieve your dreams. Getting clear on what you want is the first step. Clarity is power.

Try this: For 15 minutes a day, for two weeks of the season, write in a journal or a Google Doc.

1. Take a moment to imagine your life in the future. What is the best possible life you can imagine? Consider all of the relevant areas of your life, such as your career, academic work, relationships, hobbies, and health. What would happen in these areas of your life in your best possible future? You may be tempted to think about ways in which accomplishing goals has been difficult for you in the past, or about the barriers to making these accomplishments happen. For the purpose of this exercise, focus on the future—imagine a brighter future in which you are your best self and your circumstances change just enough to make this best possible life happen. What does this future look like? Write about all of it.
2. Set goals that are sports related and life related. What are some goals you can set that will guide you to attain your best possible future self?
3. Continue writing periodically during the course of the season or the rest of the year.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

<p>Set your goals.</p>	<p>Use the SMART RULE to set your goals. Psychologically, goal-setting works to increase productivity and wellbeing.¹⁵⁰ This can be done by incorporating the SMART rule. SMART goals stand for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S (Specific)—What is your goal? Can you clearly define it? ▪ M (Measurable)—How will you measure your success? What benchmarks will you use? ▪ A (Attainable/Actionable)—Is your goal achievable? What obstacles might you face? What steps do you need to take to achieve it? ▪ R (Realistic)—Is the goal relevant to you? What makes striving for it worth it? ▪ T (Time-bound)—How long do you think it will take to achieve it? Put a date and time on the goal. What's your roadmap to keep you moving forward? <p>Researchers over the years has added to more elements to create SMARTER goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E (Evaluative)—Review and reflect on your progress. How have you been successful? What has not gone well? What obstacles have gotten in your way? ▪ R (Readjust)—Readjust or revise your approach. This is an opportunity to adapt to roadblocks to ensure you reach your target. It does not mean starting over and developing new goals. Try new and different approaches until you find yourself making progress.
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LEARNING POINTS RELEVANT TO THE TEAM

<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Before setting goals, understand what goals are and are not. Understand that goal setting is not a bucket list. Setting and committing to goals are not resolutions we make for ourselves for a new year.</p>
<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Goals should involve approaching a desired outcome, as opposed to avoiding an undesirable outcome. Avoidance goals lead to poorer performance.¹⁵¹ Goals are designed to engage you with life, not avoid outcomes that are often out of our control.</p>
<p>Learning Tip</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Also be certain that your goals are harmonious, that is they don't conflict with any other personal or athletic goals you might have.</p>

Ways to Help You Commit to Your Goals

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO

WOOP up your goals.	<p>Try WOOP-ing your goals. To achieve goals often require behavior changes. The WOOP process is Wish, Outcome, Obstacles, and Plan. You wish, visualize and think about your goal, visualizing the best possible outcome, any obstacles that may arise, and then developing an if-then plan to overcome these obstacles. Apply this to goal setting. If you can realize it and envision it, then you can sustain and achieve a target. These are the keys to successful attainment.</p> <p>Try this: Incorporate this WOOP model into your thinking every day. When you take the time to think about and visualize your goals and have a plan to achieve them, you harness agency and empowerment to become successful in attaining them.</p>
The A,B,Cs of goal setting.	<p>Research has emphasized using the ABC of goal-setting to increase performance. Effective goals are ones that include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A—Achievable ▪ B—Believable ▪ C—Committed to working on them. <p>You are more likely to carry out self-regulatory behaviors if you set manageable goals where you have direct control and that allow you to continuously evaluate your behaviors.</p>
Create a goal map.	<p>Create a Goal Mind Map or a visual representation of your goal setting plan.</p> <p>Try this: This can be done with a drawing, collage, painting, or digital collage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first step is to think about what you want to achieve, so write down all your goals. 2. Think about what it might look like to achieve the goal. 3. Write down all the steps that you think you need to do to accomplish it. 4. Think about what it will feel like to achieve your goal. What do you envision as being the end result; what are the internal and external rewards? 5. How will you celebrate successes and hitting benchmarks? 6. Now with each of the steps to achieve your goal, from beginning to end, find or create visuals that represent each of the different steps. Arrange the photos so they thematically connect. 7. Place your goal map somewhere where you can see it regularly. This will help to visually lay out the steps necessary to achieve your target and give you some motivation as you can track your progress along the way.

WHAT STUDENTS AND COACHES CAN DO *(continued)*

Journal about the process.	<p>Keep a goal journey journal.</p> <p>Try this: Take some time at the end of a day to review and write about your goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write down 3 positives about your day, your goal journey, and any small or large successes you experienced. Writing and reflecting can help to keep you focused, motivated, and feeling more positive. 2. Read your goal journal and reflect. Keeping a journal allows you to keep a record of your progress. One of the best parts of your journal becomes a physical representation of how far you have come. You can look back and be energized by the progress you have made.
Celebrate small successes.	<p>Don't forget to reward yourself for making any kind of progress. Small rewards help push you on to major success. We can lose motivation unless we keep reminding ourselves of why we should attain a goal. Celebrate. Reward yourself. Share your progress with others. A reward might be as simple as saying to yourself, 'Great job!'</p>
Build a support system.	<p>Create a support pod of goal achievement. Nobody does any task of significance by themselves.</p> <p>Try this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relying on others can help you reach your goals and keep you motivated. 2. Research¹⁵² has found that the people we surround ourselves with can have a dramatic impact on our behaviors. Rely on trusted people who help support you. They become your biggest fans and cheerleaders. 3. Reciprocate this positive support. Connecting positively with others is often a great mood booster that can help us increase effort.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO

Talk with the intent to empower.

Engage in effective coaching conversations to help with the attainment of individual goals.

Try this: Sit and have goal conversations with students. Well-conducted debriefs can improve team effectiveness by 25%¹⁵³ across a variety of organizations and settings. Use information from the best possible team goal writing exercise listed above to gain some insight into your team's goals.

Here are some ways to do this:

1. Talk with students to help them set clear and specific goals that are meaningful and constantly changing as the season progresses .
2. Talk with them to define what success will look like, the criteria or benchmarks that will be used to keep track of success. Encouragement of their successful attainment of their goals is about them, not about you.
3. Offer some help when it comes to identifying any potential barriers, and when faced with barriers and setbacks. Help students adapt to setbacks with helpful suggestions, praise, or support.
4. Ask open-ended questions. People learn and grow when you help them to discover answers for themselves. Listen with the intent to empower. Be sure to respect any question or input.
5. Recognize what's going well. Students, like most adults, are really good at self-criticism. Good coaching requires a balance of constructive correction and appropriate praise. If your coaching conversations completely focus on what's not working, you are validating that self-criticism and helping to foster an unintended mindset. And that's not motivating, it's demoralizing.
 - Recognize the things that are being done well. Don't provide shallow praise which can be easily perceived as insincere.
 - Take the time to think about specific growth you have observed, things that are being done well, and help the student realize that you see how they have improved.
 - Point to specific benchmarks. This can give them the extra jolt necessary to help them stay motivated and keep on track.
6. Understand a student's perspective. Be empathetic. When you're coaching to help students improve performance, approaching things from their perspective, rather than your own, can be extremely helpful. Obviously, everyone has different motivations, preferences, and personalities, so understanding individual motivations, preferences, goals, and their processes for attaining such goals is important. You can talk with and support students in a way that aligns with how they work best rather than what you think works best.

WHAT COACHES CAN DO *(continued)***Chart progress.****Help students chart their progress.**

Try this: Any simple form of record keeping is important. Take time after practice and encourage students to set up a performance evaluation system where they can check off if they met an objective for the day. Students may consider this tool to track their progress. <https://www.chartle.com>

Believe!**Constantly express your belief in students' abilities through your words and actions.****Try this:**

1. Simple comments such as "I'm excited about your contributions to our team" and "I really notice the effort you are putting in during that drill" are easy ways to reinforce athletes.
2. Another form of positive reinforcement is to recognize and reward players for their personal improvement.
3. Help students realize their potential. Remind them daily. Repetition¹⁵⁴ has been shown to be the key to habit formation. Help influence¹⁵⁵ students to achieve their goals with the following:
 - Help identify what the athlete wants.
 - Identify why the athlete wants what they want.
 - Develop an action plan to achieve their goals.
 - Utilize tools and resources such as speakers, books, stories, quotes, reflection and/or visualizations to remind, re-establish, and encourage them to pursue their intention.
 - Remind students of their why or their goals.

ASSESS FOR SUCCESS SCORECARD

Time: For each of the suggestive practices, assess yourself at the end of every week or every day. The focus is *how* learning develops over time. Make it a consistent routine to talk as a team. Think of this as another kind of team huddle—an opportunity to connect, regroup, revise, and recommit to practices as needed. A good time to do this might be before or at the end of practice. Take these opportunities to revise and apply corrective and forward-looking changes as needed.

Try this: Collect useful information from students in order to help provide targeted feedback and continued instruction. This can be done either in writing or in small-group feedback discussion sessions. (See Scorecard in Principle #1 for more information).

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGY	SCALE: 1 to 4 1 = never 4 = most of the time	WAYS TO IMPROVE/ QUESTIONS
I worked towards my goal, hitting certain benchmarks I set for myself.		
I created and wrote in my goal journey journal.		
I completed the best possible future self-exercise and reflected on it.		
I identified obstacles to sustaining effort to achieve my goals.		
I established a positive support network/pod.		
I worked on developing positive habits and routines to help in my goal pursuit.		
I evaluated my goals to determine whether they were the “right kind of goals” that would maximize my needs.		
I made an effort to celebrate any successes.		
I asked for help when I faced obstacles or setbacks.		
I am enjoying the process of working towards my goals.		

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