

COURSE CURRICULUM

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

Social and Communication Skills cannot be underestimated in sports and life. You should be able to motivate the kids and participants that you work with and to provide them with information that will allow them to train effectively, improve performance and learn about themselves.

When you who know how to effectively interact with children, you will work with them better, forming a stronger overall team.

When working in groups, conflicts may occur. You need to know the best way to understand, recognise and manage conflict in a way that results in a positive outcome.

This module will equip you with knowledge in order to:

- communicate openly with your participants and have an effective interaction by speaking directly, listening attentively and valuing their opinions, and
- be able to deal with conflicts and thus increase motivation and creativity, encourage team performance and develop tolerance.

CHAPTER 2: STRUCTURED CONTENT

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Whenever groups are together, there is always a potential for conflict to occur. Conflict often gets perceived as only having negative outcomes. But depending on the nature of the conflict, effective conflict management is often about improving communication within the team. This can have positive outcomes: increased motivation and creativity, and new ideas as people look for new approaches. It can lead to clarification of issues and ideas, encourage team performance and cohesion, increase tolerance, trust within relationships, productivity and a sense of achievement. Managing conflict in sport and groups is all about attempting to get the most positive outcomes out of a conflict situation. The key is learning how to manage emotions. Learning how to identify the triggers, and how to catch hold of emotions in the heat of the moment is vital.

Teaching children to manage their emotions also becomes a vital part of a Playmaker's role. You will need to manage conflict in a skillful manner, as undoing the damage caused in the heat of a moment response can sometimes take a long time and a great deal of effort.

When this is coupled with the highly personal relationship between you and a child or team members, managing conflict in sport in a skillful way becomes even more important.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

There are five conflict management styles:

- Avoidance

You avoid conflict. You hope that the problem will be resolved itself without confrontation. You remain calm and help de-escalate emotions. Major conflict tends to grow worse when it isn't addressed, but in some circumstances avoiding can be a profitable conflict management strategy.

- Accommodation

You are likeable and lovable in most situations. You want and need harmony. You will accept blame just to bring peace to angry situations. This management conflict style gives the opposite side what it wants.

- Competition

You are strong, courageous, assertive and bring a conflict out in the open quickly. You are a leader that can confront bullies. This strategy works best in a limited number of conflicts, such as emergency situations.

- Compromise

You are communicative and willing to find win-win or lose-lose compromises. Often you are able to craft intelligent intermediate solutions and calls for both sides to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable position.

- Collaboration

You can build trust, respect and deeper relationship. You have integrity, are not tied to your way and tends to have an open mind for pragmatic solutions that create a win-win experience and is acceptable to everyone. Though this is an ideal style, it can be difficult because there must be two willing parties to collaborate – which is not always an option.

It is important to consider these different styles, especially as they relate to who you are. Do you tend to use one type more than the other? Is one strategy easier for you? Are you satisfied in the result this strategy brings you, both in short- and long-term? What kind of situations call for which style?

It is also important to recognize the nature of the conflict, and the personalities of those involved. These factors will also influence which strategy you perceive to be the best one, and the one you choose to use.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY – SPOKEN COMMUNICATION

Poor communication and social skills are responsible for reduced performance in sports and in life. If you learn to communicate effectively with children, you can deliver positive feedback and constructive criticism in ways that influence performance – in the sports arena and in life.

Your ability to communicate effectively is directly related to children's feelings. Only someone who feels good and satisfied can perform to the highest of their ability.

Effectively conveying the goals of the team for the season, or the task at hand, is also a critical aspect of communication. If the team does not understand the goal for the week, season or year, members may also feel disengaged with the team and therefore less likely to produce at peak performance.

Fostering this knowledge in players is primarily the responsibility of you as a Playmaker and your Playmaker team. Positive communication and social skills in sports can also benefit common practices like pre-practice meetings or when your team and you can come together to give feedback, discuss strategies and set goals for the day. In addition, teams that promote positive communication and respect among players improve overall motivation.

Effective communication contains six elements. It must be:

Clear: The information must be presented simply and clearly, in a way that can be understood.

Concise: You should be concise. Do not lose the message by being long-winded.

Correct: Be accurate, and avoid misleading information.

Complete: Give all the information and not just part of it.

Courteous: Be polite and non-threatening. Avoid conflict.

Constructive: Be positive. Avoid being critical and negative.

When giving negative feedback, or making suggestions to do things differently, it is also important to train yourself to say something positive first, and then providing the information. You can also try something called the burger method, where the negative feedback is sandwiched (like a hamburger) between two positive pieces of feedback.

Listening is also an important part of communication, and it is essential that you are an active listener. Be aware of how your instructions and feedback affect the children you are with.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY – NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION DETAILS

In order to have proper non-verbal communication, there are some important habits you can train yourself in. For example:

- **Maintain eye contact:**

Eye contact during conversation is a great social skill.

- **Use proper body language:**

Non-verbal clues can provide plenty of information. Are your arms crossed in front of you? Are you tapping your foot or chewing a pen? Are you doing something with your body that suggests that you might be angry / aggressive, or distracted, unsure, or unprofessional?

- **Know the difference between being assertive and being aggressive**

Share your opinion in a way that does not offend those you are with. Pay attention to the reaction your opinion brings out in others and adjust your delivery of the message.

- **Have flexibility and cooperation:**

Remain flexible and open to another solution

- **Accept criticism without being defensive**

Listen to what is being said and absorb the information, even though you may not have asked for the critique.

- **Remain positive at all times**

Positive people attract more positivity. Focus on being a person who, in the face of adversity, does not focus on self-pity, doubt and negativity. Be a person who looks for solutions.

- **Show respect for others**

Respecting someone reveals caring, admiration and honor to the other person.

CHAPTER 3: INDIVIDUAL PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

These individual activities can be done by you, the Playmaker, at home or at a quiet time by yourself, when you have time to reflect upon communication and conflict strategies.

FIRST INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: CASE STUDY ABOUT CONFLICT

Purpose: To experience a situation that might call for a communication strategy

Tools: Presentation of the video

Duration: 10 minutes

Watch the movie (3 minutes) and answer the questions:

- How do you feel?
- What did you see?
- What would you do as a Playmaker if these boys were on your team?
- Make suggestions for conflict management at sports.

SECOND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: BE AWARE OF YOUR ANGER DETAILS

Communication, social and conflict management skills demand self-awareness concerning feelings and thoughts and mainly anger management.

- What are your own warning signs?

Think about how you feel when you get angry. Check the warning signs you often have when you get angry. Write in signs that aren't listed.

My warning signs are:

- Tense muscles
- Tight fists
- Clenched jaw
- Sweaty palms
- Racing heartbeat
- Fast breathing
- Trembling or feeling shaky
- Feeling warm or flushed
- Upset stomach
- Loud or mean voice

- When you get angry, ask yourself:

Are my level of anger and my reaction out of proportion to the trigger?

Do you seem to overreact to minor annoyances? Perhaps there is something else on your mind that is making you angry?

Am I directing my anger at an innocent person?

Are you actually angry with the person who triggered your feelings? For example, suppose you have a disagreement with your boss. It bothers you all day, but you say nothing. Later, you let your anger out by blowing up at your partner or child or friend.

Am I taking something personally? Learning to deal well with anger means learning not to take problems or arguments personally.

Is this how I usually respond in similar situations?

You may respond with anger in certain situations because that's what you've always done. You may have learned this behavior growing up. But you can change the way you react.

Am I trying to take control of my anger?

Anger is a common reaction when a person feels as if he or she is losing control. But the best way to show control is to react calmly and manage your feelings.

THIRD INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: STOP – THINK – ACT

Emotions are never wrong. However, sometimes behavior is.

When your initial, emotional response is one of negative anger, it is important to try to STOP, and regain some calm, before the negative emotion causes you to act out negatively.

The first step is to use a time out technique to press the pause button and buy yourself some time. You then have time to think about what you might do next. It is important that you think about the consequences or costs and benefits of each option and decide whether you think that it will work.

Then, after you deliberate, you need to put it into action. Think about what you might feel comfortable doing next time you feel your anger rising.

· What will I do to press the pause button? (Walk away, count to ten, distract yourself, keep quiet / bite your tongue)

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· What things might I try to stop me getting angry? (breathing, self-talk, exercise, talking to someone I trust, assertiveness)

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FOURTH INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: SELF-REFLECTION

Purpose: While in a calm setting, to reflect upon your usual behavior in stressful or conflict situations in order to get to know yourself better.

Tools: One worksheet, below.

Duration: 10 minutes

Write your correct behaviour according to different situation:

CHAPTER 4: GROUP PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

These group activities might be useful for you when you are working with your players out in the zone. In addition to doing sports activities and energizers, it can also be a great idea for you to challenge the children in new ways.

FIRST GROUP ACTIVITY – COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAY

This is a practical exercise that can help practice communication and social skills. It contains communication rules, rules for the speaker and rules for the listener.

Split the group up into pairs. The pairs should role-play, having discussions according to the rules given below. It is recommended to change partners throughout the exercise.

Playmakers should create your own topics and scenarios inspired by your experiences, and by what will be most relevant for the kids you are working with.

The speaker is the one that brings up the topic in the conversation.

The speaker's rules are:

Express feelings in a way that the other person won't be offended, for example "I'm angry with you because..." or, "I'm bothered about..."

Express opinions without being dogmatic and unspecific, talking only about himself, for example: "I believe...", "In my opinion...", "I think...", "For me..".

Make a statement relevant to the topic with empathy, for example "I understand that..."

Express something positive, for example "However, I know that..."

Describe what exactly you want from the listener, for example "So I think that you could..."

Describe the feelings if the desire will be fulfilled, for example "If this happens, I will feel..."

The listener's rules are:

Try to understand the speaker's thoughts and feelings.

Try not to interrupt or disagree with the speaker

Try not to give your own opinion

Listening only:

Repeat in the listener's own words what he/she heard, and wait for feedback.

Both of them should be careful with their non-verbal communication, like gestures and movements.

The speaker and listener roles should be switched so that children get to try listening and speaking.

When the role-playing is finished, the participants should discuss together their feelings and their difficulties, give advice and feedback.

SECOND GROUP ACTIVITY – WHAT SHOULD THE PLAY-MAKER DO?

This is another practical exercise that can be used by the Playmaker as a tool for conflict management.

Participants should be separated in two groups and given the scenarios that are described below.

They should read the descriptions and discuss the best management strategy in the situation described.

The children can discuss how the Playmaker should react, what he/she should say, etc.

After the discussion one representative from each group presents the work of the group.

Then, facilitate a discussion among all participants giving feedback, alternative ideas and other opinions.

Scenario for group one – *At a dancing practice a child comes to the Playmaker and complains about being treated unfairly because he wasn't in the group that took part in the final festival. He is angry and aggressive. His behavior has been inappropriate several times; he is always late for the lessons, argues with the other children and he was absent from the rehearsals.*

You are the Playmaker. Discuss how you can manage this conflict.

Scenario for group two - *On a football team three players who are ambitious and striving more for success have come to a conflict with four team members who didn't play well during the last performance; they see those four players as a barrier to their success. They blame and offend them.*

You are the Playmaker. Discuss how you can manage this conflict.

THIRD GROUP ACTIVITY – NO WORDS

Playmakers should be broken up into pairs. They must try to communicate without speaking for ten minutes.

After those ten minutes, they should discuss their feelings and if they indeed were able to communicate without speaking. Then pairs share their conclusions to all.

There should be an emphasis on the fact that good communication depends on non-verbal behavior.

FOURTH GROUP ACTIVITY – CATCH MY NAME

DETAILS

The participants should sit in a circle and throw a ball to each other. The one who gets the ball should tell his or her name and some information about his or herself in order to be introduced. After introducing him or herself to the team, he or she throws the ball to someone else who should do the same. All participants should introduce themselves. Then the last one who has the ball and has just introduced him or herself throws the ball to someone else. The one who has now the ball should remember and repeat what the one who passed the ball has said about him or herself.

There should be an emphasis on the fact that good communication relies on the speaker being clear, but also upon the listener doing active listening and paying attention.

CHAPTER 5: LEARNER SUPPORT AND SOURCES

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QUIZ

