

Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Strengthening your players' ability to express emotions

While coaching players through the season you most likely encounter a roller coaster of emotions experienced by your players. You will encounter joy and (over-) excitement as much as disappointment, frustration and anger. These emotions are normal for anyone with a passion for the game and will to win, but need to be taken seriously. Emotions such as anger and frustration are often much stronger in a child that has been traumatized (see symptoms of trauma). It is crucial that players learn to recognise feelings within themselves that could lead to violence, and it is important that they learn to express these emotions verbally. If not expressed and dealt with constructively these emotions can lead to violent behaviour towards the self (e.g. drug abuse, or even suicide) or towards others (e.g. revenge acts).

Below you find an example how to encourage players to deal with these emotions such as frustration and disappointment in a constructive manner. Having learned this in the context of football, may allow players to apply this in other spheres of life.

Steps in managing emotions:

- ☞ Acknowledge the emotion the child is expressing, for example: "I can see you are very ..."
- ☞ Externalise the problem: Ask the child what caused this: "What is making you ...?"
- ☞ Ask the child about how they have coped with this emotion before: "When you have felt this way before what helped you calm down or feel better?"
- ☞ If there are kids watching you may want to ask them what are some of the things they have done that helped them when they were feeling this way. Involve the other children. Fostering connections with kids in front of other kids is important. Just identify the issue and pull the other children in to help each other, foster team work and connection between them.
- ☞ Try to get the child to try one of these strategies

The five steps above can be done with other emotions too such as anger, disappointment, frustration, jealousy. You will get to know what each child needs to do to manage their emotions. You can remind children what helped on previous occasions.



Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Helping players to deal with emotions through football exercises

As much as it is important to help players to express their emotions, it is also important to help players to tackle the causes for the emotional outbursts. Football exercises can help you to do so. Below you find some examples:

- ❖ Frustration or disappointment about a lost game or bad performance by an individual player: run exercises that are fun and give player(s) a sense of success. This will help to (re-)build confidence. Then identify weak spots of the team / player and design exercises that help the team / player to improve his / her play
- ❖ Fear or anxiety: Often fear and anxiety make a person passive. If a player is scared of a specific exercise (e.g. being the goal keeper or heading a ball) introduce the task step by step, turning it into a fun exercise and giving positive feedback on each step achieved)

See the **Case Study Boxes** in the **Appendix** of this manual for an example of how to encourage players to deal with emotions such as frustration and disappointment in a constructive manner. Having learned this in the context of football, may allow players to apply this in other spheres of life.



Notes

LESSON 7.1

Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Football Exercises

Using Football Exercises regarding the Topic

The emotions listed below represent those that will be focused on in this lesson. They are incorporated in the Football Exercises on the following pages.



Types of Equipment useful for these Exercises

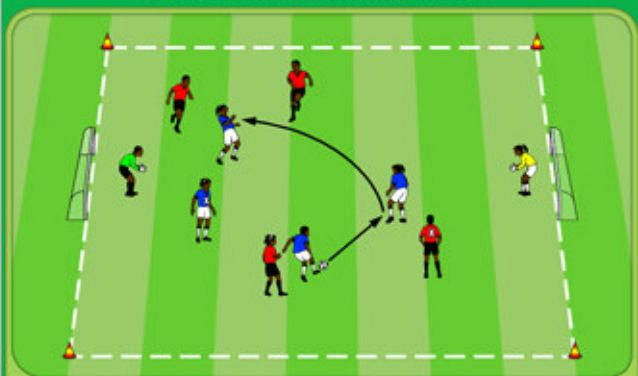


Information regarding the topics 'Coaching Basics' (Supplement 3), 'Preparation of Training' (Supplement 4) and 'All Sides of Training' (Supplement 5), have been added in the 'Work Sheets - Supplements' section of this manual.

Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Football Exercises

ANGER / FRUSTRATION



Outsider Game

- Two teams play against each other.
- Both teams have an outsider who will not be included in the course of the game. Their teammates do not pass the ball to them.
- After 5 minutes, the outsider tells the other players what kind of feeling not getting the ball and being an outsider is.



The coach has to take care that the chosen outsiders are players who are highly self-confident.

Also, after the exercises, discuss the emotions triggered during the activities. This will help make the learning experience more conscious for the players.

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN

HAPPINESS / PRIDE



5-on-5 + 1

- Mark a pitch of 15m x 25m with two goals with goalkeepers.
- Divide the players into two teams.
- The teams play 5-on-5 against the goals with goalkeepers.
- The playing time is three times ten minutes.
- One player (+1) will always be on the side with ball possession. Thus always being on the attacking side.



Teamspirit and self-determination are encouraged in a game such as this one.

Pointers

- Let the players play without rules and regulations.

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN

LESSON 7.1

Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Football Exercises

FEAR / ANXIETY



Ensure that the other players don't pick on the player who failed to score.



Penalty Shooting with Penalty for missed Shots

- ☞ Place a goal on the goal line.
- ☞ Mark a line 11 metres in front of the goal.
- ☞ The players line up behind the marked line and take a shot at goal, one after the other.
- ☞ When a goal shot is missed, the whole team has to run a lap around the pitch. This process must be repeated after every miss.

Variations

- ☞ Let the players come up with different but realistic penalties.

Include in training session: WARM UP **MAIN PART** CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN

EXCITEMENT



Consider combining these two exercises.



Penalty Shooting with Reward for Success

- ☞ Place a goal on the goal line.
- ☞ Mark a line 11 metres in front of the goal.
- ☞ The players line up behind the marked line and take a shot at goal, one after the other.
- ☞ This time, the success of a goal must be celebrated! The player who shot a goal runs down 'Victory Lane' and collects high-fives and praise from his team mates.

Variations

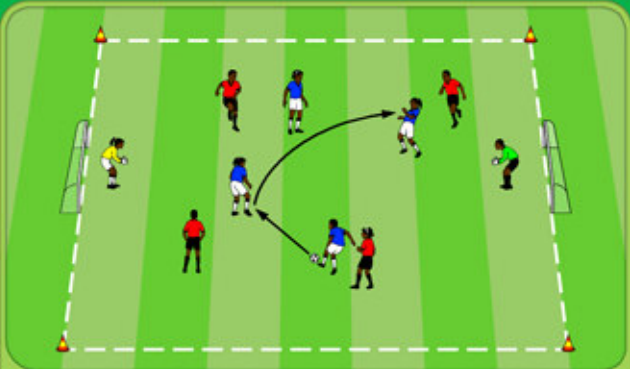
- ☞ Let the players come up with different but realistic rewards.

Include in training session: WARM UP **MAIN PART** CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN

Strengthening Players' Ability to Express and Deal with Emotions

Football Exercises

DISAPPOINTMENT



Standard Game with Surprise Spectator

- Two teams play against each other.
- Both teams have an equal chance at victory at first, however, the coach will remove a player from a team during the match.
- The chosen player will now observe as a spectator only and will no longer participate in the game.



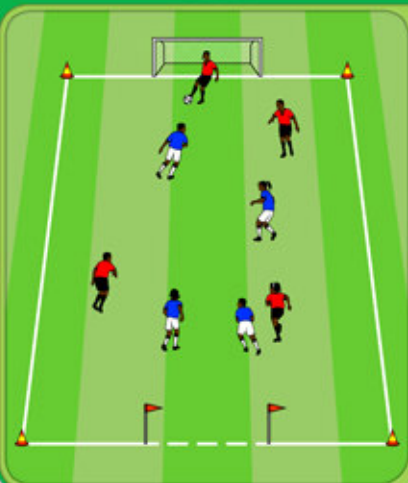
The coach has to take care that the chosen player is highly self-confident.

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART **CONCLUSION** COOLING DOWN

The encouragement of Hope lets the players experience the feeling that there is a positive end to many situations - no matter how difficult, or bad, they may seem.



HOPE



One large goal and one small goal

Organisation / Procedure

- Set up a large goal and a small dribble goal on the baselines opposite each other.
- One player of the team that is defending the standard goal acts as a 'flying' goalkeeper.

Pointers

- **Motivation:** After half-time of a match, change sides (everyone wants a chance to see his ball at the back of the net!).
- **Emphasis:** Play at one standard goal and two pass goals.
- **Quick orientation:** After scoring a goal, the team keeps the ball and attacks the other goal (sudden switch of sides!).

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART **CONCLUSION** COOLING DOWN