

AAHERD 2011



Developing Mental Skills for Teaching and Coaching

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Presentation Agenda

I. Introduction to mental skills training for sport or physical education

II. Mental Skills

- Goal setting
- Visualization
- Confidence Building
- Self-talk
- Team building



Goal setting

Questions from coaches/teachers about

Why set goals?

To create focus and commitment

To improve immediate and long-term effort

To learn what works and what does not work

What goals should I set?

Individual

Team

Improvement goals

Practice goals

Competition goals

Short and long-terms goals

How do I create an effective goal setting process?

SMART goals



Goal setting process

Teach the process of setting SMART goals:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timeline

- Make the goals specific and measurable
 - For example, mile-run time, batting average, shooting percentage, number of rebounds, number of yards gained, defensive stops, number of touchdowns, passing yards
 - Put the measurable goals in writing

- Divide the goal into small, attainable & realistic steps
 - The goals will seem easier to reach
 - Take pride in each achieved goal
 - Set realistic goals
 - help your student athletes develop an understanding of realistic goals
 - remember that their goals are often influenced by their families
 - Previous success determines what is realistic for each student-athlete

- Teach student-athletes how to set improvement goals, practice goals, and competition goals
 - Improvement goals (excellent for physical education fitness units. For example, improving mile run time)
 - Have athletes set practice goals (develops ownership and investment in practice)

- Set deadlines for attaining each goal
 - goals help to increase immediate focus and effort (e.g., decreasing turnovers)

- Evaluate and set new goals following goal attainment

- Set a variety of types of goals



My improvement goals

Week _____

This week I want to improve on the following two areas:

In priority order they are:

Goal #1 _____

Goal #2 _____

My strategies to reach my goals are:

Goal #1 _____

Goal #2 _____

Something that could stand in the way of reaching my goals is:

If I experience this barrier I will:



Goal evaluation

Week _____

Which of my goals did I reach this week?

What did I improve upon this week in practice?

What goals did I NOT reach?

Why did I NOT reach my practice goals?

What do I need to carry into next week?



Visualization/ Mental Practice

What is mental imagery?

Using all the senses to recreate or create successful skill execution

Why use it?

No physical fatigue

Performer can mentally practice on his/her own

Refining skills that are naturally part of sport skill attempts

Can help reinforce teaching/coaching cues

Recreating success. See yourself correctly executing the skills you are already doing well. This may help the performer reinforce pride in his/her performance. This works well with skills that focus on form. Start with the easiest skills and then progress to more difficult skills. Describe a skill below that you teach or coach. Break it down into parts. For example track and field events or gymnastics or dance routines.

Have the student go through the images of those skills or teaching cues in their mind and then physically execute them.

Ask athletes/students:

Were your images clear, detailed, and did you see the skill to completion and success?

Yes_____ No_____

If no, what part was unclear? _____

Correcting skills: See yourself correcting any techniques/moves that your coaches have asked you to work on or that are more difficult. Start with the easiest part to correct and then add in more components. Describe two of those skills below in detail:

Take a moment and go through the images

Were your images clear, detailed, and did you see the task to completion?

Yes _____ No _____

If no, what part was unclear?

Creating new images: (work on seeing yourself successfully performing at the next level). In detail, describe one skill you want to improve upon from last practice or competition

Take a moment and go through the images

Were your images clear, detailed, and did you see the task to completion?

Yes _____ No _____

If no, what part was unclear?

Summary:

Teach performer how to see, hear and feel their sport skills in their mind

Have them practice a routine or successful performance 10-15 times in their mi



Confidence

Increasing athlete confidence: An athlete's self confidence is the degree to which they believe they can be successful. Here are some tips for improving athletic confidence.

- Past performance impacts current confidence
 - Help athletes focus on the *positive* aspects of past performance.
- Provide good demonstrations of success
 - Providing good examples of success through demonstrations or other examples helps build confidence. Teammates can affect each other's confidence in many ways both positive and negative.
- The coach affects confidence
 - Be mindful of not only what is said but how it is said. Your words and actions matter: how a message is delivered affects confidence more than what is actually said.
- The athlete affects their own confidence
 - Athlete's own thoughts and physiological reactions to pressure situations affect performance. Take the time to find out how your athletes respond to pressure situations.
 - Athletes can learn techniques to regulate their anxiety and manage negative thoughts. Help athletes select words that will impact confidence and help them relax.
- Remember that success does NOT automatically equal confidence
 - Help athletes see each event as a challenge rather than a threat
 - Increased success can increase perceptions of pressure which can decrease confidence
 - Confidence changes with task difficulty.
- Confident athletes think confident thoughts
 - Help athletes develop positive thinking skills



Effective Thinking

Thinking: We can never stop thinking BUT WE CAN think differently.

- Have positive statements ready before you need them.
 - For example, "I can do this, I've been here before, energize, next one's mine!"
- Have an interrupter word when you start thinking negative.
 - No, Stop, Now, or breath may be good choices
- Talk yourself out of worrying about what has NOT happened.
 - Have you ever talked yourself into a fight with someone in your mind before you ever saw that person?
 - If and when this happens, have something to get yourself back on track like, "Get real!"
- Stress is mostly what we think of things not the things themselves.
 - Everyone has demands placed on them; training, tests, games but it's more about the way you look at the demands. If you start out looking at it like a drag it will DRAG you down.
- Focus on what's going well.
 - Write down 3 or more things you are grateful for
 - Post it where you will see it every day

The way I think affects the way I perform

1. Write down three Negative thoughts that you have had about your performance.

2. For each thought identify when you have these thoughts (e.g., just before the competition begins, time-outs, after mistakes) and how often

When

How often

3. When we start to go into a pattern of negative thinking we need to have a trigger word to interrupt the thought. Pick a trigger word that means something to you. Obvious choices are “stop or no”. Others may be “I can” or some word that helps interrupt the pattern.

4. For each negative thought describe in-detail a positive replacement thought. For example, “I have been behind before and I can come back if I keep focused” or “I am prepared for this and know what I need to do”

5. Have your positive focus word before negative thinking creeps in. Have athlete repeat it over and over. Fill the space that negative thoughts try to occupy. This can also be a song or a tune that the athlete repeats

In summary,

- start by tracking the frequency and timing of your negative thoughts
- have a key word that interrupts your negative thinking
- have a set thought, phrase or statement that you can replace it with
- say it over and over



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What is a Team?

- A team is a group of interdependent individuals who have complementary skills and are committed to a shared, meaningful purpose and specific goals.
- They have a common, collaborative approach, clear roles and responsibilities, and hold themselves mutually accountable for the team's performance.
- Effective teams display confidence, enthusiasm, and seek continuously to improve their performance.

Characteristics of effective teams

Real teams are characterized by the following:

- A shared, meaningful purpose or mission
- A set of specific and measurable goals
- A common and collaborative work approach
- Well-defined roles and responsibilities
- Mutual accountability for the team's response
- The skills required to do the job and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement
- Passion, as demonstrated by confidence and enthusiasm to do their best

What impacts team effectiveness?

- Breakdown in communication
- Confusion about roles
- Lack of trust between team members

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

Please indicate the extent to which the following problems are impacting team effectiveness.

	Not At All		Some Impact		High Impact
1. Complaints within the team	1	2	3	4	5
2. Confusion about roles	1	2	3	4	5
3. Unclear expectations	1	2	3	4	5
4. Lack of clear goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Low commitment to goals	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lack of initiative	1	2	3	4	5
7. Problems with team leaders/captains	1	2	3	4	5
8. Players do not listen to each other	1	2	3	4	5
9. Players do not speak up & contribute ideas	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lack of trust	1	2	3	4	5
11. Decisions are made that people do not understand	1	2	3	4	5
12. Decisions are made that people do not support	1	2	3	4	5
13. People feel that teamwork is valued	1	2	3	4	5
14. People are not encouraged to work together	1	2	3	4	5
15. There is favoritism with respect to playing time, how people are treated, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
16. People do not keep commitments	1	2	3	4	5
17. Only few people have say in decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Team meetings are ineffective	1	2	3	4	5
19. There is a lack of information sharing among all team members	1	2	3	4	5
20. The team members do not have good working relationships	1	2	3	4	5

Individual Scoring: Add up the scores for the 20 items. 90+ team building should be a top priority for your team. If you scored your team between 85-75, you should seriously consider a team building session. If you scored your team between 74-50, there is some evidence that team building is warranted. This is particularly true if your score on seven to ten items is very high. If your score is 49-20, there is little evidence your team needs team building.

Group Scoring: If you administered this checklist to a group, calculate the group average and use the same scoring parameters as above. Identify those questions that have a broad distribution of responses from low to high. For example, three individuals responded 1, two individuals responded 3, and four individuals responded 5 in answering to a particular question. This indicates a need to address the issue, either through team building or some alternative.

Adapted from Payne, V. (2001). *The Team-Building Workshop: A Trainer's Guide*. Amacom: NewYork, NY

Name: COMMONALITIES

Purpose Team building; Getting to know you; Getting to know you better

Level of Physical Activity Low

Estimated Time 10 minutes

Props None

This is a way for people to get to know one another by exploring the commonalities they have. Use it with groups of people who do not know one another, or with those who do for added insight and understanding, or as an introduction to team building or a diversity topic.

Instructions

Begin with finding a partner and identify three unique items you have in common (i.e. hometown, food, TV show, etc.). Once you have your three items identified, raise your hands to find another set of partners who are ready to join you to form a group of four. Now the group of four is to identify two items you all have in common. Encourage each other to dig deep for commonalities but you cannot use items you have previously identified. Finally, when you are ready, raise your hands to connect with another group of four to make a group of eight. The goal for the group of eight is to find ONE unusual event, interest or activity that all have of you have in common. The groups of eight will report to the full team at the end of the activity.

Adapted from: Cain, J., Cummings, M., & Stanchfield, J. (2005). *Teachable Moments: A Facilitator's Guide to Activities for Processing, Debriefing, Reviewing and Reflection*. Kendall Hunt: Dubuque, IA.

Name; HOT AIR EXPRESS**Purpose** Team building; Energizer; Pure Fun**Group Size** 16-100**Level of Physical Activity** High**Estimated Time** 10 minutes**Props** Balloons, one color per group – one per person plus extras

This is fun, high-energy, competitive activity for building team and achievement. Use it with groups to energize, to use as an example of problem solving, and for a sense of fun.

Instructions

1. Mark locations in the room for groups to begin and to move balloons to. This could be corners, boxes or circles made with tape, or one solid line.
2. Organize participants into groups of eight to fifteen.
3. Give each person one balloon to blow up and tie off.
4. Explain the activity:
 - The object is for groups to get their balloons to the designated area before other groups. The first group to get all of their balloons into that area is the winning group.
 - Groups must put their hands behind them and clasp them; they may not use their hands to move balloons.
 - Once the activity begins, the strategy may change, but participants must, at all times, keep their hands clasped behind their backs.
5. Give groups one minute to strategize.
6. At the end of one minute, make sure they are positioned, then give the signal to begin.
7. Allow all groups to complete the task before ending the activity.
8. Announce groups in the order they completed the task.

(Adapted from: West, E. (1997). *201 Icebreakers: Group Mixers, Warm-ups, Energizers, and Playful Activities*. McGraw Hill: New York, NY.)

Name: **STAR QUALITY**

Purpose Team building; Goal setting

Group Size 4-40

Level of Physical Activity Medium

Estimated Time 10 minutes

Props Five-pointed stars drawn on large pieces of paper or poster board (one per small group); tape or flip charts; markers (one per small group)

Instructions

1. Organize participants into small groups (i.e. position groups). Place one of the large stars near each group.
2. Provide a definition of qualities.
3. Give small groups two minutes to brainstorm the qualities needed for achieving team goals.
4. After two minutes, instruct small groups to choose their top five qualities and write them inside the five points of their star.
5. When points are filled in, instruct groups to agree on other star qualities and list them in the center of the star.
6. Once all groups have their stars completed, have the full team come together to develop one star for the full team and the **TEAM'S STAR** with the **FIVE TEAM GOALS** (full team).

Adapted from: West, E. (1997). *201 Icebreakers: Group Mixers, Warm-ups, Energizers, and Playful Activities*. McGraw Hill: New York, NY.

Name: MOVING TEAM JUGGLE

Description

This activity is a variation of the cooperative team juggle activity from *The Cooperative Sports and Games Book* by Terry Orlick (1978).

Success Criteria

To pass the three balls from team member to team member in an exact order while moving around the gym and not allowing a ball to touch the floor.

Equipment

Three foam balls – either footballs or soccer balls.

Set-up

The group stands in a circle. One of the team members holds the three foam balls. When everyone is ready, the person starts tossing the three balls, one at a time, to a team member across the circle. Teammates continue to pass the balls around the circle until everyone has had a chance to catch all three balls. The last person to catch should be the person who started the rotation. Each team member must remember to whom he or she tossed the ball and that person's name.

Rules & Sacrifices

1. If a ball hits the ground, the group must start the process over.
2. When the group was standing in a circle tossing and catching, the primary purpose was to learn the rotation. Before starting the balls around a second time, group members must be moving.
3. The team may not move as a unit. Team members must jog in different directions around the gym while attempting to pass and catch in the same rotation as they did in the circle.

Possible Solutions

Students must be very alert as balls will come at them one right after another. Also, students must remember who threw to them and who they throw to.

Conclusion to the Task

When all three balls have been successfully passed in the correct rotation the task is complete.

Additions & Variations

- Use fewer balls.

- Allow the team to move as a unit.
- At the instructor's signal, team members must change the way they move.

When several teams attempt this challenge at once, the activity becomes quite difficult.

Safety Considerations

The students are not only moving among their classmates in the gym, they are also throwing and catching. Caution them to be aware of others and avoid contact.

Midura, D. W. & Glover, D. R. (2005). *Essentials of Team Building: Principles and Practices*. Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL.