Communication in Sport
Important Webinar Feature
Welcome!

How a speech-language pathologist ended up working for the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness, and why

Ashley Frazier, M.S. CCC-SLP
06/03/15 Webinar
Communication

“The transmission of thoughts or feelings from the mind of a speaker to the mind of a listener”
(Borden, Harris, & Raphael, 1994, p. 174)
Purpose – what are you doing with it?

Functional
Informational
Instructional
Relational

To persuade/convince
To socialise

To instruct
To recount
To explain
To inquire
To entertain

Code switching – adapt all aspects of communication appropriately - totally context driven
Sport & Communication

This intersection is more complicated than it seems
Context & Purpose

• Advertising, marketing, building excitement (relational, informational)
• Mobilizing fans and supporters (relational)
• Communication of mission, policies, expectations (informational, instructional)
• Athletics department to broader campus (collaborative, informational)
• Within department (cooperative)
• Coach-athlete, coach-coach, admin-coach, athlete-athlete (instructional, relational)
Why do we care?

- Athletics important “brand” for universities – relationships with alumni, recruiting, campus spirit, sometimes income producing
- S-A missteps can have costly impact on brand
- Unique role – balancing student with athlete
- Criticism of athletics culture often targets coaches/leadership
- Coaches need to be able to support overall well-being of athletes by identifying potential problems and connecting athletes to help
- Perceived lack of student-athlete well-being is damaging to university
- Student-athletes with undetected well-being issues are at risk
- Student-athlete well-being is mission of NCAA and university
Coach-athlete relationship

- Communication is one of the key mediators of this relationship
  - communication is acknowledged as a critical piece in the puzzle that is the art and science of coaching; perhaps even the most important element – Culver & Trudel, 2000
  - the ability to communicate effectively is a distinguishing characteristic of great coaches: learning when to communicate with players is an intangible art, a skill that separates the competent coach from the great one – Bloom, Schinke, Salmela 1996
  - Communication cited as essential skill in multiple coaching models
Coaching Communication

Use the right style for your purpose

• Coaches are generally good at communication within the sport context
• In coaching for sport performance a **directive/instructive style is appropriate and effective**
• But what about the other roles of coaches – developing effective adults, mentorship, strong team members, people who will be excellent decision makers, handling well-being issues?

• Conversations about well-being are **more effective when a guiding/partnership style** is used
• IPAHW – Coaches Assist
Developing a Healthy Culture

• Words, Labels, and our changing environment
  – Offensive, derogatory language unwelcome
  – Maculinity and sport
  – Not only unkind, it’s not EFFECTIVE
Developing a Healthy Culture

- using language that is respectful, kind, and specific/accurate is a goal both in the realms of developing well-being AND in effectively coaching sport performance. It is important to notice this language and make an effort to eradicate it and replace it in your athletics culture.
- **Notice it: commit to paying attention**
- **Do something about it: Say Something!**
  - Bystander Education
  - Coded Language
Summary

Two specific ways you can start to think about communicating more effectively within your athletic department:

1. Coach/Staff communication with athletes – understanding the importance of switching from a directive/instructional style of communication that is most effective for physical, sports performance coaching, to a guiding/collaborative style that is most effective for supporting athlete well-being.

2. Finding ways to eradicate words, phrases, language, storytelling that is unkind, offensive, disrespectful from your campus athletic culture – not only because it is unkind, but because it is not effective for either increasing sport performance OR developing athlete well being
Quick coaching for better personal communication

COMMUNICATION TUNE UP
Remember -

- The speech part is about your body, the language part is about your brain.
- Your brain does better with rehearsal, just like your body performs better with practice.
- Think about what you want to say, mentally run through the signposts
Game tapes? Watch yours.

- Do you have weird body language, gestures, pacing around?
- Do you use verbal fillers – uh, like, like I saw – repetitively?
- Do you keep talking past the end of your breath?
Breath, Posture, Hydration

• Your voice is powered by breath.
• “Bad breath” situation? Slumping over, being nervous, clavicular breathing.
• Your voice is produced by vocal folds. They can be tight, dry, shaky.
• A nice voice has good breath support, loose, lubricated vocal folds, is loud enough.
• Try the “yawn, hum, hello” trick
QUESTIONS?

Contact Ashley at amfrazie@uncg.edu for more information or resources