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LACROSSE



DIVERSITY, EQUITY
AND INCLUSIN

CREATIVE INCLUSIVE COACHING

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Lacrosse Is A Game For All,
including individuals with intellectual,
developmental, physical disabilities or any diversity.

Support and strategies to help EVERY player achieve their full potential

WHAT does Inclusion mean for your Lacrosse Team (and why this is important for you the coach)

Inclusion is:

- ★ the intentional work we do to ensure that all players are welcomed and supported to be successful members of the team.
- ★ ensuring that all players are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the team.
- ★ successful when everyone involved; coaches, volunteers, parents and players work together to create an inclusive environment that allows the success for all players.
- ★ committing to educating and equipping coaches with the tools needed to provide the support for players with diverse abilities to reach their fullest potential alongside their typical peers.

WHY is Inclusion important for our communities and teams?

Benefits to using inclusion practices:

- ★ improves community awareness and meets a civic need by providing the opportunity for ALL to belong, participate, make friends and benefit from being part of a team.
- ★ players with diverse abilities learn appropriate social and team participation skills which will help them have greater success in more aspects of their lives.
- ★ having training and development opportunities for coaches leads to high quality programming; all involved learn a new skill set which may be beneficial in work, school, and personal situations.
- ★ by tapping into this underserved population, you increase participation and the number of players for your team and league.

1 IN 59 children have an autism diagnosis

1 IN 5 have or will have a disability at some point in their life



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How Do We Make Inclusion Work?

TOP TEN strategies for coaches to adapt their team practice that support players with diverse abilities and build an inclusive team culture.

1. **FACILITATE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:** Get to know your players likes and interests and use that to facilitate connections between players. Partner up players with buddies to ensure no one is left out.
2. **FLEXIBLE THINKING:** Think outside the box and be less rigid with responses. Offer choices to help players feel more in control “would you rather ___ or ___?”
3. **SENSORY NEEDS:** Be aware that some players experience the world and stimuli around them differently than others (i.e. for noise, light, touch). Be proactive to avoid or lessen stressful sensory situations.
4. **MODIFICATIONS:** Make reasonable accommodations. Can the way someone participates be adjusted to ensure inclusion? Focus on someone’s strengths – if good at organizing have them help set up for a drill.
5. **POSITIVE SUPPORTING TECHNIQUES:** When giving direction focus on what you would like to see rather than pointing out what a player is doing “wrong”. Say “great job listening” Instead of “stop making noises”.
6. **USE A VISUAL SCHEDULE:** People learn in different ways (visual, auditory, experiential or hands on). Make a list of practice components using pictures or icons to spell out what is coming next *see sample schedule
7. **CREATE AN EXPECTATION LIST:** “Rules” created and agreed upon with the group at the start of each practice/game. Allow for processing time, have them repeat back each listed expectation. *see sample list
8. **TRANSITION COUNTDOWN:** A strategy that gives players a visual of the passing of time allowing them to get ready for the next activity. Having players involved helps them to learn to manage their time. *see sample tool
9. **CLEAR DIRECTIONS:** Make sure to give directions with one or two steps at a time. Use “first-then” language - for example: “first cradle the ball to the cone, then shoot on the net”.
10. **PREVENTATIVE TOOLS FOR ALL:** These strategies are intended to be preventative in ensuring success for ALL players not just those with diverse abilities. Make sure not to isolate those needing inclusion supports.

These preventative strategies provide you as the coach the tools needed to build a more inclusive team culture. They are intended to help your focus to be on “How can we include” as opposed to “we can’t”.

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The Importance of a Visual Schedule

Written and/or Icons spell out the order of activities
 Can be used for overall group schedule, for a more in depth activity, or for an individual player
 Being able to see the sequence of events helps players to feel comfortable and in control of their day

DIRECTIONS FOR USING A VISUAL SCHEDULE

- Determine the schedule for the practice/group and choose appropriate icons (add written words if age appropriate) representing each event (generally around 5-7 activity icons).
- Arrange the icons on your board in the appropriate sequence for the practice. Whenever possible, have your players engage in adding the icons.
- Review the practice schedule with the players for the day/duration of offering.
- Use “first...then...” language to review sequence of upcoming activities (First we’ll practice cradling then we will do Sharks & Minnows).
- Remove icon from schedule board or cross off when an activity is completed. Encourage players to take part in this exercise.
- A useful tool to help process an unexpected change in the schedule (for example if an activity needed to be cancelled, bring the group together and review that change).
- Provide positive verbal feedback when players are taking part in creating the schedule or removing icons when an activity is completed and/or use this process as a positive reinforcement. “Great job gathering the balls Dylan, would you like to take off the icon and tell us what is next?”

TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULE

WELCOME & PRACTICE STARTS	
REVIEW SCHEDULE & EXPECTATIONS	
STRETCHING & WARM UP	
PASSING & CATCHING DRILLS	
STATIONS	
4v4 GAMES	
END OF PRACTICE CHECK IN	

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The Importance of Listed Expectations

"Rules" shared and agreed upon with the group, developed at the start of each day/activity

A great reference to go back to if certain "expectations" aren't being met

Consistent use creates a more positive culture for players and coaches - more proactive

DIRECTIONS FOR USING LISTED EXPECTATIONS

- Expectations chart is a list of "rules" established by the group. This is a strategy that sets limits for players in a positive way.
- Engage participation from players in coming up with the "rules" and/or reading the expectations (generally 4-6 expectations).
- Set expectations at the beginning of each day (or activity where applicable).
- Use simple language that is age appropriate - using symbol, icons and/or words.
- Use positive language. Instead of saying "No bad words" say "Use nice words".
- Allow for processing time, ask players to repeat back the expectations to ensure they received the info and understand.
- Be flexible to adjust the list when needed and/or to review again mid-practice. For example, if the group is struggling with an expectation bring them together to add in another needed expectation or to have a general review.
- Provide positive verbal feedback when players are engaging in expected behavior, "Great job Molly using nice words!"

TEAM EXPECTATION

USE NICE WORDS	
HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF	
LISTEN WHEN COACH IS SPEAKING	
HAVE FUN!	

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TEAM EXPECTATION

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4 3 2 1



DIRECTIONS FOR UTILIZING TRANSITION COUNTDOWNS

- ★ The example above can be used or come up with a creative way to show the transition down from 5 to 1 to "all done"
- ★ Approximately 5-10 minutes before the end of one activity, and needing to go to the next, announce "in about 5 we are going to wrap up" (does not need to be in minutes).
- ★ Go through each number to give notice as you are moving down the scale - see if they are processing by asking them to repeat back "how much longer till we are done?"
- ★ Give specific cleaning up directions as it gets closer, such as "all the balls need to be in the bucket" & "let's start getting ready to rotate".
- ★ Be sure to show the group at the start of practice how this works. Once they are familiar exploring having players be involved with announcing transitions to the group.
- ★ Give praise when a group or player has prepared to transitioned properly.