

SESSION
02

WHAT OUR BODIES EXPERIENCE IN SPORT





In session two, athletes will learn how to focus on and accept what their bodies can do and experience during sport, rather than what it looks like.

By doing so, athletes are more likely to accept and appreciate their bodies and its different abilities, and be in tune with what their body needs when playing sport.

KEY TERMS FOR TODAY

BODY FUNCTIONALITY

Focusing on and appreciating what our bodies can and cannot do, and perhaps what they do differently to others.



SESSION OVERVIEW

LET'S GO!

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Key information you need to know before delivering Session Two

Who: Team players

- ▶ Remember, the same coach should lead all three sessions of the program.
- ▶ Athletes will benefit most from the program if they attend all three sessions!

What: What our bodies do in sport

- ▶ In today's session, athletes will learn how to focus on and appreciate what their bodies can experience during sport, rather than what it looks like, and how this way of thinking can improve their sporting experience.

When: Session length and schedule

- ▶ Today's session will involve group discussions and an individual writing task.
- ▶ You will need a quiet, private space for discussions and writing.
- ▶ Athletes will have the opportunity to write their thoughts and reflections about these discussions, as well as complete the individual writing task in their personal workbooks.

Why: The learning outcomes

By participating in today's session, athletes will:

- ▶ Recognize the difference between focusing on what their body can experience vs. what their body looks like when playing sport.
- ▶ Understand how this way of thinking improves their sports experience.
- ▶ Develop strategies to improve their awareness and gratitude for what their body can do and experience.

SESSION OVERVIEW

How: The structure, content and materials

01 THE GAME PLAN 5 MINS

02 THE KNOWLEDGE 20 MINS

03 THE SKILLS 20 MINS

04 THE FINAL SCORE 15 MINS

RESOURCES YOU'LL NEED

Session materials

- Coaches' guide
- Program slide deck
- Athletes' personal workbooks

From your sports club or school

- Electronic device to display slide deck
- Whiteboard/recording surface/markers or pens

LET'S GO

THE GAME PLAN



THE GAME PLAN

15
MINS

Welcome and recap

- ▶ "Welcome to Session Two: What our bodies experience in sport"
- ▶ "Can someone please hang up the ground rules flyer?"
- ▶ "Over the past week, did you
 - 1) notice body talk
 - 2) challenge body talk and
 - 3) how did it go?"

COACHES' NOTES

- Inviting the group to repeat back the ground rules established in session one can serve as a reminder as well as reinforce the importance of these group rules.
- If your athletes report having a negative experience with challenging body talk, congratulate them on being brave to confront this behavior and reassure them that sometimes it's enough to identify body talk and ignore it (e.g., change the subject; walk away), if they don't feel safe to directly challenge it.

Introduce Session 2

- ▶ "As a group, we will explore a helpful way of thinking which focuses on what our body can experience rather than on what it looks like. We will do this through a mixture of group discussions and an individual writing task."
- ▶ "You will also have the opportunity to quietly journal (write, draw, record a voice note) about what you appreciate about your body and what it can experience when playing sport."





LET'S GO

**THE
KNOWLEDGE**

THE KNOWLEDGE

Introducing what the body experiences in sport

Group discussion and activity

- ▶ Ask athletes to have their personal workbooks (digital or hardcopy) ready for recording their thoughts/answers.



What is your body able to do and experience?

- ▶ *"Let's brainstorm the different things that our bodies can do and experience. For example, our sense of taste allows us to eat our favorite candy."*
- ▶ Invite an athlete to record the group's responses on a whiteboard/surface area.

What is body functionality?

- ▶ *"Who would like to read aloud the definition for body functionality?"*

DESIRED RESPONSES

Definition:

- ▶ Body functionality is when we focus on and appreciate what our bodies can do and experience, rather than focusing on what it looks like. Sometimes this might mean focusing on what our bodies do differently to others.

DESIRED RESPONSES

Answers could include:

- ▶ Body functions related to **senses and sensations** (e.g., sight, taste, touch, hearing, smell); **physical activity** (e.g., flexibility, strength, reflexes, our favorite sports); **health** (e.g., breathing, growing hair and nails, healing from a sickness, regulating our temperature); **creativity** (e.g., drawing, singing, reading); **self-care** (e.g., eating, drinking, sleeping); **relationships and communicating with others** (e.g., talking, facial expressions, hugging, crying).

THE KNOWLEDGE

Introducing what the body experiences in sport



What body functions might be important to us when playing sport?

- ▶ *"Let's take a moment to reflect on what body functions might be important to us when playing sport. For example, I appreciate my body for being able to heal from an injury, which means I can get back to playing the sport that I love."*
- ▶ Invite another athlete to record the responses.

DESIRED RESPONSES

Answers could include:

- ▶ Stretching my body during a cool down feels good and increases my flexibility; I love to express how I'm feeling by moving my body; My leg muscles help me to outrun an opponent and score a winning goal for my team; I might not be strong, but I have good game sense and that is my secret weapon.



Why might it be more helpful to focus on how sport is enjoyable, rather than focusing on how you look?

- ▶ *"Why is focusing on what our body can do, or perhaps do differently more helpful than focusing on what our body looks like? For example, if I focus on the unique abilities of my body, rather than on what I look like, I will have better concentration and perform better."*
- ▶ Invite another athlete to record the responses.

DESIRED RESPONSES

Answers could include:

- ▶ It shifts the attention away from my appearance and needing to look a certain way (e.g., challenges appearance ideals).
- ▶ It helps me nourish my body so I can have the energy I need to move.
- ▶ I put on clothes that feel great to wear rather than following what others are wearing.
- ▶ It highlights the cool things my body can do beyond what it looks like.
- ▶ I'm less likely to back-out of participating in life events because I'm worried about how I look.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Introducing what the
body experiences in sport

COACHES' NOTES

- If your athletes comprehend and feel comfortable with the term 'Body Functionality', you can continue to use this throughout the program. However, for younger athletes, we suggest you avoid using this term and simply describe the concept. For example: Let's think about what our bodies can do and experience. Sometimes our bodies will do things differently to others.
- When the team brainstorms the different things our bodies can do and experience, make sure it includes body functions related to physical activity, as well as other areas of girls lives (e.g., sensations, health, creativity, communication with others etc.)





LET'S GO

THE SKILLS

THE SKILLS

How to focus on what our body experiences in sport



Individual writing task

Overview and individual writing task | 15 mins

- ▶ If you have access to a digital device, show Slides 12 and 13 of the presentation deck. This provides example responses to the individual writing task.
- ▶ *"In this next task, you will use your journals to practice focusing on what your body can do and experience, and why this is important to you."*
- ▶ *"Over the next ten minutes, you're going to describe what your body can do and experience when playing sports and why this is important to you. Sometimes this might mean focusing on what our bodies do differently to others."*
- ▶ *"Once you've finished writing, read what you have written."*
- ▶ *"After 10-minutes, we will come back to the main group and you'll be invited to share what you've written."*
- ▶ *"For example [read aloud an example answer]."*
- ▶ *"Now, go and find a quiet space and you have 10-minutes to write."*

Overview of group discussion | 5 mins

- ▶ *"Who would like to share what they've written/drawn?"*

DESIRED RESPONSES

Answers could include:

- ▶ My wheelchair gives me freedom on the basket ball court. My hands propelling the wheels get bashed and sometimes feel weak, but I love the independence of being able to fly across the court, weaving around other players. If I tip, or someone bashes into me, I know my team will support me back up. We all use our strengths together to make a really powerful team. I might not be able to reach my arms up high, but I know if I get the ball to Fin, they'll be able to score and we'll all celebrate what we did together.
- ▶ As soon as I hear music, I want to dance. I'll listen to music all day and as soon as there's enough space, I start to move. I love when the music is so loud that you can feel the vibration in your body. I'm happiest when I'm in a dance studio, there's dimmed lighting, my favorite music is on and I can freestyle. I like to experiment with different styles and will try to make new shapes with my body. Dance is also a place where I can connect with my friends. We talk about our day or if we want to ignore our worries we put on our favorite songs and show each other new moves.

GAME TIME

How to focus on what our body experiences in sport

COACHES' NOTES

- Research shows that when people reflect on and write about what their bodies can do and experience, and why this is important to them, they experience greater body appreciation and reduced self-objectification.
- We are used to thinking about our bodies in terms of appearance. Therefore, it can be challenging to think about our bodies in a new and different way. The more we practice thinking about and appreciating what our bodies can do and experience, the easier and more natural it will come.
- Athletes communicate and learn in different ways. Some may feel comfortable writing, drawing, or speaking. Give them the opportunity to use either form of reflection, while encouraging them to participate in individual reflection.



LET'S GO

THE FINAL SCORE

THE FINAL SCORE

15
MINS

What have we learned today?

- ▶ "Can someone briefly describe what we learned today?"

Practice writing task

- ▶ "Over the next week, I would like you to practice the writing/journaling task 2-3 more times. This can be on another aspect of our sport or another sport altogether."



Finish with the 'Three-Step Sense Check'

- ▶ If you have access to a digital device, show Slides 14 & 15 of the presentation deck; this provides an infographic of how to use the Three-Step Sense Check.
- ▶ "Remember that the Three-Step Sense Check can be used anywhere, anytime."
- ▶ "It's designed to be a simple way for athletes to check-in with what their body needs."
- ▶ "Has anyone used the Three-Step Sense Check since the last session and how did it go?"
- ▶ "Let's take a quiet moment and practice the Three-Step Sense Check."

01. SLOW DOWN

- ▶ "Pause and take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth."

- ▶ "If you feel comfortable, close your eyes."

02. CHECK-IN

- ▶ "Scan your body, from top to bottom. Pay attention to what your body is feeling. What sensations are you noticing? For example, are you cold? Are you hungry?"
- ▶ "Does your body need something? For example, do you have tension in your shoulders? Do you need to get a snack?"

03. MOVE-FORWARD

- ▶ "Now that you've checked in with your body, act in a way that meets your body's needs. For example, stretch parts of your body that feel tension. Go and get a quick snack."
- ▶ "You can use this exercise anytime, anywhere. For example, before you start practice, or while you're traveling to your game!"
- ▶ "This is a brief act of self-care that helps you to connect with your body."

That's the end of the session!

- ▶ "Over the next week, practice the sense check before, during or after a practice or game."

THE FINAL SCORE

15
MINS

COACHES' NOTES

- Athletes are more likely to engage in the sense check if they are prompted and encouraged. Create a space where sense checks are normalized, encouraged and modelled by people in influential positions (e.g., coaches, team captains).
- Creating visual prompts in sporting environments (e.g., locker rooms) is a valuable strategy for embedding the sense check into athletes' routine.
- Coaches can use the infographic provided in the slide deck (Slide 15), to guide athletes through the three steps.



SESSION COMPLETE!