




A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COACHING

DEFINING HOLISTIC COACHING

An approach to coaching that sees coaches take an active role in helping athletes develop transferable life skills, in addition to teaching sport specific skills and tactics. Coaches focus on developing their athletes to be complete people, equipped with strong sport skills and strong life skills. Coaches may teach these skills themselves, or hire other professional to help develop these skills in their athletes.

SOME QUICK TIPS

-  Get to know your athletes as people. Learn who they are away from sport and what motivates them.
-  Utilize outside resources: sports psychologists, trainers, athletic therapist, books, online resources, etc.
-  Allow yourself the space to make mistakes and to continually grow as a coach.

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WAYS OF DEVELOPING THE WHOLE ATHLETE

Promote Psychological Well-Being

- Create a safe and open space for athletes to communicate their needs
- Promote mental skills development, such as gratitude, mindfulness, and self-care, through team sessions
- Provide athletes access to a Sports Psychologist
- Utilize team building activities that promote athlete sharing and develop mutual understanding*

Create Nutritional Awareness

- Provide athletes with accurate sport specific nutritional information
- Promote healthy eating and body image messaging for athletes
- Provide athletes access to a Sports Dietician and team cooking sessions
- Provide athletes access to healthy snack and meal options at training facilities and when travelling

* Find Personal-Disclosure Mutual-Sharing Team Building Ideas in this article: Holt, N. L., & Dunn, J. G. (2006). Guidelines for delivering personal-disclosure mutual-sharing team building interventions. *The Sport Psychologist*, 20(3), 348-367. doi:10.1123/tsp.20.3.348
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Promote Interest Exploration

- Encourage and create time for athletes to explore activities outside of sport
- Incorporate other sports and activities into your training to allow athletes to explore different fitness activities
- Utilize team building time to have athletes experiences new activities that they can continue on their own
- Encourage athletes to use the off-season to try new activities and hobbies.

Build Transferable Life Skills

- Have athletes engage in volunteer and philanthropic activities
- Hold team sessions on communication, organizational, scheduling, and study skills.
- Establish mentorships programs with Alumni and other community members
- Create a team enviroment that promotes and encourages the utilization of important life skills

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Prioritize Education and Career Exploration

- Encourage and create time for athletes to explore education and career opportunities beyond sport
- Establish mentorships or career co-op opportunities for athletes
- Hold team information sessions about career and education options beyond sport
- Encourage athletes to use the off-season to gain work experience or to further their education

Build Financial Skills

- Hold team sessions on creating a budget, building a savings, etc.
- Encourage athletes to utilize financial advisors and to plan for their futures
- Establish mentorships programs with Alumni and other community members that help athletes build financial skills
- Encourage athletes to use the off-season to work and build their finances

References:

Adapted from Assignment completed for EPHE 576 - Adopting a holistic coaching style to promote the development of life skills in athletes (2019).