



# MINDFUL COACHING PRACTICES

Coaches have the power to do a tremendous amount of good—or harm—to young people. Mindful coaching practices can help coaches be more engaged and less stressed when interacting with their players and parents.



## DEFINE YOUR 'WHY'

Have you ever thought about where your coaching philosophy came from? Why do you coach the way you do? Coaching shouldn't start with X's and O's, but with "whys." Every coach needs a why!

To define yours, ask yourself these four questions:

- Why do I coach?
- Why do I coach the way I do?
- What does it feel like to be coached by me?
- What is success?



## CHECK-INS WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR PLAYERS

- For yourself, this means paying attention to your emotions and stress level. Staying attuned can boost resilience, lower anxiety, and help you maintain healthier relationships.
- For your players, it means being receptive and caring for them holistically. This helps them feel comfortable reporting injuries, mental health concerns, and other difficulties. Consistently check in and listen empathetically to show that their health is a priority.



## PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

Our inner voice is often harsher than we would be with someone we care about. Many people are good at being kind to others but neglect to be kind to themselves. Pay attention to your inner voice. Do you speak to yourself in a friendly or hostile and rude way? Negative self-talk can impact your physical and mental well-being as much as criticism from an outside source. Make sure that you're showing yourself love and kindness!



## JUST BREATHE

Just breathe. Take a few deep breaths, pausing between each one. This will help you soften mentally, emotionally, and physically. Breathwork can be done anywhere, under any circumstance. When you're frustrated, anxious, or feeling any other emotion, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth or nose. Repeat until you feel calm and centered.



## SHOW EMPATHY

Empathy is a way to connect with kids and show them you care about what they're going through, even if you don't fully understand their experience. It says, "I see you. I hear you. And I want to understand." Every kid deserves to feel seen, safe, secure, and supported. Caring adults and secure relationships can transform young people's lives.



## MAINTAIN A GROWTH MINDSET

To be a better coach, you must become a better you. Believing that you can always learn and grow will keep you ahead of the competition and help you understand how to up your game. This will benefit you, your players, and even their parents. Remember, more is caught than taught. So, by living from a growth mindset, you're influencing more than just yourself.

**Every young person is in need of a mentor, someone to look them in the eye and affirm their value, their worth, their human potential. How are you showing up for the kids you serve?**

