

Managing Your Emotions

Explanation for Athletes

What Does Managing Your Emotions Mean?

Managing your emotions means learning to accept and identify your emotions, so you can respond to situations appropriately. It's not only about managing stress, frustration and fear, but also managing happiness, excitement and pride, so you can handle different situations in the right way.

Why is Managing Your Emotions Important?

Learning to manage the intensity of your emotions will help you focus on the actions that are important to your performance and make better decisions. Managing your emotions inappropriately can lead to mistakes in the game or create conflict within the team. Expressing your feelings in a respectful way can help others to understand you better. It can also help to reduce stress and encourage positive interactions with your teammates, coaches and opponents.



"Keeping your emotions in check is the key to good team chemistry."

Rafaël Harvey-Pinard, Montreal Canadiens

Similarly, it's just as important to manage the intensity of pleasant emotions:

- **Pride:** I express my pride arrogantly.
- **Excitement:** I can't concentrate, I act impulsively and risk injuring myself, I'm exhausted even before the end of the game.
- **Confident:** I feel like I don't need to practice or listen to my coach's advice.
- **Determination:** My goals are too ambitious and unrealistic.

How to Manage Your Emotions?

1 Identify the emotion you're feeling:

All **pleasant** and **unpleasant** emotions are normal and important.

2 Manage the intensity of your emotion by using different strategies:

Breathe: Take 3 to 5 deep breaths to calm down, exhaling as slowly as possible.

Take a step back: Remove yourself from the situation to calm down and avoid reacting inappropriately.

Focus on the task ahead: Voluntarily direct my attention to an action in order to perform. Use the emotional energy to play better.

Talk to someone: Talk to someone you trust (e.g., a friend) about what's bothering you, so they can help you.

Do a "reset": Imagine a "reset" sticker on your stick or on the bench; when things aren't going well, press it and move on.

Talk to yourself: Use phrases to refocus like, "Keep your stick on the ice," "Keep your head up," "Exhale slowly," "Reset" or "Everything's okay."

3 Identify the situations that trigger your emotions so you can use your strategies before the emotions become too intense.

Feedback and Discussions

Reinforce: When you see a player is managing their emotions, congratulate them and explain what they did well (i.e., identified their emotions and acted in a positive way).

Reteach: When a player loses control, help them understand their emotions by encouraging them to say what they're feeling and what triggered it.

1. When they're less emotional, go over the different strategies to manage their emotions and help them find one that works best for them.
2. Come up with a plan so they can use their strategy next time.

Teaching your players how to manage their emotions takes time and may require more than one refresher session!

Award the *Managing Your Emotions* sticker to a player who managed their emotions exceptionally well or has shown great improvement.

