

Managing Emotions

Fun mini-challenges!



Here are mini-challenges to help teach and promote inclusion during practice.

Further Explanations...

- Incorporate the mini-challenges into your tactical and technical practices.
- Adapt the mini-challenges according to your group's age and skill level.
- Give a demonstration when explaining the mini-challenge so participants know what they need to do.
- The indication [U9 and +] means that, in general, the mini-challenge is better suited for these levels, but adjustments can be made for U7.



An Interesting Strategy!

- To teach players how to manage their emotions, **start by doing one of the mini-challenges** below during a practice so your players can experience it firsthand.
- **At the end of practice**, take 10 minutes to talk about managing emotions using the [infographic on the I'm on Board program page](#):
 - What is it?
 - Why is it important in sports?
 - What are examples of good emotional management?

Why Is It Useful?

Your players will better understand and pay attention to what you say if they can connect it to a recent experience.

Strategic Timeout [U9 and +]

Objective: Teach players to stay calm and regain focus after making a mistake.

How Does It Work?

Each player will tackle an individual challenge to complete a specific task (e.g., a shot on net or a passing drill). If a player makes a mistake, the coach gives them a 30-second timeout to take a deep breath (e.g., inhale for four seconds through the nose, exhale for six seconds through the mouth), identify how they're feeling (e.g., physical sensations, emotions), and return to the drill with a positive attitude.

Why Is It Useful?

It helps young players understand that mistakes are part of the game and teaches them simple techniques to stay calm and focused.

Silent Puck

Objective: Encourage players to develop concentration and self-control.

How Does It Work?

Set up a drill where players need to reach a goal (e.g., complete a series of passes, score a goal), but can't make loud noises when they make a mistake, such as groaning, yelling or other loud emotional outbursts. If a player reacts too loudly or loses their cool, the entire team has to start over.

Why Is It Useful?

It teaches players to manage their emotions without being loud or overreacting. It also encourages players to stay calm and focused, without letting negative emotions get the best of them.

Self-Compassion

Objective: Teach players to forgive themselves and stay motivated after making a mistake.

How Does It Work?

For every mistake made (e.g., missed pass, conceded goal, poor puck control, fall on the ice), the player must say something positive or encouraging out loud, such as “It’s okay, I’ll do better next time” or “I’ll keep working hard.” The coach can also include small, positive reminders during the drill to reinforce this habit.

Why Is It Useful?

It helps players move past frustration after mistakes and stay motivated to improve, fostering a supportive environment where errors are seen as learning opportunities.



Composure and Positive Attitude

Objective: Teach players to turn an unpleasant emotion into a positive one.

How Does It Work?

Each time a player shows an unpleasant emotion (e.g., anger, frustration, disappointment) after a mistake or a disappointing performance, the coach asks them to turn this emotion into something positive. For example, they might take a deep breath, smile, encourage a teammate, or use a keyword like “reset” to get back on track.

Why Is It Useful?

It teaches young players that, despite feeling intense emotions, they can choose to act constructively, which in turn, helps them better manage their emotions.

Breathe and Prioritize [U9 and +]

Objective: Teach players to focus on what matters, even when frustrated.

How Does It Work?

Organize a series of drills with various objectives (e.g., scoring a goal, completing a perfect pass, holding a defensive position). If a player doesn't reach an objective, they must take a 30-second break during the next stoppage of play to:

- Close their eyes (optional, but helps to minimize distractions);
- Concentrate on their breathing to refocus (15-20 sec.);
- Resume the drill and focus on a concrete action to successfully complete the task (e.g., arm and stick placement, body positioning, starting speed).

Why Is It Useful?

It teaches young players that, even in frustrating situations, keeping their focus on the main goal is the key to success, no matter how disappointed or upset they feel.

Developing Patience [U9 and +]

Objective: Teach players to deal with impatience and frustration.

How Does It Work?

During a scrimmage, the coach calls for unexpected breaks or pauses (e.g., a stoppage of play, a player change) at key moments when important plays happen like a breakaway or a good zone exit. Players must remain calm and patient, without expressing frustration. They need to be patient and stay focused on the drill, no matter how frustrating it may be.

Why Is It Useful?

It emphasizes the importance of being patient and staying calm in moments of frustration, which is key to maintaining a positive attitude on the ice.