

Inclusion



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This tool is designed to help you introduce the concept of inclusion to your players. The first discussion is mainly intended to:

- Define what inclusion is in simple terms;
- Help players understand why inclusion is important;
- Identify inclusive behaviours to adopt within the team;
- Prepare players for the strategies and mini-challenges that will be used throughout the season to reinforce inclusion.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means making sure that everyone has a place on the team, regardless of their skill level, experiences, personality, or individual characteristics. It means accepting and valuing differences, giving everyone the opportunity to participate, and creating a respectful, supportive, and welcoming environment for all.

Key Words

- Belonging
- Being welcoming
- Embracing differences
- Making others feel valued
- Making participation possible for everyone



"We need to choose together to let our differences bring us closer rather than divide us."

Caroline Ouellette,
Concordia University Stingers

Questions to Start the Discussion

- What makes you feel included on a team?
- What does a team look like when everyone feels like they belong?
- Can we exclude someone without it being intentional? How?



Why is Inclusion Important?

When players feel included, they develop greater **confidence**, are more willing to **participate**, and feel more comfortable **asking for help** or **expressing their needs**. This contributes to players' well-being, as well as team cohesion and overall team performance.

A team where young players feel welcomed and respected is often a team where **communication is stronger**, **cooperation** is greater, and everyone has the opportunity to **improve**.

Questions to Help Players Reflect on its Importance

- Why is it important for everyone on the team to feel accepted?
- How can good inclusion help the team on the ice?
- What can happen when a player feels left out?



How can you be Inclusive?

- Invite someone to join a conversation or activity
 - Avoid leaving someone alone or left out
 - Avoid comments or jokes that make fun of other people's differences
 - Accept and appreciate differences
- Show interest in your teammates and get to know them:
- Learn their names
 - Use nicknames only if the person is comfortable with them
 - Support one another during difficult moments
 - Share positive experiences together
 - Appreciate each person's unique strengths
 - Discover their interests and the things you have in common



Questions to Encourage Players to Think About Inclusive Behaviours

- What are some small things you can do to help someone feel included?
- How would you like others to include you when you're part of a group?

Questions to get to Know Your Teammates

*Where are you from?
Do you have any brothers or sisters?
Do you play any other sports?*

Shea Weber,
Montreal Canadiens



After the initial discussion, **the goal is to keep inclusion alive** in your team's daily conversations and coaching practices by reinforcing key messages, recognizing inclusive behaviours, and creating regular opportunities for players to put them into practice.

Check out the other life skills resources to help you!

- ☐ List of inclusive behaviours to teach and reinforce
- ☐ Mini-challenges to help players practice inclusive behaviours
- ☐ Examples of how to model inclusion and lead by example

And more!

