

Managing Your Emotions



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This tool is designed to help you introduce emotional management to your players. The first discussion is mainly intended to:

- Define what emotional management is in simple terms;
- Help players understand why managing their emotions is important;
- Explore different ways to recognize and manage emotions;
- Prepare players for the strategies and mini-challenges that will be used throughout the season to reinforce their emotional management skills.

What is Emotional Management?

Emotional management is the ability to recognize what you're feeling and use strategies to respond appropriately to the situations you face. It allows you to experience your emotions without ignoring them, while staying in control of your words, actions, and decisions when emotions become especially strong.

Key words

- Recognizing your emotions
- Putting your feelings into words
- Calming yourself
- Refocusing
- Making good decisions



"Controlling your emotions is important for team chemistry."

Rafaël Harvey-Pinard, Montreal Canadiens

Questions to Start the Discussion

- In your own words, what does it mean to "manage your emotions"?
- What emotions can you feel during a game or practice?
- Are all emotions normal?



Why is Emotional Management Important?

Emotional management helps players stay **focused**, make **good decisions**, and respond **respectfully** toward others. When an emotion becomes very strong, it can sometimes prevent us from listening, thinking clearly, or playing the way we want to.

Learning to manage emotions helps players **enjoy hockey more**, build **positive relationships** with others, and **give their best effort**, even during challenging moments.

Managing the intensity of positive emotions is just as important, because they can sometimes affect us, or others, in negative ways:

- **Pride:** I show my pride in an arrogant way
- **Excitement:** I can't stay focused, I act impulsively, I put myself at risk of injury, and I run out of energy before the game is over
- **Confidence:** I stop taking my training seriously and ignore my coach's advice
- **Determination:** I set goals that are too ambitious or unrealistic

Questions to Help Players Reflect on its Importance

- What can happen when you act without thinking because you're angry?
- Why is it helpful to calm down before taking action?
- How can emotions affect your game? Can they sometimes help you perform better?



How can you Manage Your Emotions?

The first step in managing your emotions is recognizing what you're feeling. Once you recognize the emotion, you can use different strategies to reduce its intensity or channel that emotion in a more positive and helpful way.

1 Identifying the emotion I'm feeling:

There are pleasant and unpleasant emotions, but they are all normal and important.

Jealousy
Sadness
Boredom
Anger
Relief
Impatience
Fear
Surprise
Loneliness
Pride
Joy
Excitement

2

Adjusting the intensity of my emotion using strategies:

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

Take a step back: Remove yourself from the situation for a few moments before reacting too quickly

Focus on the task: Intentionally direct your attention to the next play or action to perform, rather than dwelling on a previous mistake

Self-talk: Use words or phrases to help yourself refocus, such as “*stick on the ice*,” “*keep your head up*,” “*breathe out slowly*,” “*reset*,” or “*it’s okay*”

Reset: Imagine a reset button on your stick or on the bench. Press it to let go and move on when things aren’t going well

Talk it out: Share what’s bothering you with someone you trust (e.g., a friend) so they can help and support you

Questions to Help Players Reflect on Ways to Manage Their Emotions



- How does your body tell you that an emotion is becoming strong?
- What do you do to calm yourself down when you feel frustrated?
- What helps you regain your focus?

After the initial discussion, **the goal is to continue reinforcing emotional management** through daily conversations with the team and in your coaching practices by reminding players of key messages, recognizing positive emotional management behaviours, and providing regular opportunities to practice them.

Check out the other life skills resources to help you!

- ☐ List of emotional management behaviours to teach and reinforce
- ☐ Mini-challenges to help players practice managing their emotions
- ☐ Examples of how to model emotional management and lead by example

And more!

