

Mutual Support



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

- Define what mutual support is in simple terms;
- Help players understand why mutual support is important;
- Encourage players to think about how teammates can support each other;
- Prepare players for the strategies and mini-challenges that will be used throughout the season to reinforce mutual support.

What is Mutual Support?

Mutual support means being able to offer help when someone needs it and accepting support from others when you need it yourself.

It means contributing to the well-being and growth of other team members by offering support, encouragement, a listening ear, and by sharing your knowledge.

Key words

- Offering help
- Supporting others
- Encouraging others
- Listening
- Working together

"It means always being willing to listen. You can tell when a teammate arrives at the rink feeling down. It's about not being afraid to go talk to them and let them know that you're there for them."

Samuel Montembeault, Montreal Canadiens



Questions to Start the Discussion

- What does helping each other on a team mean to you?
- How can you tell when a teammate is trying to help you?
- Can you help a teammate without doing the work for them? How?



Why is Mutual Support Important?

Hockey is a team sport. We win, we lose, but most importantly, we **improve together as a team**. Creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable asking for help or offering support strengthens team **cohesion**.

Mutual support **strengthens relationships, respect, and trust** among team members. It allows everyone to **improve**, which benefits the entire group.

Questions to Help Players Reflect on its Importance



- Why is it important to help one another on a team?
- How does a team act when players help and support each other?
- What might happen on a team where no one helps each other?

How can we Help one Another?

- Encouraging a teammate after a mistake
- Showing a teammate how to do an exercise they are learning
- Helping a teammate pick up their equipment
- Checking in on a teammate who seems sad
- Offering help in a respectful way:
 - **Offer your help** instead of forcing it on someone
 - **Avoid judging** the person
 - **Listen** carefully to what the person needs
 - **Encourage** the person throughout their process
 - **Celebrate** the person's efforts and progress
 - **Be patient** while the person is learning
 - **Ask an adult for help** if you need extra support



Questions to Help Players Think About Ways to Support one Another

- What are some different ways to help a teammate?
- How can we help a teammate who is struggling with a difficult emotion? What about a teammate who is learning something new?

Being a Good Teammate

"For me, being a good teammate simply means taking care of the players around you."

Shea Weber,
Montreal Canadiens



After the initial discussion, the **goal is to keep mutual support alive** in your team's day-to-day interactions and practices by reinforcing key messages, recognizing and encouraging mutual support, and creating regular opportunities for players to put it into practice.

Check out the other life skills resources to help you!

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

And more!

