

Developing Social Skills

Social Skills and Violence

Building social skills is generally important in the development of children. However, in the case of children that have experienced violence this is particularly vital. Trauma and neglect can make children feel intense feelings of shame and being different from others which makes them socially withdrawn and isolated. Children growing up in adverse conditions may have missed opportunities to build social skills.

Especially where children have learned to mistrust others and to be suspicious of everyone, they may not have mastered building healthy relationships. At the same time **good social skills are one important protective factor** for youth and children to become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. Programmes that rehabilitate young offenders have definite social skills components. Social skills are for example crucial in non-violent conflict resolution that was discussed in **Lesson 3**. Assisting youth and children in developing good social skills may prevent the use of violence in solving conflicts and acts as a "buffer" against traumatising, as well as helping children to regain social connection and social skills is very important.

Social skills include: *Social skills that act as protective factors for youth and children to become a victim or perpetrator of violence include:*

- ☞ Turn taking in interaction
- ☞ Communicating their own needs clearly
- ☞ Negotiating
- ☞ Listening
- ☞ Being aware of other people's needs in the situation
- ☞ Accepting and giving praise
- ☞ Assertiveness:
 - ▲ People may behave in an aggressive, assertive or passive way.
 - ▲ Being aggressive or passive is not helpful
 - ▲ Being assertive is a way to protect yourself and to respect the rights of others.
 - ▲ Assertiveness links to the other social skills of sharing and being aware of the needs of others.
 - ▲ To teach children assertiveness, the following exercise works well. Tell the children to pretend they are on a bus to Durban for a holiday. There are only enough seats on the bus for half of the children. (lay out the chairs like a bus with half the number of chairs). They must get on the bus. The children will get aggressive, assertive or passive. The assertive children are usually the most successful in getting a seat. Explain how this worked to the children.

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(Note that different skills may be relevant to different ages.)



Developing Social Skills

Developing social skills could be done in the following ways:

- ☞ Giving praise should not just be done by the coach / youth worker, but by the children to each other. The children may need encouragement to do this.
- ☞ Children could be encouraged to take on different roles that they are not used to as a way of understanding others and expanding their skills.
 - ▲ For example, if there is a shy child, allow them to be the whistle blower, or let them be in middle and pass ball around. If there is a child who always dominates, put them in non-leadership role where they can learn to follow someone else; if there is a child that challenges the referees decisions, put him / her into the role of the referee.



- ☞ Allow them to be in roles they are not used to but be careful not to push children too far beyond what they are capable of (remember from the previous section that they need to experience a sense of agency. If they fail completely, it will reinforce feelings of shame and helplessness.)



Notes

LESSON 7.3

Developing Social Skills Football Exercises

Using Football Exercises regarding the Topic

The Social Skills listed below will be focused on in this lesson.
They are incorporated in the Football Exercises on the following pages.



Types of Equipment useful for these Exercises



Information regarding the topics 'Coaching Basics' (Supplement 3), 'Preparation of Training' (Supplement 4) and 'All Sides of Training' (Supplement 5), have been added in the 'Work Sheets - Supplements' section of this manual.



Developing Social Skills

Football Exercises

TURN TAKING IN INTERACTION



Do not forget to praise the children / youths on a job-well-done. This builds **self-confidence**.

Role-playing

- ⊕ Mark a pitch of 15m x 25m with two goals with goalkeepers.
- ⊕ Divide the players into two teams.
- ⊕ The teams play 4-on-4 against the goals with goalkeepers.
- ⊕ The remaining children will fulfil the roles of the referee, linesman and coaches.
- ⊕ Swap the roles, incl. goalkeepers, after a certain amount of time.

Pointers

If there are many children, also fill these roles:

- ⊕ Timekeeper
- ⊕ Goal referee (he / she must decide if the ball was in the goal or not)
- ⊕ Ball fetchers

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART **CONCLUSION** COOLING DOWN

COMMUNICATING NEEDS



The Teams Code of Conduct

- ⊕ The team gathers and respectfully creates a code of conduct that represents the players wishes and needs.
- ⊕ It is important that all the players voice their needs and that every player is satisfied with the code of conduct.



This exercise is very good for building relationships through the use of **Communication!**

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART **CONCLUSION** COOLING DOWN

LESSON 7.3

Developing Social Skills

Football Exercises

NEGOTIATION



Code of Conduct before a Match

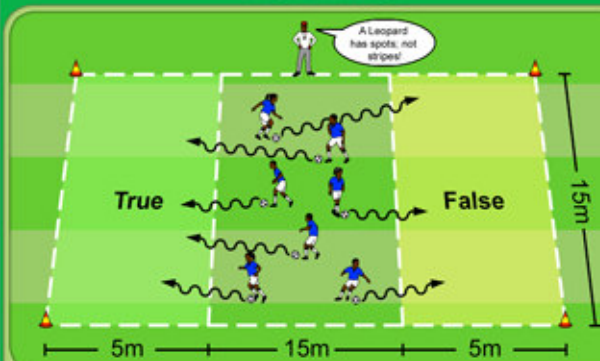
- ☞ The team gathers with the opposing team before the match and they respectfully agree on a code of conduct to be used during this match.
- ☞ It is important that all the players voice their needs and that every player is satisfied with the code of conduct.



This exercise is very good for building relationships through the use of **Communication!**

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN

LISTENING



"True or False?"

- ☞ Players dribble around in the mixed zone, each with their own ball. The coach, from outside the playing area, gives advice on how they should dribble.
- ☞ The coach then shouts out a statement. As quickly as possible, the players have to dribble with their ball to the "correct-answer-field". After every player has reached a field, the coach gives the right answer and a short explanation. The players, who got the answer wrong, have to do an additional

The players should make their own decisions and stick with them.



exercise as a penalty (push ups, knee-bends, etc.).

- ☞ The last player to have reached a field, even if it was the correct field, also has to do the additional exercise.

Variations

- ☞ At the beginning of the game, every player has 3 points. For every wrong answer, or being last on the answer-field, he loses a point. Players with 0 points will be dropped from the game. All players who still have all 3 points at the end of the game are the winners.

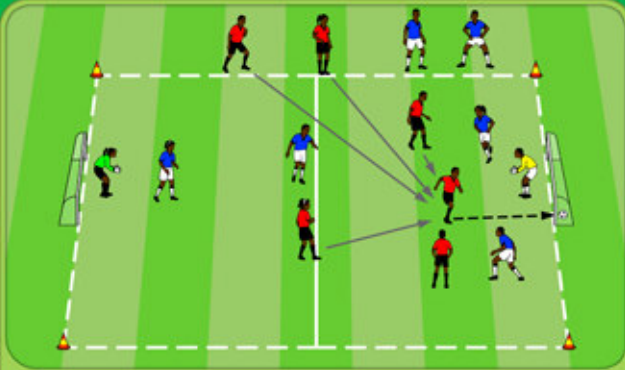
Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN



Developing Social Skills

Football Exercises

ACCEPTING / GIVING PRAISE



"Well done!"

- Two teams play against each other.
- When a goal is scored or saved, **all players and team-members** must go to the scoring / defending player and congratulate him / her.



Giving praise raises the level of **respect** people have for you. Having a positive reputation helps in many aspects of life.

Include in training session: WARM UP MAIN PART **CONCLUSION** COOLING DOWN

ASSERTIVENESS



Purposefully misleading fellow players can cause **injury** as well as emotional damage (**mistrust**)!

To develop Trust

- A player leads another player, whose eyes are blindfolded, within a marked-off area.
- The area is littered with random objects.
- The pair makes their way around the pitch touching and / or collecting the objects.

Safety First

Arrange a **warning signal** in case the situation gets tight, e.g. two players could collide.

Include in training session: **WARM UP** MAIN PART CONCLUSION COOLING DOWN