

# Women

# on the Move

Trauma-informed interventions  
based on Sport and Play

A Toolkit for Practitioners



**Part I**  
Principles and Practical Guide



Swiss Academy for Development

## **Managing Social Change and Cultural Diversity**

The Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) is a practice-oriented research institute in the field of development and social inclusion. The Sport & Development department of SAD examines the potential of sport in development cooperation through researching and promoting psychosocial well-being, resilience, and social integration through sport and play activities.

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# 1. Introduction

Traumatic events are widespread and affect people of all ages and from all areas of society. They have consequences which may not seem to have any obvious relation to the event. Trauma has an effect which is broad, touching various areas of people's lives. It may continue long after the event is over. Trauma survivors may suffer from serious health problems and difficulties in daily functioning as well as challenges in the way they relate to others and build relationships.

Sport and play programmes can be very effective in restoring the well-being, psychological and physical health of individuals who have suffered from trauma. They can support a population affected by disaster by helping people to cope with new realities, move forwards from their loss and suffering, release anger and fear, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and build up day to day resilience. Sport and play can be used to bridge social, racial, religious, and gender divides and have a positive effect on confidence, body image and communication skills.

A growing awareness of the prevalence and damaging impact of trauma has made it clear that this is an important area to address should we want sport and play based programmes to be as effective as possible. This toolkit has been written as a guideline for professionals running sport and play based programmes for women who have lived through traumatic experiences.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

Different approaches have been identified in order to address the treatment and support the needs of trauma survivors.

Trauma-specific practices take a direct approach, specifically addressing trauma and its effects and the need to find means for recovery, for example through counselling and clinical interventions.

However, this toolkit focuses on the trauma-informed approach. This is an approach which does not intend to deal with trauma directly, but creates an awareness of the issues related to trauma and the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors. Emphasis is placed on raising trauma awareness, creating a safe, non-violent environment in which the survivor can be empowered to make choices, collaborate and learn.

The toolkit is grounded in the belief that trauma-informed sport and play based programmes have the potential to reinforce social bonds, improving the well-

being of both individuals and society. Such programmes work on the principle that individuals who are empowered to care for themselves and each other will gain in self confidence, as will the community as a whole. Renewed confidence can in turn aid recovery and strengthen a community's ability to cope with future traumatic experiences.

## 1.2 TOOLKIT AUDIENCE

The toolkit does not aim to advise the reader on how to lead individuals towards full recovery, either through counselling or clinical intervention. Rather, it stands as a guide for coaches and professionals looking at how they might carry out psychosocial sport programmes specifically designed for victims of trauma.

Originally designed for the coaches working on the "Women on the Move Programme" - Sport and play based psychosocial Interventions in South Sudan ([www.sad.ch](http://www.sad.ch)) - the toolkit was primarily aimed at reaching women affected by trauma in this region. However, most of the suggestions and recommendations are valuable and relevant to all practitioners working with people affected by trauma who are looking to incorporate sport and play based activities into their programmes.

## 1.3 USE OF THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit has two parts:

**PART I:** The first part of the toolkit, "Principles and Practical Guide", illustrates how sport and play based psychosocial programmes can aid recovery for individuals. This begins with looking at the importance of peer support, followed by the relationship between sport and trauma, and then what is meant by a 'trauma-informed approach.' The remaining chapters speak about the necessary steps to be taken in establishing and carrying out a trauma-informed sport and play programme with practical advice as to how professionals might deal with different situations.

**PART II:** The second part of the toolkit, the "Toolbox", is presented as a separate pocket guide to use in the field. The toolbox provides specific ideas for ice-breakers, warm-up and cool-down exercises, basic rules, skills and techniques of selected activities, and specific games designed to build life skills that are important for overcoming trauma and coping with stress.

## 1.4 TRAUMA AND THE ROLE OF SPORT AND PLAY

Women who have been through or are still going through traumatic experiences may benefit greatly from

sport and play activities. Sport is defined as all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include recreational, organised, casual or competitive activities. Play is associated with the engagement in an activity for the enjoyment of that activity<sup>1</sup>. Sport and play can be a powerful tool to promote the holistic development of individuals on four dimensions: the mental, physical, emotional and social dimensions of development<sup>2</sup>. It can contribute to personal growth and enable the individuals to improve their physical skills. Sport and play can increase quality of life, enhance self-confidence and provide an opportunity for social interaction<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.4.1 WHY USE SPORT AND PLAY

The use of sport and play to support people affected by trauma is a relatively new field of study. The little evidence available (most of which focuses on children and youth) identifies that sport and play activities improve resilience, the acquisition of new skills and abilities in

those affected by traumatic experiences and social stabilisation<sup>4</sup>. Sport can be a powerful tool to increase and build resilience, defined as the inner strength, responsiveness and flexibility of individuals, which help them respond to stress and trauma in healthy and positive ways. A well-designed sport and play based programme can be an effective platform for learning and building skills (including skills important for overcoming trauma and coping with stress), increasing knowledge of women's rights, improving health and fitness, and ultimately encouraging positive behaviours and improved health. Sport and play can not only build and strengthen valuable and integral life skills that will help the women overcome trauma and deal with the daily stress of their lives, but create enabling environments where they meet with other women and discuss the stress and trauma affecting their lives. With social and support networks destroyed because of migration and displacement, and general community trust weakened in post conflict situations, the creation of female social groups and networks through sport programmes fills essential needs.

#### Sport and play engage:



**The Head/ Mental: Activities help to develop intellectual capacities (concentrate, reflect, consider strategies, make decisions quickly, etc.)**



**The Body/ Physical: Activities stimulate movements and help to develop physical abilities (coordination, flexibility, strength, endurance, etc.)**



**The Heart/ Emotional: Activities improve the awareness and management of emotions (control negative emotions and feelings, experience joy, learning to win and to lose)**



**The Team/ Community/ Social: Activities help to strengthen social relations and to improve social skills (make friends, engage in teamwork, cooperation and receive support)**

[1] UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for development and peace (2005). Sport as a Tool for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. United Nations.

[2] Swiss Academy for Development (2011). Move 4 New Horizons Playful Teaching Manual.

[3] Tobert, M. (2001). Secrets to Success in Sport and Play. Human Kinetics.

[4] Sportanddev (2013). Sport as a Psychosocial Intervention. [http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport\\_and\\_disaster\\_response/sport\\_as\\_a\\_psychosocial\\_intervention/](http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport_and_disaster_response/sport_as_a_psychosocial_intervention/)

### In essence, sport and play based programmes allow women to:

- Build and increase resilience
- Regain trust among female peers in their community
- Re-create female social support structures and sharing information on issues related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), sexual and reproductive health and rights, child care, women's rights, financial empowerment etc.
- Develop habits of asking for help and support
- Learn new life skills helping them to cope with daily stress and problems
- Improve health and fitness

#### 1.4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORT AND PLAY

Research shows that sport programmes are most successful when they<sup>5,6,7</sup>:

##### 1. Build assets

**a. Social assets:** Social networks, positive peer groups, female role models, group affiliation and membership.

**b. Human assets:** Physical strength and fitness, mental and emotional health, self-confidence, information and knowledge about SGBV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic empowerment, as well as life skills<sup>8</sup>.

**c. Sport skills as assets:** Mastering a set of sport skills requires discipline and concentration and builds a sense of competence.

##### 2. Provide access to resources

**a.** Links and access to playing fields, health centres, community development organizations, counselling services and financial services

**b.** Access to safe spaces and enabling environments such as female-friendly public spaces where women can gather to learn new skills, form friendships, expand their social networks, and receive mentoring in a supportive environment is an important strategy in overcoming the social isolation that many may face.

##### 3. Encourage taking action

**a.** Encouraging women to take actions that are in their best interest

**b.** Building leadership skills, setting goals and working as a team to take collective action towards solutions to community and personal problems.

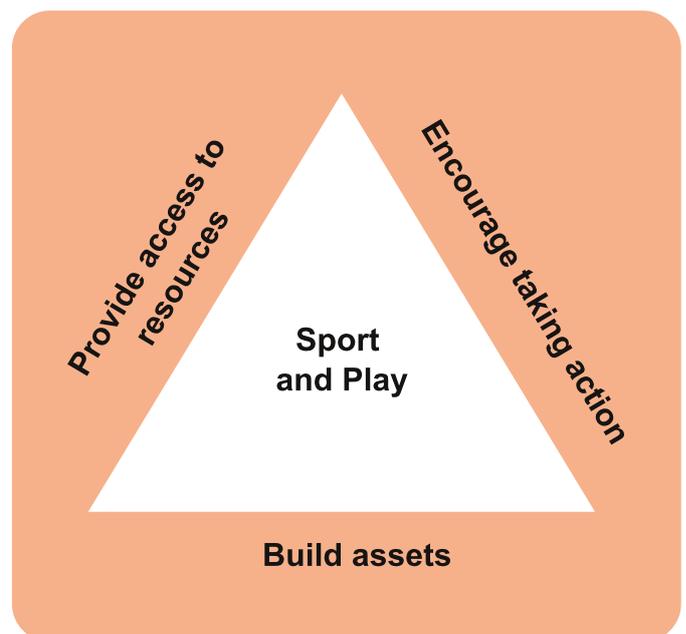


Figure 1.

[5] Brady, M. (2011). Levelling the playing field: Building girl's sports programs and creating new opportunities. Population council. <http://www.popcouncil.org/publications/serialsbriefs/TABriefs.asp>

[6] Lehman, S., and Koerner, S. (2004). Adolescent Women's Sports Involvement and Sexual Behaviour/Health: A Process-Level Investigation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.33 (5): 443 – 455.

[7] Women's Sport Foundation (2009). Her Life Depends on It II: Sport, Physical Activity, and the Health and Well-being of American Girls and Women.

[8] Slutzky, C.B., and Simpkins, S.D. (2009). The link between children's sport and self-esteem: exploring the mediating role of sport self-concept. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*.10 (3):381-389.

## 1.5 THE TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Different approaches have been identified in order to address the treatment and support needs of survivors of trauma. Trauma-specific practices take a direct approach and specifically address trauma and its effects and the need for recovery from traumatic life experiences through counselling and clinical interventions. By contrast, trauma-informed practices do not intend to deal with trauma directly, but to work with an awareness of the impact of trauma on an individual's life. Trauma-informed services are sensitive to trauma related issues, meaning that they can accommodate the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors, allowing services to be delivered in a way that will avoid re-traumatisation and facilitate programme participation. Trauma-informed approaches create a culture of non-violence, learning and collaboration, placing emphasis on choice and control in decisions affecting ones treatment. Every interaction takes place in a safe environment and confrontation is avoided.

This manual is using the trauma-informed approach as opposed to the trauma specific approach. Sport and play based programmes usually include people with different backgrounds and histories. Since coaches have no way of distinguishing people affected by trauma from people who have not experienced trauma, the best practices are those that treat all women as potential trauma survivors, following the practices that are most likely to promote healing and least likely to be re-traumatizing. Implementing these practices will be of

benefit to all people involved in the programme, but they are essential for trauma survivors who may not be able to participate or benefit from the sport and play programme without them.

### 1.5.1 KEY PRINCIPLES

Key principles of trauma-informed practice have been identified by clinicians and researchers. They are based on current literature, include the viewpoint of the survivor and are informed by research and evidence of effective practice<sup>9,10,11</sup>. The key principles will be outlined in the following.

#### 1. Trauma awareness

The first stage of the trauma informed approach is building awareness about trauma among staff. They should be made aware of how common trauma is, its impact on one's life, the typical ways individuals try and cope with the experience and the relationship between trauma, physical health and mental health concerns. Trauma informed staff should understand the effects of traumatic events and coping strategies and adaptations employed by survivors.

A basic knowledge of trauma can ease the process of coaches working with traumatised women. It will enable coaches to understand certain types of behaviour, allow them to recognise problems earlier and deal with them more easily. This knowledge will facilitate work with a group including traumatised women.

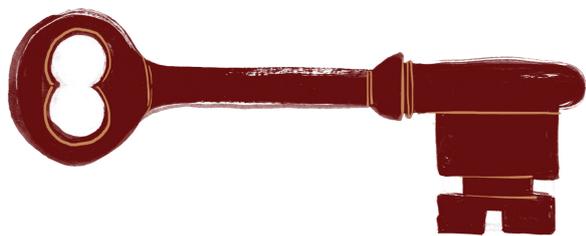


Figure 2.

### Trauma-informed key principles:

- Trauma awareness
- Safety and trustworthiness
- Connection
- Opportunity for choice and collaboration
- Strengths-based and skill building

[9] Harris, M., and Falot, R. (Eds.) (2001). Using Trauma Theory to Design Service Systems. New Directions for Mental Health Services. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[10] Najavits, L.M. (2003). Seeking Safety: A New Psychotherapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Substance Use Disorder. In: Trauma and Substance Abuse: Causes, Consequences, and Treatment of Comorbid Disorders (P. Ouimette & P. Brown, Eds). Washington DC: American Psychological Association Press. 147-170.

[11] Poole, N. (2012). Essentials of Trauma-informed care. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/PT-Trauma-informed-Care-2012-01-en.pdf#search=essentials%20of%20trauma-informed%20care>.

## **2. Safety and trustworthiness**

Key to the trauma-informed approach is the physical and emotional safety of the survivors and the trust developed between coach and survivor. Traumatized women often feel unsafe, are likely to have experienced boundary violations and abuse of power or may currently be in unsafe relationships. In order to establish safe relationships and trust, activities can be carried out such as: exploring and adapting physical and emotional safe spaces, providing clear information about programming, ensuring confidentiality between coach and survivor and within the group, demonstrating predictable expectations and scheduling appointments consistently. Informed consent and predictable expectations are key to creating a safe and trustworthy environment which can allow the survivor to feel in control and able to meet their goals.

## **3. Connection**

Reparative for those with early or ongoing traumatic experiences is the opportunity to establish safe relationships – with coaches, peers and the wider community. An enormous amount of evidence identifies social support as one of the strongest defences against problems following traumatic events<sup>12</sup>. Those with a strong social support have a much better outcome than those without, following a crisis or traumatic experience. This highlights the fact that trauma needs to be healed in an environment that establishes non-traumatizing relationships. The coach-participant relationship should be underpinned by respect, trust, information, connection and hope. Safe relationships are consistent, predictable, non-violent, non-shaming and non-blaming. Enhancing social support, focusing on individuals, families and communities, is the most influential aspect to 'promote connectedness'.

Therefore, strategies that boost and protect community members' capacity to help and care for one another are essential.

## **4. Opportunity for choice and collaboration**

The trauma-informed approach creates a safe environment that promotes a sense of self-efficacy, self-determination, dignity and personal control. In order to achieve these, coaches should communicate openly, equalise power imbalances, allow expressions of feel-

ings without fear of judgement, provide choices and work collaboratively. The ultimate goal of the activity is to facilitate each woman's ability to take charge of her life and, most importantly, have conscious choice and control over her actions. Through this personal experience of choice and control the women will be able to reclaim their right to direct their own life and pursue personal goals and dreams.

## **5. Strengths-based and skill building**

Through the trauma-informed approach the women are assisted in identifying their strengths and therefore enhancing their resiliency and coping skills. Particular attention needs to be paid to enhancing goal orientation, strengthening relationships and increasing collaboration. Learning these skills and values characterises the trauma-informed approach, including recognising the women's strengths and skills, building a realistic sense of hope for the women's future, and providing an atmosphere which will allow the women to feel validated and affirmed in every exchange.

**These principles provide the backbone of this toolkit, as they are essential for working with trauma survivors in any type of service.**

In Chapter 3, recommendations along these principles are given for coaches using sport and play as a psychosocial tool to help traumatized women.

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[12] Brewin, C.R., Andrews, B., Valentine, J.D. (2000). Meta-Analysis of Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Trauma-Exposed Adults. *J Consult Clin Psychol*. 68 (5): 748-66.

## 2. Essentials to carry out a Sport and Play programme

Sport creates an environment of active learning. Through participatory games and exercise, women may acquire new skills and learn new concepts. Sport and play can be broken down into three categories:

- 1. Exercise games:** movement games, activities in which the whole body is physically engaged
- 2. Symbolic games:** make-believe and role play, theatre
- 3. Rule games:** rules and following instruction (logical reasoning, working out strategies, etc.)

These approaches actively engage participants in both mind and body, in their own learning and therefore, they are more likely to absorb information and learn new skills.

### Adaption to context

It is important to keep in mind that the tips and best practices below should be adapted to your particular cultural context. While some activities or suggestions might work for a wide variety of situations, there are some that might work only for certain situations, but not for others. As a coach, you must understand what will and won't work with your particular participants and adapt your programme to meet their needs.

## 2.1 SPORT FUNDAMENTALS

### 2.1.1 TEACHING RULES

Rules are a very important part of any sport. Learning and following rules, as well as setting own rules, is also important for participants in post conflict settings who have experienced, or are still experiencing, trauma. Rules create environments where there are boundaries and clear consequences of exceeding those boundaries. This helps women create not only a sense of order and justice within the sport match or programme, but can help them understand and enforce boundaries outside of that programme related to her own life and violations against her own rights.

For basic rules and regulations of netball, volleyball and football, ⇨ please see Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 5.

### 2.1.2 TEACHING SPORT SKILLS

Increasing sport skills is an essential component of improving in a sport. Learning new skills and improving those skills not only helps women become better at a sport, but also increases their confidence and proves their value and ability as a member of a team. Although the fun component of sport should be emphasized and encouraged in all activities and matches, it is beneficial for you as a coach to also focus on skill building, challenging women to practice and improve on what they already know. Help them set goals for learning new skills and create plans to achieve those goals. For example, set a goal of juggling the ball 3 times in a row without hitting the ground, then show the women how they can reach that goal. This activity helps create a sense of accomplishment and achievement, however small it is, and helps build confidence to seek and work towards larger goals and accomplishments.

### 2.1.3 COMPETITION VS. COOPERATION – BOTH ARE IMPORTANT

Sport naturally combines both competition and cooperation. Sport programmes should include both aspects since they are equally important for individual and social development of participants. Competition teaches athletes how to cope with the stress of games and matches and perform under pressure. Competition also teaches how to lose gracefully, reacting in positive ways such as working harder at practice rather than negative ways such as becoming depressed, quitting the team or reacting violently against the opponent. Competition can also foster cooperation, where women on a team learn to rely on each other in order to win a match or tournament.

However, coaches and facilitators must be careful to ensure competition remains healthy and respectful. Coaches must also ensure that encouraging competition and creating teams doesn't reinforce existing divisions within a community.

### **Tip on how to build a team:**

When creating groups and making teams, make sure to mix up participants from different tribes, groups or backgrounds often. Also, switch out team members often so that women learn to play with different types of people and personalities, and not just their friends. There are many ways to create teams and they can be fun and creative as well.

- Count off: Give each participant a number, up to the amount of teams you need. Then, tell all the number 1's to get together, the number 2's etc.
- Have the women create their own teams, giving them rules such as they must have at least one person they don't know in the group.
- Match same coloured shirts/tops together as one team.

## **2.1.4 MATCHES/TOURNAMENTS**

Matches and tournaments are great ways to encourage women to work as a team, display their skills and reward themselves for their hard work at practice. Matches or tournaments are great incentives for women to attend practice and work hard. They can also be opportunities to build and increase life skills such as teamwork, cooperation, resilience and stress management. Not only do players learn how to win gracefully and be respectful to their losing opponent, but they must also learn how to lose. As a coach, you must ensure that your players use their anger or frustration from losing in positive ways, such as working harder at practice or creating skill goals for themselves, rather than lashing out at each other or their opponent. Games and tournaments can also be stressful, particularly if playing in front of a crowd. Players must learn to control their stress and fear in these situations, focusing on playing and having fun, and seeking the support of their coach and teammates to help.

Matches are also places where injustice can occur. Referees make bad calls and coaches make tough decisions on who to play in the field and how to designate a substitute. As a coach, try to hold discussions with participants if something they feel "unfair" happened. Talk it through with them after the game and come up with strategies to deal with these small injustices next time they might occur.

Matches and tournaments are also great ways to engage the community. Invite family members, husbands, children and village elders and authorities to the match/tournament. Raise awareness of gender based violence or other issues that the women might be interested in addressing with the community through banners, speeches or dances.

### **Tip on how to play fair:**

Let participants create their own rules and have fun.

One example of using a match to teach valuable life skills is having the participants create new rules that change the game slightly to emphasize certain life skills. Examples could be:

- every time one team scores, both teams must celebrate with a dance.
- everyone must touch the ball before a goal can be scored.
- players must play with their eyes closed and are guided by a 'buddy' next to them who can't participate in the game but can only tell the player what to do.

## **2.1.5 COACHING**

One of the most important aspects of a sport programme is the coach. The coach is responsible for ensuring that the programme is safe, well-designed and that the participants reach their objectives. Good coaches create bonds of trust between themselves and their players as well as help the players create bonds between each other.

What is a good coach? There are four categories of skills that are vital for all coaches to develop and improve<sup>13</sup>:

### **Personal Skills**

1. Recognise, understand and control emotions and their impact on others.
2. Be self-confident, assert oneself and be trustworthy.
3. Adapt to difficult or changing situations and be open when facing differences.
4. Evaluate oneself and learn from experiences.

[13] Meuwly, M., and Heiniger, J-P. (2007). Laugh, Run and Move Together: Games with a Psychosocial aim. Lausanne: Terres des hommes –child relief. 5-6.

### Social Skills

1. Lead a group towards an objective, be enthusiastic and communicative.
2. Motivate participants by providing constructive feedback.
3. Maintain an emotional bond with the participants while at the same time setting clear rules and boundaries.
4. Empathize, recognise and respond to the needs of all the participants.
5. Manage conflicts in a positive way (without exclusion or non-constructive punishment) and make the participants responsible for resolving their problems.

### Methodological Skills

1. Plan an activity taking into account variables such as intensity, time and materials.
2. Set clear objectives adapted to the group, designed to develop mental, physical and psychosocial skills.
3. Guide participants to reach the set objective (i.e. final form of a game, competition, race, etc.) through progressive steps and structured exercises.
4. Make participants participate so that they are always active (no waiting).
5. Alternate moments of experimenting, discussing and correcting so that they can learn.

### Technical Skills

1. Be in good physical shape and be aware of personal strengths and limits.
2. Know the rules of the games and teach them to participants so that they can also referee.

3. Master a sufficient number of games and sports adapted for the target group.

### Four Categories of Coach Skills

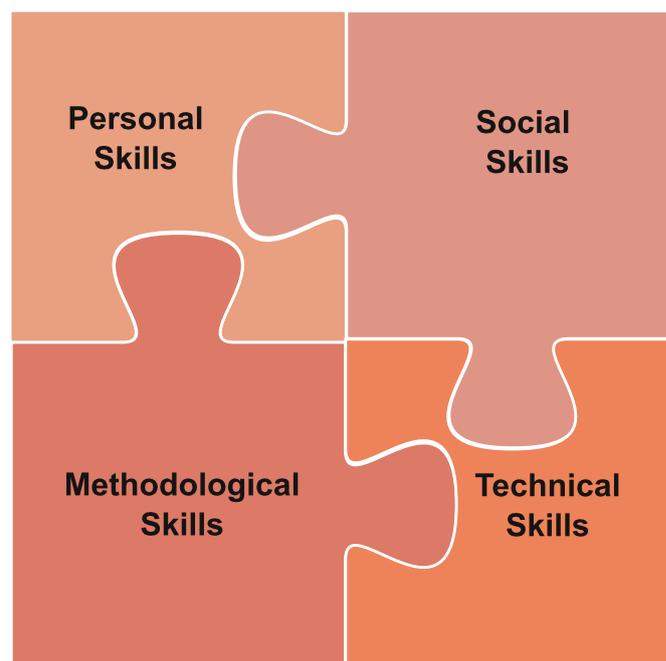


Figure 3.

### 2.1.6 ADAPTING SPORT EQUIPMENT

We know that not all sport programmes will have all the equipment they need to run a practice or sport session. However, there are various alternatives that coaches can turn to in order to still run a successful and fun sport session (see chart below).

Table 1: Adapting sport equipment through use of alternatives

Materials	
Ideal	Alternatives
Balls (footballs/soccer balls, basketballs, netballs, etc.)	Any sort of ball that can either be bounced, kicked, carried or thrown, depending on the activity
Cones (round disks or cone-shaped objects used in sports practices to create goals, mark fields or guide participants in the activity)	Rocks, backpacks, shoes, containers, water bottles, anything that is large enough to be seen by participants
Training bibs (coloured jerseys or vests that distinguish one team from another during an activity)	Coloured t-shirts, ribbons or rags tied on the arm or wrist to differentiate teams
Flip-chart paper	Chalkboard, whiteboard, clear piece of earth and a stick, large wall that can be written on with chalk

## 2.2 PLANNING A SPORT SESSION

Sport sessions should be planned ahead of time, in order to ensure that you as a coach meet the objectives that you want the participants to reach. For example, if one of your objectives is to teach passing skills for football and the life skill of teamwork, you should plan and design your session with activities that address passing the ball and teamwork.

On the right-hand side are components of a sport/life skill session that are very important to include.

Below is an example of one session. For a blank session template to help you plan, see page 11.

### Session Outline (1 hour and 30 minutes)

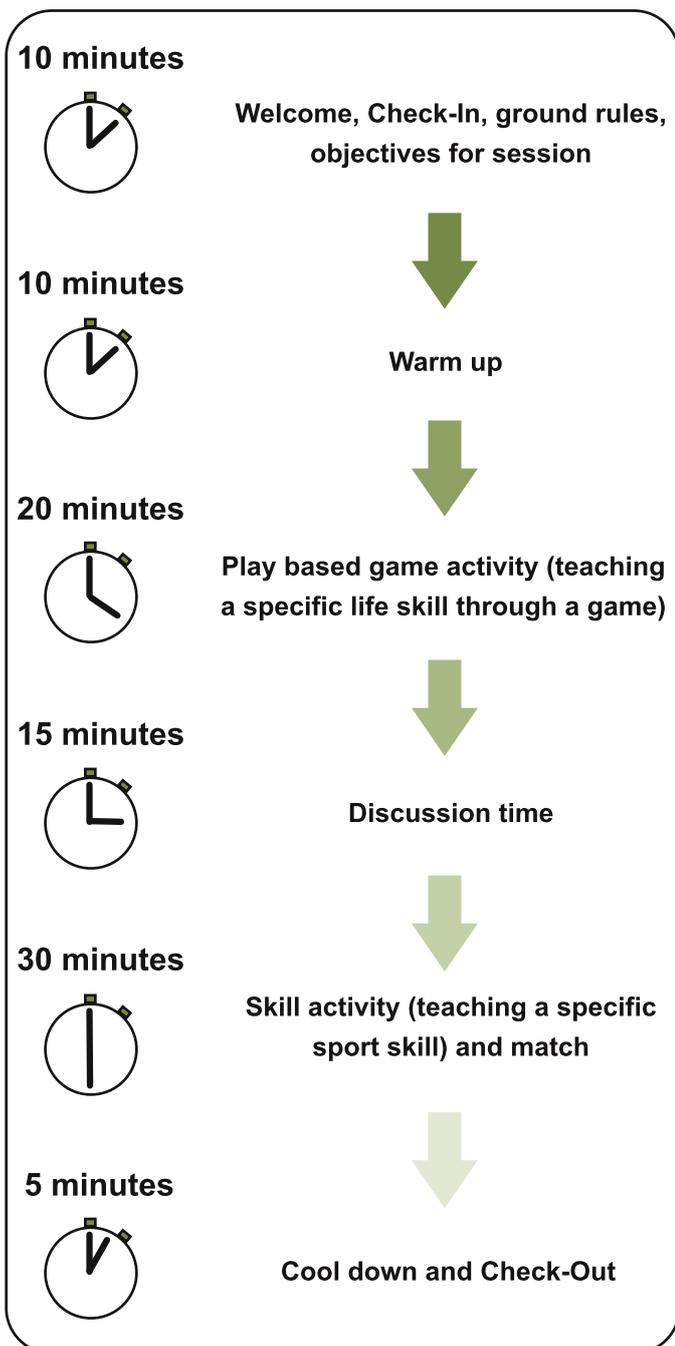


Figure 4.

## 2.2.1 COMPONENTS OF A GOOD SESSION

**1. Objectives:** What are your objectives? What skill and sport will you be teaching? What life skill will you be teaching? Make sure participants understand the objectives of the session before they start.

⇒ See chapter 3.5.2 on trauma related skills and Part II, Chapter 4 for Skills and Drills.

**2. Ground rules:** Do the participants know the ground rules? Do they have to be reminded?

⇒ See chapter 2.3.2 on how to create collective rules and responsibilities.

**3. Warm up and stretch:** Make sure that before and after sport sessions, participants have time to warm up and stretch properly so they do not injure themselves.

⇒ See part II, chapter 3 for Warm up, stretching and cool down activities.

**4. Skill training:** Have you thought about how you will teach the skill in your objective? For example, if you are teaching how to pass in football, do you have an activity that will teach participants how to pass<sup>14</sup>?

⇒ See part II, chapter 4 for skills and drills.

**5. Play based life skills games:** Do you have games or activities to teach life skills? For example, if you want to focus on teamwork, do you have a game that will teach teamwork?

⇒ See chapter 3.5.2 on trauma related skills and Part II, Chapter 6 for a collection of play based games designed specifically to address trauma related life skills.

**6. Discussion:** Leave 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the session for discussion. This is a time when you can talk about life skills with participants, discuss other topics that might have come up during the session or let the women ask questions, either to you or among themselves.

⇒ See chapter 3.5.3 on how to connect sport and play with life skills, importance of discussion

[14] Suzanne, S. Team-up for girls. Soccer toolkit. A resource guide. Building effective sports programs for girls.

**Tips:**

- Keep things simple, the more complicated a session is, the harder it is to reach objectives.
- Progression: start with something easy and progress to harder things, like combination of skills.
- Always plan the materials you will need.
- Demonstrate: when introducing something new, often participants must experience themselves to understand, rather than just hearing an explanation. Always try to demonstrate, using yourself and a volunteer, before you let them practice themselves.
- Never have your participants look into the sun, make sure you are the one looking into the sun.

In addition to planning just one session, it is important to plan out several sessions in advance, so as a coach you have a clear vision of what skills you want to teach and messages you want to get across to your participants. Having one month or several months planned out, even if this just means you know what life skill themes and sport skills you will address for the next couple of months, will help you tremendously. With your plan written down, you can gather the necessary resources you might need or contact the necessary people who can help you on certain topics. This does not mean that plans can't change - they can, of course, and they almost always will. However, the more organised you are as a coach, the more successful your sessions and practices will be.

**Tip:**

Use a blank calendar and mark the theme of each training day on the calendar. Create one for every month and mark down the themes you will be addressing each practice day that month, or for several months.

**Name of Coach:**

**Date:**

**Objective of session (Sport/ Life Skill):**

**Sport I will focus on:**

**Equipment I need:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Diagram/Details</b>	<b>Time</b>

Figure 5.

## 2.3 TIPS FOR COACHES

### 2.3.1 ENSURE ALL PARTICIPANTS SPEAK UP

It is important that programmes and specifically coaches ensure that all participants are active, speaking and heard. Often, there will be participants who dominate and take every opportunity they get to speak, and others who are quiet and shy. Creating activities and designing your programme so that even the shy participants have an opportunity to speak and be heard at least once is very important.

#### Tip:

##### Sample Activity

Check in and out: An activity called check in/check out is a great way to start and end sport or life skills sessions. This game gives every participant a chance to be heard and make their presence at the session. This is especially for the shy ones who don't say much and stay in the background during sessions, this is a way to boost their confidence and to announce that they are here and they are active participants in this session.

⇒ See Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 1 for instructions and other ice breaking games.

### 2.3.2 CREATE COLLECTIVE RULES

In order to create a safe space and give participants a sense of choice and collaboration, decide, with your participants, upon a set of rules that everyone agrees to with consequences if someone breaks those rules. Have participants come up with silly or fun consequences, such as singing in front of the group if they are late. By involving the participants in the creation of ground rules and consequences, you make them feel like this programme is theirs and that they are responsible not to you as a coach but rather, to each other.

As a coach, feel free to add any extra rules if the participants don't mention something you think is important. Write these rules on a large piece of paper and try to bring it to training or life skills sessions each time so everyone is reminded of the rules.

#### Suggested Ground Rules:

- Participants have the right to "pass" on activities/ questions that they feel uncomfortable with.
- It is all right to feel embarrassed or not to know answers to everything.
- Everyone's opinion is to be respected.
- All questions will be addressed appropriately.
- Confidentiality will be respected. Whatever is discussed in the group will stay in the group (i.e. no gossiping).
- Speak for yourself. Use "I statements" to state opinions or feelings.
- Don't be late. Late arrivals will be penalised (the person concerned will e.g. have to clean up after the activities).
- No alcohol permitted during the activities.
- Aggressive or unfair behaviour, negative attitudes, bullying, teasing or even fighting will not be tolerated.

### 2.3.3 CREATE LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Creating leadership opportunities for participants in your site is very important. This allows women to not only feel like they are in control of the programme but builds their confidence, increases their sense of responsibility and enhances trust in their own skills.

Have participants appoint roles and responsibilities to each other. For example, participants vote on who will be the time keeper, who will be in charge of water, who will be in charge of equipment. Again, this creates shared responsibility and active involvement among participants in making the program a success.

Rotate leadership roles often, so that even the shy women, who do not speak or participate much, are given the opportunity to take part and build their confidence. Natural leaders will emerge. Be careful not to let those leaders take over, intimidating others not to speak up or take charge.

### 2.3.4 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ASK QUESTIONS

Participants often refrain from asking questions or saying things out loud in front of a group because it is sometimes difficult, embarrassing or shameful to say certain

things or ask certain questions. However, it is important that these questions are asked and these things are said. How can this be addressed?

It is a good idea to have a box for questions at your session site. Explain to the women that if they have any questions, or if there is anything they would like to say or learn about a certain topic, they can put it in the box on a piece of paper, without writing their name. You can then look at all the questions at the end of the week (or once a month) and answer them within the group if you can.

This is also good if you are holding a sensitive discussion and want everyone to come up with one question they might have. By having the box go around and everyone put in a question without their names, women will feel free to ask the questions that they really want to without feeling like everyone will know it is them.

If there are illiterate participants who are not able to write down their questions, you can also hold 10 minute question time at the end of a session, allowing anyone with questions to come up and ask you the question personally. As a facilitator you can then choose whether to answer it then or write it down for the participant, place it in the box at a later date and answer it a couple of days later, as a way to protect the participants anonymity, should this be important or necessary.

### **2.3.5 GETTING THE COMMUNITY AND HUSBANDS ON BOARD**

The support of the communities and husbands is considered a key factor for successful project implementation. In addition to sensitization meetings with the communities, facilitators may speak about the project at occasions where the whole community gathers (e.g. church). Furthermore, they may visit village headmen and youth leaders individually to talk about the project and its activities.

Influential husbands can be identified and “recruited” to advocate for the project in order to prevent opposition or resistance to the project from others. If problems with the women’s husbands nevertheless arise, the project coordinator and/or facilitators, other husbands or community/ youth leaders who are in favour of the project may actively approach the reluctant husband, talk to him, listen to his concerns and explain what the project is about. He can be invited to attend a lesson or an open day, allowing the community, husbands, friends and families to learn about the project.

### **2.3.6 BACK-UP DAY IN CASE OF INTERFERENCES**

The group should determine an alternative day for rescheduling beforehand in case of funerals, heavy rain or other interferences. Participants are asked to inform the facilitators as soon as possible if another event is scheduled on the same day that the activities normally take place.

Additionally, the hosts of the playgrounds can be asked to provide a room (maybe a classroom) or another shelter to carry out indoor games or activities despite bad weather conditions.

### **2.3.7 ORGANISING CHILD CARE TO FACILITATE PARTICIPATION**

The issue of child care can be discussed and decided upon with the group beforehand. Different solutions are possible. If the activities are taking place later on in the afternoon, older siblings may be able to take care of the younger siblings because they are already out of school. If the children are brought to the playgrounds, participants could take turns in taking care of the children. Sick or injured women who are nevertheless attending the activities could also adopt this responsibility. In addition, the groups may arrange to have toys which could keep the children busy during the activities.

### 3. Designing a Trauma-informed Sport Programme

#### Tips:

Just throwing a ball onto a field and telling everyone to play is not effective. Sport programmes must be designed with a methodology in place. Sport itself does not necessarily create change, but well trained coaches and well-designed programmes that connect sports with life skills, do. Sport can work as a tool to empower women in the community and must be used correctly.

As previously outlined in chapter 1, helping people heal from their traumatic experience can be achieved by tailoring the design and organization of your sport and play based programme to address and include key principles of trauma informed practice. These key principles are trauma awareness, connection, safety, trustworthiness, opportunity for choice and collaboration, focusing on strengths, and to design and implement actual games and drills that address and deliver trauma-relevant life skill messages.

#### 3.1 INCREASING TRAUMA AWARENESS

An effective sport and play based trauma-relief programme must comprise careful selection of coaches and some basic psychosocial training of the latter<sup>15</sup>. Coaches should not only be knowledgeable in the more technical aspects of sport, but they should learn about psychosocial and trauma related issues and methodologies as well before conducting sports lessons for the target group. But it is not necessary to employ coaches trained in psychology for the implementation of psychosocial sport and play programmes.

It is essential for staff working with traumatised women to understand trauma in order to facilitate healing and avoid doing harm. Furthermore, with appropriate knowledge and skills, women who have experienced traumatic experiences themselves can learn to better cope with their situation and with any health problems that might arise from trauma. It can help the women to know that their feelings, thoughts and behaviour are typical reactions that other survivors also describe. Understanding that these reactions are normal may give them a name and a face and will help the person to feel more connected.

- As a coach, include time to talk about trauma in your sessions, following the guidelines below. Start with open questions about how participants define trauma, what they know about traumatic events and their impact on the individual.
- Instruct participants to talk about a third person (i.e. "I know someone who...").
- Keep it general; don't force participants to talk about their own experiences! For this part, emphasize on imparting knowledge and awareness, rather than going in depth into emotions, as the group dynamics may overstrain your skills as a coach.
- Try to focus on positive aspects, helpful skills and strategies when talking about negative effects.
- Always conclude with positive issues to keep positive spirits up and generate hope for the future.
- In addition to coaches and participating women to be able to recognise and react to trauma in an appropriate way, it might be helpful to include a psycho-social counsellor or mental health expert in your programme by inviting her/him to attend at least one practice a month or once a week. Having a counsellor there could not only help you understand your participants better but you could provide your participants with a valuable service during or after practice.

#### 3.1.1 BASIC KNOWLEDGE ON TRAUMA

This chapter will provide basic information on how trauma can affect the body, emotions, mind, and behaviour. It will also provide some guidelines for coaches for working with trauma survivors.

##### What is trauma?

The word "trauma" is used in everyday language to cover a range of different issues, referring both to

[15] Gschwend, A., and Selvaraju, U. (2006). Psycho-social sport programmes to overcome trauma and post-disaster interventions – An Overview. Biel-Bienne: Swiss Academy for Development.

traumatic events that induce distress and to the reaction to a traumatic event. But it is important to understand that experiencing a traumatic event is not necessarily the same as being traumatised and trauma is not the same thing as PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder). Trauma occurs when a negative, external event overwhelms a person's coping capacities. Trauma can happen to anyone and is unique to each individual.

### **Traumatic events**

Traumatic events describe experiences or situations that are exceptionally distressing, and that overwhelm a person's ability to cope. It is an individual's subjective experience that determines whether an event is or is not traumatic. What makes an experience traumatic is a sense of intense fear, horror, utter helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of physical injury or death<sup>16</sup>.

#### **Examples of potentially traumatic events are:**

- Exposure to an act of war, battles, combat (death, explosion, gunfire, being tortured, kidnapped or taken hostage)
- Abuse (physical, sexual, mental and/or verbal) in childhood and as an adult
- Long-term neglect in childhood
- Violent attack (animal attack, human assault, rape, domestic violence)
- Natural and man made disasters (tornado, floods, earthquakes, terrorism)
- Witnessing violence, a violent death or serious injury within the family or community
- Serious road accidents or life-threatening illnesses

### **Effects of a traumatic event on an individual**

Traumatic events turn our world upside down, shatter our normal sense of safety and stability, and shake our fundamental assumptions about how much we can control our life. A traumatic experience demonstrates in a powerful way that we are vulnerable and that we can die at any time.

Traumatic experiences can profoundly impact our sense of safety, self and self-efficacy. Our ability to regulate emotions can be affected, and social relations disturbed. It is important to note that each person reacts in a slightly different way, because each situation and each individual is unique. But there are some typical reactions which are commonly reported. Almost all of the reactions mentioned below, and perhaps other reactions as well, are understandable and normal reactions.

It can be useful for survivors to know that what they are experiencing are normal responses to a life-threatening event and that they are not "going crazy". This knowledge can put their experiences in context and make their reactions less disturbing and frightening.

### **Emotions:**

Especially in the immediate aftermath survivors may feel overwhelmed with intense fear, anxiety and panic, because the world as they have known it no longer exists. Some people experience sadness due to their losses, accompanied with spontaneous crying, despair and hopelessness. On the contrary, survivors may react with emotional numbness and feel disconnected from the world or detached from other people. Irritability, anger and resentment are common responses. Some may experience guilt for having survived while others have died and some may even blame themselves for what happened.

### **Body:**

It is important to keep in mind that reactions to traumatic experiences are physiological as well. Survivors often complain about physical complaints (e.g., headaches, backaches, nausea, stomach aches, pelvic pain, stomach/ digestive problems) for which no medical cause can be identified. They may also experience eating or sleeping disturbances (more or less than usual), as well as general physical exhaustion. Another disturbing effect concerns vivid nightmares and flashbacks (people find themselves re-living the traumatic event again and again by hearing voices or sounds, seeing images, feeling the associated emotions, smelling odours, experiencing unexplained tastes and physical sensations such as pain). Their heart rate, blood pressure, and sweat response may be higher.

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[16] Biere, J., and Scott, C. (2006). Principles of Trauma Therapy: A guide to Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment. Thousand Oaks.

### **Mind:**

Survivors are commonly flooded and overwhelmed with memories of the trauma. Unwanted thoughts get in the way of daily activities, as well as confused thinking.

Their ability to concentrate is decreased and they experience difficulty making decisions and memory lapses, especially about the trauma. Their watchfulness on the other hand is increased. They often have an exaggerated startle response. A sharp noise may cause them to jump, or involuntarily duck down or scrunch the head between the shoulders. This sensitivity may make them irritable, with a quick temper and anger outbursts.

### **Behaviour:**

Daily activities and functioning may be disturbed. People tend to isolate themselves and withdraw from normal routine and social life. Trauma can have a negative effect on people's relationships with others, as they may have difficulties trusting others or being close to others. They may also encounter problems in sexual relationships. Instead of strengthening their relationships, they often turn to self-destructive behaviours such as substance abuse, engaging in risky sex, or inflicting self-injury (e.g., cutting, burning). In addition, people feel afraid of being in, or even going near, situations that remind them of a traumatic event. As a result, they will try to avoid these situations, places, people, thoughts

and feelings. This type of behaviour will increase the fear, sadness, isolation, or anger.

As a coach, it is important to recognise these reactions as coping responses, rather than "bad behaviour". You should always acknowledge and respect the person's coping strategies, but at the same time support them in using other coping strategies and help them to connect to their own strengths and resources, as outlined in Chapter 3.5.

### **When is professional help needed?**

Not everyone with a traumatic experience will need professional help. It is normal to have reactions to trauma. These reactions are usually worst right after the trauma and gradually get better. There are many victims of trauma who naturally overcome trauma. But if the above described symptoms don't get better over time, if they strongly interfere with functioning at home, at work and in the community, or if the person talks about committing suicide, then professional help may be necessary.

Coaches should know about local places or professionals they can refer people to, if they recognize the above described alarm signals or if they feel that an individual needs more help and support than they are able to provide.

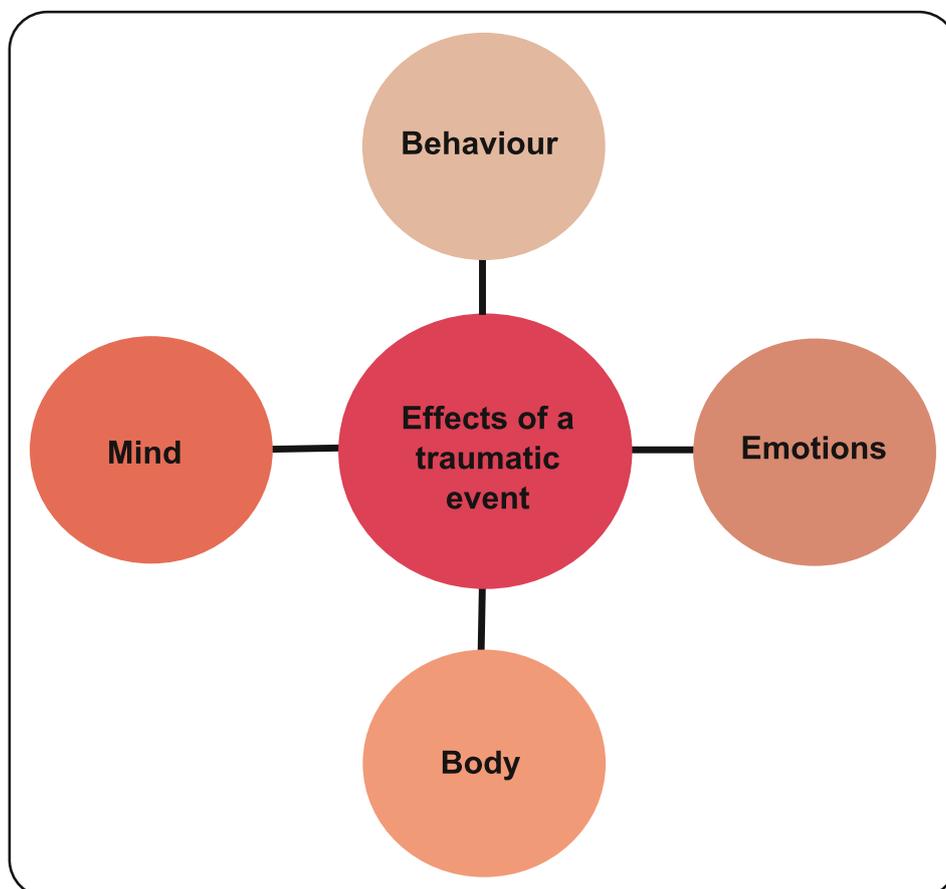


Figure 6.

### 3.1.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

As a coach, you can provide important support to the participants in your group. You can help them by listening, giving comfort, assisting them in coping with difficult situations, or referring to other services.

Remember these basic do's and don'ts when interacting with trauma survivors as guidance to avoid doing harm to the person, and to provide the best support possible:

#### DOs

- Help the person to express their feelings and accept a person's feelings, whatever they are and however strong they are. Expression helps the person to feel relief, think more clearly and manage their emotions.
- Focus on holistic health: drink, eat and sleep enough, exercise moderately, avoid caffeine, alcohol, or other drugs.
- Listen to the person: Listening encourages sharing and expression.
- Be empathic: "putting yourself in the other person's shoes." Make a genuine effort to imagine how the other person feels, what might have led to those feelings, and how we would want someone to respond to us in that situation. Frequently repeat and check with the person to find out if you have understood their words and feelings correctly.
- Approach each person with respect, openness, kindness, curiosity, and genuine interest.
- Know your limits and refer if needed. Consult regularly with other coaches and counsellors to get support, new perspectives and to share ideas.
- Be flexible in your approach: Try to change and respond to the needs of the person. Follow what the person shares with you.
- Consider the trauma-informed key principles: provide information on trauma, connect with loved ones, strengthen relationships, facilitate social support, be honest and trustworthy, maintain confidentiality, provide choices, encourage people to make their own decisions, and focus on strengths and solutions.

#### DON'Ts

- Don't force trauma survivors to talk about their own experience.
- If they start talking about painful experiences, don't discuss too much at once, don't dig too deep and don't go too far back into the past.
- Don't stop someone from crying because it is their way to express their feelings.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not tell people's stories to anyone.
- Don't force help on people by insisting on what they should do.
- Don't judge or blame the person for their situations, actions, words, or feelings.

Survivors respond to trauma in different ways, with different emotions and reactions. As a coach, you may find yourself in a situation when you are confronted with intense emotions and reactions that can be overwhelming. On the next page find tips on how to respond to common reactions trauma survivors experience<sup>17</sup>:

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[17] Ferencik, S.D., and Ramirez-Hammond, R. (2001). Trauma-informed care best practices and protocols for Ohio's Domestic Violence Programs.

Table 2: Tips on how coaches can respond to common reactions of trauma survivors

Survivor Reaction	Coach Response
Depression, Negative thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to motivate her to stay active such as going for a walk to keep her body active, and to keep doing her daily responsibilities and tasks.</li> <li>• Encourage her to get up at the same time early in the morning, instead of staying in bed too long, or sleeping during the day.</li> <li>• Encourage her to eat and sleep regularly.</li> <li>• Check if she has thoughts of committing suicide. Talking about suicide does not increase the risk of committing suicide. Not talking about it does.</li> <li>• Replace negative thoughts with more realistic ones, e.g. bad things do not always happen to me. It was one negative event and I had many more positive experiences in my life.</li> </ul>
Anxiety and Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remain with the survivor and tell her that she is not alone.</li> <li>• Remind her not to try and fight those feelings - they will pass!</li> <li>• Tell the survivor to breathe slowly and deeply and to try to relax her muscles.</li> <li>• Tell her that her feelings are not dangerous or harmful, but a common reaction to trauma and stress.</li> <li>• Focus on the here-and-now events and feelings; don't get caught up in past and future.</li> <li>• Concentrate on the surroundings, the feet on the ground, noise in the background, touch of the tree or grass under her hands.</li> <li>• Allow extra time for expression of feelings.</li> <li>• Without making unrealistic promises, reassure the survivor that she is now safe.</li> <li>• Be calm, kind, supportive, and reassuring; let her know that others have survived, and she can too.</li> </ul>
Nightmare and Flashbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let her know that nightmares and flashbacks are common responses and that they will pass.</li> <li>• Avoid interpretation of dreams, etc.</li> <li>• Continue to be patient and to encourage expression of feelings.</li> <li>• Provide information about common reaction to trauma and stress.</li> <li>• Suggest to sleep with a light on, to write the nightmare down or to draw it, but change the ending.</li> <li>• Remind her to breathe deeply and slowly.</li> </ul>
Shock, Disbelief and Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge that it is difficult for her to accept what has happened to her.</li> <li>• Listen empathetically and help her to express her feelings.</li> <li>• Let her know that her response is normal and she is not going "crazy".</li> </ul>
Sadness, Loss and Hurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show non-judgmental acceptance and understanding.</li> <li>• Reassure her of her worth and value as a person.</li> <li>• Tolerate silences and encourage her to cry (when she wants to) about her loss.</li> <li>• Support and encourage efforts to reach out for help from friends and family.</li> <li>• Encourage expression of feelings and convey your own feelings for the survivor such as concern, compassion, respect, etc.</li> </ul>
Anger and Resentment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrain from arguing with the survivor; set appropriate limits, and don't respond with anger if she is verbally abusive.</li> <li>• Let her know that anger at the batterer is entirely appropriate.</li> <li>• Explore channels for that energy and support her efforts to release it in healthy ways.</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate expressions of her anger.</li> <li>• Reflect her feelings and let her know how you feel about the way she might be treating you.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 BUILDING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

### 3.2.1 COACH/ PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

To create a sense of safety and trustworthiness, which are very important for women who are going through or have been through traumatic events, it is important to start with the coach/ player relationship.

Traumatic events differ among individuals and can have varying effects and provoke a variety of emotions. There is no specific method for the use of sport for women who have experienced traumatic events; however there are many tips that a coach can employ to build a trustworthy relationship, including:

- **Cultural knowledge** – in order to build a good rapport and trust with the women knowledge and sensitivity of the culture is key.
- **Be yourself** – believe in yourself and your capabilities and recognise your limitations. Mistakes are allowed but make sure you learn from these mistakes.
- **Know how to react in stressful situations** – stressful situations are inevitable, in these circumstances emphasise the importance of taking part and not just on winning, this will diminish the competitiveness leading to conflict. Highlight the positives of the women and the activity, building self esteem and confidence.
- **Focus on the sport and play activity** – the activity should focus on the sport and not on the trauma. Many women want to just play sport and forget about their traumatic experiences for a while. It is ok to talk about the trauma but don't feel that you have to do it all the time.
- **You as the coach should always be honest and transparent** with your players and let them know you are someone who they can confide in and get advice or help from. You should also let them know that what they tell or discuss with you stays between you two, unless the information is about something that could cause harm or danger to them or someone else. Then, you are obliged to tell someone who can help. By being honest and upfront with players, they will understand what you are doing and why you are doing so.
- **As a coach, it is important that you keep your promises.** If you promise that you will bring several new balls to practice the next week and you don't, then you are slowly creating an atmosphere where your

players will not trust you or believe you. Rather than promising things, be honest. If you are unsure you can deliver on something, tell them that you are unsure, but that you will try.

- **Coaches should be sensitive to their players** and support them whenever they can. This can come in the form of making themselves available for one on one talks before or after practice, being encouraging and positive during practice, and remaining non-judgmental when women discuss their problems or obstacles. These actions will let your players know you are an ally, and not simply a coach or authority figure in their lives.

### 3.2.2 CREATING SAFE SPACES

In addition to creating strong bonds and trustworthy relationships between the coach and player, coaches must ensure their players have a safe space, both emotionally and physically, in which they can play and express themselves freely without fear, stress, judgement or harm.

A safe space is an environment where women feel physically and emotionally secure. It is a place where they are protected from bodily harm, including sexual abuse and preventable sport injuries. In a safe space, women feel free to openly express themselves in a confidential environment, without fear of judgment or intimidation. They are comfortable sharing their deepest concerns and asking sensitive questions. Ultimately, the definition of safe space depends on how women feel within that space; therefore, the programme space needs to be consistently evaluated and adjusted by programme leaders and women.

#### Tips:

##### How to create physical safe spaces:

- The ground is free from anything that could harm participants (glass, rocks, sharp objects, holes).
- No unwanted visitors are watching and bothering participants (teasing or making comments from the side line).
- Bathrooms or places to wash are available.
- Participants can get to the programme site safely and return home safely. The lesson must finish on time to ensure security (women do not have to walk home alone in the dark).

- The facilitators and the group should be aware and considerate if someone is sick.
- Equipment is safe at the site and can be stored safely somewhere. One participant can be appointed to be in charge of the sports equipment, to take care of it, to be responsible for the distribution, collection and safe storage of the materials.
- First aid materials should be available on site to be used in case of an accident. Facilitators should be trained in basic first aid skills. A procedure should be established in case of an accident, e.g. the injured woman should be referred to hospital if necessary and her relatives informed immediately of what has happened.
- Participants should have adequate protective gear or rules of play should be modified.
- A no fight policy should be adopted during sessions for participants and coaches, which should include banning verbal attacks as well as physical attacks.
- Appropriate clothing should be provided to participants.

### Tips:

#### How to create emotional safe spaces:

- Participants feel free to play and act freely without worrying about who is watching them or what others might think.
- Facilitators should be friendly, caring and considerate at all times. The facilitators should be empathetic but at the same time keep a professional distance from the group.
- Participants should feel free to discuss sensitive issues and ask sensitive questions. They are encouraged to talk freely, express their opinions and share their emotions and experiences.
- Importance should be placed on clear instructions in order to avoid making participants feel insecure.

- Team work and team spirit is to be supported and encouraged. Participants should consider the opinions of others and respect others in the group.
- There should be no bullying or gossiping.
- Participants should feel like they are part of the group, part of a supportive team.
- Group members should agree that whatever was told in the group should stay in the group.

### 3.2.3 ESTABLISHING RITUALS

In order to create an environment that promotes feelings of safety, trustworthiness and comfort, recovery rituals and unchanging factors can be employed. This predictability can be created from the rituals and unchanging factors, alongside knowing that certain traditions and activities will happen as part of the activities. These recurrent traditions have a significant impact on the women, even more so when the traditions are associated with local culture and serve to connect the women with some of the protective factors inside their community<sup>18</sup>.

### Tips:

#### How to establish rituals and stable factors:

- As much as possible groups should meet in the same location and at the same time.
- The participants should have roles or tasks (e.g. referee, expert for rules, organizing water, time keeper, responsible for material) and stick to them.
- More experienced group members can act as mentors for less experienced participants throughout the programme, and therefore facilitate developing a stable relationship.
- Opening and closing circles can help the participants to make a switch from the outside

[18] Edgework Consulting. Integrating Trauma-Informed Practices into interventions for youth. [http://assets.sportanddev.org.sad.vm.iway.ch/downloads/bringing\\_trauma\\_informed\\_practices\\_into\\_interventions\\_for\\_youth.pdf](http://assets.sportanddev.org.sad.vm.iway.ch/downloads/bringing_trauma_informed_practices_into_interventions_for_youth.pdf)

world into our programme and back. In addition, they will feel that they are part of a larger group.

- Team check ins (see 2.3) can facilitate expressing feelings in the safety of their crowd.
- Regular times for praise should be cultivated with a little ritual, for example shouting a slogan to celebrate the women scoring a goal.
- Think about a nice closing ritual, such as marching around the playground or through the village, singing and cheering.
- Greet every participant with their name and a special hand shake when they arrive. Take your time to chat with each one of them before the activities begin or after they have ended.
- Instead of trying out new activities and games each session, repeat some activities over the course of the programme. Recognizing an already known activity can trigger feelings of safety and stability.

### 3.3 ESTABLISHING CONNECTION

Essential in creating an atmosphere of connection in your team is the creation of a programme that is inclusive and promotes cohesion and peer support, both among all players and between the player and yourself, the coach.

#### 3.3.1 PEER SUPPORT

Peer support plays a fundamental role in establishing connection and healing trauma. A 'peer' is an equal, someone who has faced similar circumstances, for example war and conflict or sexual assault.

Peer support encourages healing, through building relationships among community equals, learning from one another and building connections. Though peer support varies depending on the circumstances, it is always underpinned by important principles:

- Peer support is voluntary – everyone who is part of the group is there out of choice and this makes it easier for those involved to build trust and connections with one other.

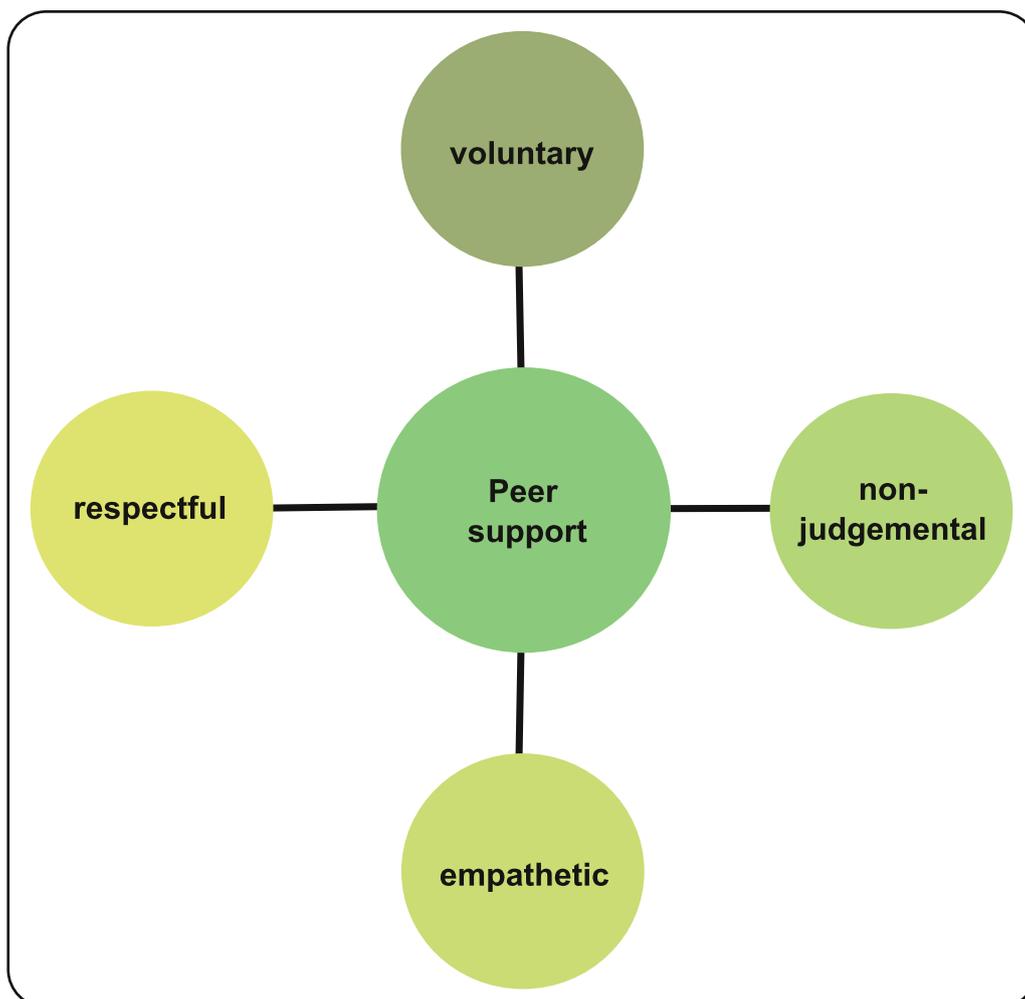


Figure 7.

- Peer support is non-judgemental – this means each person is treated with openness, curiosity and genuine interest.
- Peer support is empathetic – during peer support you should “put yourself in the other person’s shoes.” Imagine the feelings of the other person and how we would want someone to respond.
- Peer support is respectful – every person has an important contribution, everyone who is part of the group must be valued and treated with warmth and kindness. Everyone must be accepted and open to sharing with people from different ethnicities, cultures and educational backgrounds. Everyone is seen as equal.

### 3.3.2 GROUP COHESION

Cohesion is defined as a dynamic process reflecting the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of common goals and objectives, or for the emotional satisfaction of being part of the group<sup>19</sup>.

Group dynamics can have a major influence over the success of a sport session and ultimately, for a sport programme with the aim of addressing psycho-social issues. A group atmosphere in which women feel comfortable to be themselves, can speak their minds and discuss all topics is ideal for any sport programme. However, this is not always as easy as it sounds. Often, women gossip about or bully other women, and feelings of superiority can then create large problems, especially in situations where there are groups that mix social class, nationality, ethnic backgrounds or even just neighbourhoods. If there is no group cohesion, or women come to feel threatened by others in the programme, they will not speak up or fully engage in sessions and could eventually decide not to come back, preferring to avoid the group and forget about the sport. Good group cohesion and the absence of bullying are important factors in keeping women in a programme, and this responsibility usually falls on the coach or facilitator. An ability to create cohesion and resolve conflict within the group quickly is important in creating a positive group dynamic that increases women’s feelings of connectedness and safety.

#### How to foster group cohesion:

- Monitor women who are more dominant in discussions and during sessions. If you see the dominance being displayed in abusive or negative ways rather than positive and healthy, take that woman to one side and talk to her about her behaviour.
- Break up cliques when you see them forming, so that the women pair up with others that they do not know or are not necessarily close to as they train. Play games in which those women must rely on each other to win, forming a bond through competition.
- Help women talk through conflict resolution. If you see conflict forming between two women, try to approach them early on before the conflict has been blown out of proportion.
- Stop gossip and rumours from circulating. Have a discussion with the women about the difficulties that arise through gossip or rumours.
- Avoid having favourites. It is great to reward and encourage those who are natural leaders and show great behaviour; however, constantly favouring some over others can cause jealousy and conflict in the group. Give each woman the opportunity to be rewarded and take on responsibilities.
- Make sure you avoid an autocratic leadership style, but instead use democratic and inclusive behaviour as a coach, and encourage the group by giving positive feedback.

### 3.3.3 INCLUSION

In addition to group cohesion, it is essential to include everyone in your programme who wants to participate. This might mean holding sessions where some players are very good at sport and others are beginners. This also might mean adapting some of your games or sessions for players with certain disabilities. Excluding participants because of their abilities or disabilities can not only harm the community but also turn women away who truly could benefit from the positive aspects that sport and a new social network brings.

[19] Carron, A., Brawley, L., and Widmeyer, W. (1998). The measurement of cohesiveness in sports groups. In JL Duda (Ed.) *Advances in sport and exercise psychology measurement*. Morgantown: Fitness Information Technology. 213-226.

### **Including women with disabilities:**

- When developing your sport programme, actively recruit women with physical, sensorial, and other disabilities. Be aware that, due to religious and cultural biases, many families still hide their disabled family members and specifically women with disabilities. They are often regarded as second class, and a burden to their family.
- Regardless of how many women with disabilities you have, make sure they can be physically included in the games by providing them with suitable infrastructure and sporting equipment within realistic financial parameters. Look for sport activities that match equipment and abilities.
- Look for the abilities of the women, not their disabilities, to see the opportunities for them within your sport activity. If you have a large enough group of women with disabilities, consider creating a group just for them, where they can share and compete against women with similar abilities and experiences. When working with women with disabilities, be flexible, creative, patient and enthusiastic.
- If you work with deaf or women who are hearing impaired, learn basic sign language for the first communication and include sign language interpreters into your courses. You will also need to include this in your financial plan beforehand.
- You will also need to address how the issue of transport for women with certain disabilities. In many countries, special transportation is not available, too costly or poorly organized. Build this into your programme design, and consider programmes that can be offered close to the women with disabilities (e.g. their homes, or schools).
- Peer support is critical within creating an open and encouraging environment for all participants. Help all participants broaden their perspectives about who can play sport. Allow them to ask questions. Teach the women without disabilities to be the strongest advocates for the participation of those with physical, sensorial or mental challenges.

- Look for role models. Nearly all countries (or at least neighbouring countries) have Paralympics athletes. Invite them to your training to have women with and without disabilities experience what can be achieved in spite of disabilities. Work with disabled women trainers if they are available or adult disabled women as coaches or supporters of your programme. Seek support of the local or national disabled persons' organisations.
- Make women with disabilities aware that participation in sport and physical activities is their right<sup>20</sup> and that it can enhance their health, their lives and their abilities.

### **Tips:**

#### **How to hold a session with participants of different skill levels:**

- Speak to the more skilled players, explaining to them that there will be beginners in the group and that they should help you guide them, explain drills and rules, and be encouraging.
- If the skilled players are interested in an opportunity to play just amongst each other in a more competitive environment, try to schedule time for them either before or after practice for them to play a match or some games. Or, split groups up in practice so that they can do their own drill and lead themselves while you lead and coach the beginner group.
- Be careful when putting beginners in competitive situations with advanced players, ensuring that beginners do not get discouraged or lose their chance to participate, and are not over dominated by those with more skill.
- When splitting players into small groups or pairs, depending on the drill it might be beneficial to place a beginner with a more skilled player so they help guide that player through the exercise.
- If there is a beginner that feels uncomfortable or wants to sit out, try to involve her in some other way. For example, have her keep score during the match, or take the register, or be an equipment manager looking after the equipment. Try to give her a role to keep her within the team and occupied during the practice.

[20] United Nations (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.  
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

### 3.4 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE AND COLLABORATION

Trauma is an experience of losing control, and losing purpose and meaning. Many women have little control or choice in their lives and therefore it is important to give participants in your programme some degree of control over the design of the program. When a woman feels like she has control over her body, her future and her environment, she begins to feel strong and powerful.

#### 3.4.1 COLLABORATING IN PROGRAMME DESIGN

Opportunities to contribute to the programme are a great way to give women the ability to control and make decisions and thus to promote trauma recovery. Collaborating in the programme design will increase their self-efficacy, personal control and opportunities to exchange with their peers. In addition, participants are more likely to fully engage in activities if they have helped to design them.

Each person is unique with different cognitive, social, emotional and physical capabilities and therefore the individuals have a right to choice and decision making<sup>21</sup>. People are experts in their own lives and the role of the coach is to increase and explain choices and encourage the individual to make their own choices and decisions. You should explain clearly the choices that the women have, for example they can choose to take part in the programme, they can choose their own goals and you should support the individual to become confident and take control of the process. Offer alternatives: When a person has more alternatives, she is able to choose the best possibility for herself. You can be creative in proposing new resources. You can involve the person with others to share ideas and make decisions as a group.

#### Tips:

##### How to engage participants in programme design:

- Allow women to choose and decorate the space where their sessions are held.

- Ask women to vote on how they would like to be grouped for competitions, for example, by age, region or skill level.
- Let the women choose the colour of their uniform and the name they would like for their team.
- Consult with women and their families about the time and duration of practices and training sessions.
- Ask the women to create rules of conduct for sessions and penalties for breaches of conduct.
- Pick a group of women to interview and evaluate potential coaches.
- Ask women which sport they would like to play.
- Ask participants to teach another player a skill, or support them in practising it.
- Ask women which life skills topics they would like to discuss during particular sessions.
- Discuss the structure and different parts of your programme with the women, for example a ritual to start the session, what kind of warm-up activities ought to be performed, how to end the session.

#### 3.4.2 RELAXATION TO REGAIN CONTROL

Relaxation can be a way of training oneself to have some influence over physical and emotional symptoms of fear and arousal. Being able to exert some control over experience of fear and its accompanying physical and emotional sensations can be liberating and empowering.

For some trauma survivors, relaxation techniques can sometimes increase distress at first by focusing attention on disturbing physical symptoms or reducing contact with the external environment. Especially using relaxation techniques when you are already in panic can be difficult or even terrifying. This is why you should start practicing relaxation techniques when you are calm and in an environment where you feel safe. In the long

[21] Kasser, S. (2005). Inclusive Physical Activity: A Lifetime of Opportunities. Human Kinetics. 22.

run, the skill to relax will help you to deal with negative reactions to thoughts, feelings, or bodily perceptions. If you fight the fear and panic, it will become stronger. If you accept it and cope with it by using relaxation techniques, it will become less overwhelming after some time. Relaxation techniques are skills that will improve with practice. Be patient with yourself — your effort to practice relaxation techniques should not become yet another stressor. If you experience serious discomfort while practicing relaxation techniques, stop what you're doing and consider another technique (e.g. if you are doing muscle relaxation, try deep breathing or yoga instead) or activity (going for a walk, talking to a friend, physical activities).

### Tip: Deep breathing

A very simple, yet powerful technique is to practice deep breathing. To use the technique, take a number of deep breaths and relax your body further with each breath. You should breathe in through your nose, getting as much fresh air as possible from your stomach, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest. Exhale through your mouth. The deeper you breathe, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) and yoga postures are other relaxation techniques commonly used. PMR is a powerful relaxation technique and often recommended for trauma survivors because it teaches you to relax your muscles.

⇒ See Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 2 for detailed instructions on PMR and yoga postures.

## 3.5 FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS AND LIFE SKILLS BUILDING

### 3.5.1 STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

The strengths-based approach focuses on the capability, talent, competence, values and hopes of the survivor. Underpinning the approach is the hope that everyone, no matter how distressed or traumatised they are, has strength. It focuses on the resources existing within and around the individual. The approach allows the coach to regard each woman not only in need of help and support but also in possession of unrealised resources that need engaging to resolve present problems. The strengths-based approach focuses on building resilience, building trust, promoting empower-

ment and destigmatising the post-trauma response. The strengths-based approach is a collaborative process between the individual and the coach, as well as the whole group, working together to determine an outcome that draws on the persons strengths. As a coach, you can support this process:

- **Focus on strengths and skills** not on weaknesses to instil hope about the possibility of change and creating a better life. Ask, “what is right with you?” not “what is wrong with you?”.
- **Acknowledge the strength** it takes to get to where they are today, refer to the women as ‘survivors’ and let the women know that you believe in them. Make it clear to the women that what happened to them was bad but they are not bad themselves, are not to blame and had no control over the event. Frame non adaptive coping behaviour as a way to survive.
- **Support the individual in recognising the inherent strengths** they have at their disposal which they can use to counteract any difficulty or condition. Some women may not be aware of what strengths they possess, or they feel uncomfortable talking about their strengths. Ask them what they enjoy doing, things that they do well, and events or experiences that make them proud and that they feel passionate about. The individual needs positive encouragement in order for them to realise that they have strengths and resources to make changes in their life.
- **Focus on possibilities and solutions** instead of problems to help participants understand their options or potential solutions rather than focusing on the problem and all the obstacles that exist. Ask the following questions: “What does your preferred future look like?”, “What would you like instead of the problem?”, and “Imagine a miracle happens, you wake up tomorrow morning, and all your problems are solved. But since the miracle happened over night nobody is telling you that the miracle happened. When and how are you going to start discovering that the miracle happened? What else are you going to notice? What else?”.
- **Encourage setting goals** based on strengths, to increase awareness of a person’s strength and to discover new skills. Meet with the women in order to discuss, both as a group and as individuals, what they wanted to achieve from the sessions and what their goal is. If an individual sets their own goals he or she is more likely to internalise and achieve them. Goals could be to learn new skills, make friends or improve

their physical health or eating habits. It is important that the individual feels in control of their goals, and for this they should be realistic, specific and achievable. Instead of having the goal of generally learning new skills, it is useful to think of a specific new skill such as being able to juggle the ball 30 times in a row, or practice speaking loudly in front of people.

- **Help the person to identify her solutions** instead of giving your own advice. People are capable and responsible for solving their problems. People should be self-reliant and not dependent on you.

### **3.5.2 TRAUMA-RELATED LIFE SKILLS**

“Life skills” is a very broad term, but for the purpose of this toolkit, life skills are any tools that serve a woman in everyday life, such as knowledge, attitudes and the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life<sup>22</sup>. Generally, life skills are divided into three main categories:

- 1. Communication and Interpersonal Skills**
- 2. Decision Making and Critical Thinkin Skills**
- 3. Coping and Self-Management**

Women who have experienced or are still experiencing traumatic events (war, rape, gender based violence etc) and women, who deal with increased daily stress situations because of trauma, could greatly benefit from the set of life skills on the following page.

### **3.5.3 HOW TO CONNECT SPORT AND PLAY WITH LIFE SKILLS**

Besides teaching sport skills, using play-based games designed specifically to address certain life skills is a great way to engage women in active learning around issues and topics as well as start conversations and dialogue afterwards.

In addition to addressing life skills through play-based games, there are also steps you can take as a coach to design your sport programme to address those life skills. See below tips and suggestions for you as a coach to ensure you take advantage of learning moments during sport sessions and design your sessions to increase the frequency of these learning moments.

On pages 28 to 29 are play based games and coaching tips connected to specific life skills that are important for overcoming trauma and coping with stress. For full descriptions of the games and instructions, ⇨ please see Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 6.

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[22] United Nations Children’s Fund. <http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills>

Table 3: Examples of Life Skills for Overcoming Trauma and Coping with Stress

General Life Skill	Life Skill for Overcoming Trauma and Coping with Stress	Description
Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Strong Voice and Communication	Ability to speak out and communicate needs, wants and feelings loudly and clearly
	Conflict Resolution and Negotiation	Ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and non-violently Ability to negotiate on behalf of self interests and positive health outcomes
	Empathy	Ability to feel and relate to someone else's feelings and emotions
	Support Seeking Skills (asking for help)	Ability to ask for help and support from others
	Teamwork, Cooperation and Trust	Ability to work in a team, create bonds of trust within social networks and understand the value that individuals bring to a team
	Power and Gender Relationships	Understand and navigate power and gender relationships in personal and social life
Decision Making and Critical Thinking Skills	Being Proactive	Ability to be proactive and take action rather than just reacting to things happening
	Resilience	Ability to respond to stress and trauma in healthy and positive ways by using inner strength, being responsive and flexible
	Problem Solving and Decision Making (solutions oriented approach) based on rights and health	Ability to solve problems and make decisions based on information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender based violence, women's rights and human rights
	Mitigating Consequences and Decreasing Risks of GBV	Ability to mitigate and decrease risks of gender based violence
Coping and Self-Management	Developing Life Goals	Ability to envision long term goals and create an action plan to reach those goals
	Regulating Emotions	Ability to regulate and manage emotions of anger, frustration, sadness etc.
	Managing Stress	Ability to control and manage stress in daily life

Table 4: Play based games and coaching tips on life skills that are important for overcoming trauma and coping with stress

Life Skill for Overcoming Trauma and Coping with Stress	Game/Activity	Coaching Tips
Strong Voice and Communication	Game 1: Strong Voice and Body Language Game 2: Non-Verbal Communication Game 3: Say it With Silence Game 4: I'm Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage women to speak loudly and clearly in discussions and during team sport practice</li> <li>• Give everyone the opportunity to talk during discussions, particularly encouraging shy or quiet women to speak, by passing around a ball and requiring everyone to say something when they catch the ball</li> </ul>
Conflict Resolution and Negotiation	Game 1: What is conflict? Game 2: Navigating conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear consequences for conflicts (ex. verbal or physical fights). For example, if players are fighting, they must sit out during practice and not play, or they cannot play in the next match</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts (when appropriate) in front of the whole group, so that everyone feels they are responsible for finding a solution</li> </ul>
Empathy	Game 1: Secret Whispers Game 2: What is Empathy Game 3: Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch positions of responsibility and playing positions often, so that women experience and understand what it is like to play the position or have the responsibilities of another</li> </ul>
Support Seeking Skills (asking for help)	Game 1: Lion/Chick Game 2: Help Me! Game 3: Links Game 4: Tag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a coach, always ask for help when laying out the field, bringing water or organizing a game, so that the women become used to the notion of asking for help. Make it a normal part of practice and encourage others to ask for help with tasks</li> <li>• Encourage players to ask for help on the field. For example, if a player has a ball in football but does not see any of her teammates free to take a pass, stop the play and ask everyone what the player with the ball can do? Should she yell for help from her teammates to come to her and receive the ball or should she stay quiet and then possibly lose the ball to the other team?</li> <li>• When assigning tasks and duties, assign them in pairs so that women engage in activities as a team, helping each other</li> </ul>
Teamwork, Cooperation and Trust	Game 1: Feet to Feet Game 2: Human Knot Game 3: Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create pre practice and post practice cheers so everyone feels that they begin and end the practice or match as a team and not as individuals</li> <li>• Applaud and celebrate success, when a player does something well, make sure the whole group cheers for her on the field during a match or practice</li> <li>• Make a rule that during matches at practice, when one team scores, both teams must celebrate and dance</li> </ul>

Life Skill for Overcoming Trauma and Coping with Stress	Game/Activity	Coaching Tips
Power and Gender Relationships	Game 1: Power Over, Power With Game 2: Objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a coach, always ask for feedback on how you are holding sessions and guiding the team, to show your players that you value their opinions and do not feel superior or better than they are</li> <li>• Create safe spaces, emotional and physical, at the practice site (see Chapter 2 Safety and Trustworthiness)</li> </ul>
Being Proactive	Game 1: Capture the Flag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage participants to take the lead and solve problems on their own, don't always give them a solution to an obstacle, but rather, give them space to take the initiative</li> <li>• This could be done by letting them play a match without much guidance in how they should play, letting a leader or captain on the team to step up and take charge</li> <li>• Let women lead their own warm ups and cool downs, eventually, they will take the initiative every practice without you asking</li> </ul>
Resilience	Game 1: Mine Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and foster positive reactions to losing a match or tournament (working harder at practice, strengthening cooperation amongst the team etc.)</li> <li>• Discourage players when they talk about all the obstacles in front of them and how they will never succeed</li> <li>• If players feel tired or injured, do not send them away from practice (unless it is serious) but have them sit near their teammates so that the chance of them returning to the practice is higher and their teammates encourage them to continue playing</li> </ul>
Mitigating Consequences and Decreasing Risks of GBV	Game 1: Breaking the Silence Game 2: Secrets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss gender based violence in some way during each session, even if briefly before or after practice. Keep this issue on everyone's mind and make sure they know that they can come to you or their teammates if they need to talk or discuss GBV</li> </ul>
Developing Life Goals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage participants to develop personal skill goals and life goals during the program. Hold a session where everyone creates small life plans for the month or year and then reserve time slots during practice throughout the month or hold special sessions throughout the year to check on their progress. Create peer partner groups so that players have a teammate to talk to throughout the year about their progress</li> <li>• Help the team create team/group goals. Write these goals out at the beginning of the season and then revisit the goals at the end of the season.</li> </ul>

Life Skill for Overcoming Trauma and Coping with Stress	Game/Activity	Coaching Tips
Controlling Emotions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and foster positive reactions to losing a match or tournament (working harder at practice, strengthening cooperation amongst the team etc.)</li> </ul>
Managing Stress		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule matches and tournaments for your team, and then leading discussion around the stress of games and how to deal with that stress as a group, supporting each other</li> <li>• Encourage stress releasing activities during practice, such as fun warm up games, or have participants suggest ways they could release stress during practice (such as dancing) and try to integrate the ideas into your programme</li> <li>• Remind players that if they are feeling under stress, whether it is related to their experience in the sport programme or to their personal lives, that they should talk about it, either with you or with the group. It is important that they do not keep their stress inside so it builds up</li> <li>• Start each practice session with an opportunity for women to say what is on their minds, talk about what is bothering them in their lives or what they are happy about</li> </ul>

## Importance of discussions

It is important to remember, as a coach, that holding discussions after these games and activities is important in creating connections between the game and the issues addressed. Discussion sessions allow the participants to reflect on the game, their interaction with the game, and what they think they learnt or understood. It also allows participants to share their opinions and insights with each other and therefore learn from each other. ALWAYS take 10 or 15 minutes after a game or session to sit down in a cool shaded place (or inside/ some place warm if you live in a cold climate) and discuss what happened, why it happened and what the participants have learnt or understood. Suggestions for general questions to structure the discussions are listed below. ⇨ Additional questions that are specific to each game are specified in Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 6.

### How to lead a discussion session:

- **Go with the flow.** If participants are really enjoying one question and have a lot to discuss on it, don't stop them, even if you only end up discussing that one question the entire session. Or, new questions could come up and the conversation could flow into another related topic. Let it. Sometimes, really important points are discussed when the conversation is freed up. As a coach, however, you should be there to guide the conversation. If you see everyone is starting to get distracted and move away from the important topic or related topics, bring the conversation back with a new question.

- **Let everyone speak** and give his or her opinion. Don't tell participants they are wrong for having a certain opinion, help them see another way of looking at a point. It is important to not be negative or judgemental as a coach, even if you strongly disagree with someone's opinion. You must be a role model and not get caught up in heated debates, but rather facilitate the players in having those debates.
- **Be prepared.** Have paper and pencil ready to record main points! Before the discussion, the coach must have a firm grasp of what the message of the game is, what we should learn from it and where you want the discussion to go. Write down between 5-7 questions that you as a coach want to ask your players to see if they understood the activity or the life skill session. Writing down your questions ahead of time helps you organize your discussion session so that you don't forget any important points. Keep the paper in your pocket and when you start the discussion pull it out and use it as a guide. In Part II, The Tool Box, Chapter 6, every game comes with the objectives of the game, as well as tips on how to lead the discussion for this specific game and questions to ask. Of course, if the discussion is interesting but going in another direction, let it flow. Maybe you can return to a previous point later on.
- **Ask questions.** Try to go deeper and get more information. Ask why, how and what? If appropriate, discuss possible support or objections to their claim.

Table 5: Suggestions for questions that help to structure discussions

	Questions ?	Purpose !
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was the game?</li> <li>- How did you like this game?</li> <li>- How did you feel about this game?</li> <li>- Did problems or difficult moments arise during the game?</li> </ul>	Let them come out with their feelings first, try to get as many different emotions as possible, name emotions other than just good or bad. It is a good exercise to express one's feelings and to name them
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What helped you when you played the game?</li> <li>- What have you learnt from this game?</li> </ul>	Talk about different life skills learnt when playing the game.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where in your life did you experience this feeling?</li> </ul>	It's easier to relate and connect to feelings. They can talk about women in their communities, if they don't feel comfortable talking about their own experiences.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How can we apply these skills in our daily lives?</li> </ul>	Talk about different examples in daily life where this skill is useful.

- **Get everyone involved.** Ask the quieter participants what they think and encourage everyone to speak. But ask individuals who seem ready to talk rather than picking someone randomly. Kindly advise participants who always rise to speak to let others talk as well. Make sure every participant has an opportunity to be heard. Validate and repeat every contribution.
- **Open the discussion to the group.** Instead of ping pong style question-answer sessions, throw a question or comment back to the group every now and then. Ask: What do the others think? Do you agree or disagree? Are there other solutions or comments?
- **Summarize as you go.** Repeat shortly in your own words what people say, in case someone at the back didn't hear it or someone didn't understand the meaning. In the middle of the discussion, ask the group, "OK, what have we said so far?" Recap and allow time to breathe, re-gather thoughts, and start thinking again. Make a summary at the end of the discussion or let someone else summarise and write the main points down in front of everyone. It's ok if you can't remember everything, let the group join in.
- **Stages of discussion.**
  1. Brainstorm: collect different opinions and ideas, there are different techniques for brainstorming. Ideas can be discussed as a pair, or a group, or everyone can be allowed to think on their own and then present to the group.
  2. Explore one or several ideas.
  3. Pick one or two at the end and then summarise.
- **Create a friendly environment.** The discussion group should be a safe place where the women can express opinions and speak freely. No answer should be ridiculed; everyone's opinion should be accepted. A wrong answer should be correctly refined and explained but no one should be laughed at or ignored.

### **Importance of adapting to local culture/ context**

Not all communities are the same. Therefore, as a coach, you must be aware of when you need to adapt a particular activity, game or discussion session to the particular participants/women and the community you are working with. Some communities might be more conservative than others, and you might therefore need to refrain from discussing certain topics in public spaces. Some communities or groups of women might need to focus on certain themes more than others.

By adapting your programme and its content to local contexts and the needs of your participants, your session will be more targeted and have a greater impact, meaning your participants will get more out of their experience.

### **Tip on how to adapt:**

- Always get feedback from your participants. After sessions, or the next time you see them, ask them what they liked or disliked about your last session or discussion. Ask them what they want to focus on in the coming sessions or if they have any issues they really want to address and how. This can be done formally after each session or before each session.

## 4. Practical recommendations: Key Points

The toolkit provides a trauma-informed guide to conducting sport and play activities, and can be adapted for different cultural and economic environments. In trauma-informed sport and play programmes, the coach is at the centre of contact with and delivery to participants, who are trauma survivors. A coach will require personal, social, methodological and technical skills not only in the aspects of sport, but also psychosocial and trauma related issues, to successfully implement these programs. The trauma-informed approach provides key principles for practitioners that are essential for working with trauma survivors and have been discussed in this toolkit.



### There are five principles to the trauma-informed approach:

1. **Trauma awareness** – understand trauma and basic displays of behaviour in order to detect and react to it, encourage survivors to express how they feel if they want to, without forcing them to talk about their trauma, identify helpful skills and strategies to cope with negative feelings and reactions and conclude with the positive aspects, seek professional help when symptoms such as fear, lack of appetite or sleep don't get better, interfere with everyday function or if the individual talks about committing suicide.
2. **Safety and trustworthiness** – give clear information, use language they understand, stress confidentiality, create spaces where women feel physically and emotionally secure, establish rituals.
3. **Connection** – enhance social support among individuals and within the community by offering support such as advice and companionship, and giving the women a sense of belonging through common goals, encourage asking for help, break up cliques and follow an inclusive approach.
4. **Opportunity for choice and collaboration** – encourage the women to take control of their lives and choosing what they want to achieve, provide choices by involving the women in the decision making of the session i.e. determine what they want to get out of the activity.

5. **Strengths-based and skill building** – a consistent environment and strong, positive relationships encourage hope. Highlight the fact that they can't change the past but can look to the future. Focus on resources and strengths, not on problems and weaknesses. Ask “What happened to you?” not “What is wrong with you?”, encourage acquiring new skills and setting goals.



### A good session has:

- **Objectives** – determining the choice of sport and activities that will meet the objectives and what life skills they focus on.
- **Ground rules** – reminding the women of the rules before taking part in the game.
- **Warm ups and cool downs**
- **Skill training sessions** – making sure the skills and games meet the objectives you want to achieve.
- **Play based life skills games** – the games and activities should address life skills.
- **Discussions** – allow 15-20 minutes to discuss the life skills involved, the session and any other topics the women want to speak about.
- **Keep things simple**, start easy and get harder. Make sure you demonstrate new skills to the women, rather than just describing them.



### For best practice:

- **Be prepared** – plan the session ahead of time and make sure you have all the materials necessary to meet the objectives.
- **Include everyone** – ensure all participants speak up and are vocal at least once by having a register or conducting small group discussions.
- **Introduce rules** – ground rules are an essential way to identify boundaries, and the consequences that breaking the boundaries would have. Allow the women to come up with collective rules and responsibilities i.e. that they would have to clean up if late, to make them accountable to each other.
- **Assign roles to participants** – allow the women to vote among themselves for roles i.e. time keeper or in charge of water, assign leadership roles.

- **Allow for question time after practice** – dedicate time at the end of the session to answer any questions the women may have. Have a question box women can put questions in if they do not want to say them out loud.
- **Get the community on board** – speak at public events (e.g. church events), to individuals or with the village headmen, or invite members to sessions to highlight the importance of the project.
- **Combine competition and cooperation** – Creating teams and rules within each team encourages women to work together to achieve the same goal. Matches and tournaments also encourage teamwork and competition to beat the opposing team.
- **Arrange for child care facilities** – decide beforehand who is going to look after the children, it could be older siblings or a member who is unable to take part due to injury or sickness.
- **Be flexible** – the group should determine an alternative day or venue for the session if it cannot go ahead due to a village event (funeral) or bad weather conditions.



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