COACHING BEYOND WINNING

A resource for sports coaches and third space leaders on positive youth development in the third space
The Third Space

What is the Third Space?

The “third space” is anytime that children and youth spend outside of the home or school—i.e. when they are at afterschool programs, summer camps, rec programs, youth centers, extracurricular activities, service learning projects, etc. Young people spend lots of time outside of their homes and outside of school. This third space is an important place for them to get what they need as they grow up. As we go about our lives, we can welcome youth as part of our communities and provide opportunities for them to learn new skills and to have opportunities to play, learn, relax, explore, and be young.
The Third Space

Why Does it Matter?

What happens when youth aren’t at home or at school—also known as the third space—really matters in a child and teen’s life. This can be a significant amount of time when you take into account school vacation weeks and summer break. It is important that young people are encouraged to engage in quality activities during the out-of-school time. Whether it’s volunteering in the community, learning new skills, practicing for a performance, or hanging out with friends in a safe place, third space programs allow youth to further develop their social skills and build emotional resilience. Participation in consistent, high-quality third space programs are also a known protective factor against substance use and risky behaviors. In sum, third space programs are an effective primary prevention strategy.

Youth need the third space more than ever to build connections, life skills, and play!

- **51%** Students agree there is a special person around when they are in need
- **62%** Students agree there is a great deal of social life available in their community
- **45.5%** 7th and 8th grade students and 43% 9th and 10th grade students participate in sports twice or more a week.
- **18%** 9th & 10th graders report hanging out at a friend’s house with no adult present
- **60%** 9th and 10th grade students report doing well in sports increases peer respect.
- **45.5%** Students report Covid-19 has made their mental health worse.
- **27%** 11th and 12th graders report staying outside the home past midnight once or more a week.

Data from the Vermont Youth Project 2020 Survey
[www.vermontafterschool.org/vypdata](http://www.vermontafterschool.org/vypdata)
The Role of Sports Coaches and Third Space Leaders

**Ignite Curiosity**
Help young athletes recognize failure/setback as an opportunity.

**Build Resilience**
Know youths’ boundaries and fears and gently push them out of their comfort zone but provide support and encouragement.

**Model Integrity**
Treat youth with respect and dignity. Praise youth for demonstrating and living their values.

**Promote Self-Awareness**
Provide specific feedback about performance and support students in being aware of their self talk during practice and competition.

**Foster Resourcefulness**
Challenge athletes to set high expectations for themselves and support them to accomplish their goals by connecting with/providing the resources required.

**Encourage Creativity**
Notice and help others notice youth for thinking outside the box.

**Lead with Empathy**
Ensure youth are seen, heard, and understood.
Protective Factors

What Are Protective Factors?

There are many domains that youth interact with frequently and they can have protective impacts on a youth’s wellbeing.

Factors for Positive Youth Development

Participation in consistent, high-quality third space programs are a known protective factor against risky behaviors. Organized quality activities, trained third space leaders, and accessible opportunities that third space programs can provide are an effective primary prevention strategy. Below are factors that promote positive youth development:

- **Positive Social Norms**
- **Supportive Relationships**
- **Opportunities to Make a Difference**
- **Opportunities for Skill Development**
- **Opportunities to Belong**
- **Physical and Psychological Safety**
- **Appropriate Structure**
- **Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts**
Youth go through a lot of changes and typical development between the ages of 12-18. If you work with young people, you know them well and if there is a drastic change in behavior, it may be time to check in.

**Common Signs of Alcohol and Drug Use**

**CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR MOOD**
Restlessness, nervousness, paranoia, irritability, defensiveness, and/or a lack of interest in appearance or activities.

**CHANGES IN FRIENDS**
Switching friends and being reluctant to introduce new friends.

**PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL OR HOME**
Poor attendance, drop in grades, and rebelling against rules.

**PHYSICAL OR MENTAL CHALLENGES**
Slurred speech, lack of coordination, disorientation, memory lapses, trouble concentrating, or symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, bloody noses, teeth clenching, or sweating.

**Common Signs of Adolescent Development**

**PHYSICAL CHANGES**
Changes in hormones and increase in weight and height.

**MENTAL CHANGES**
Developing more abstract thinking skills, forming own beliefs, and questioning authority.

**EMOTIONAL CHANGES**
Shifts mood quickly, feels more intensely, and increasing risk-taking and impulsive behavior.

**SOCIAL CHANGES**
Increase in peer influence, learning to manage relationships, and experimenting with social and cultural identity.
**Tobacco Use**

**E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among middle and high school students.**

**Some e-cigarette products do not look like tobacco products so students can use them unnoticed in school.**

**JUUL, a popular e-cigarette, is shaped like a USB flash drive.**

**E-Cigarettes deliver a high dose of nicotine which is highly addictive and harmful to adolescent brain development.**

**Tobacco Cessation Resources**

Youth can text “VtVapeFree” to 88709 to get help and support for quitting e-cigarettes and vaping.

- Free tools and support for ages 13 and older. 802 Quits: 802quits.org
- Free tools and resources. Truth Initiative: truthinitiative.org
- Free tools and resources. CDC Quits: cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm
Vaping Illness

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and state and local health departments, including the Vermont Department of Health, are investigating a multistate outbreak of e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury (EVALI).

The investigation is ongoing and a cause has not been identified, but all reported cases have a history of using e-cigarette products. Many patients report using e-cigarette products with liquids that contain cannabinoid products, such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).


How to Stay Updated

EVALI is new and evolving. To stay updated, please visit the following CDC page: cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

Know the Symptoms

- Cough, Shortness of Breath or Chest Pain
- Nausea, Abdominal Pain or Vomitting
- Fever, Chills or Weight Loss

Additional Information and Resources

Youth can text “VtVapeFree” to 88709 to get help and support for quitting e-cigarettes and vaping.

USA Today (December 2019): Vaping negatively impacts student-athletes’ health

CDC: Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults

Tip Sheet - Talking to Youth: Advice for Parents, Teachers, Coaches and More
Social Emotional Learning

What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:

- Develop Healthy Identity
- Manage Emotions and Achieve Personal and Collective Goals
- Feel and Show Empathy for Others
- Establish and Maintain Supportive Relationships
- Make Responsible Decisions

Core Competencies

Strategy to Promote SEL Competencies

S  Support them in any way possible.
A  Take Action, but make sure your action is based on hope.
F  Have faith in students' ability to initiate change. Have faith in students to do better.
E  Express your feelings. Connect with them and let them know that you are there for them.
SEL Tips for Coaches

Transition & Informal Time

Create an environment to ensure physical, mental and emotional adjustment in student-athletes. The transition time should be used in building relationships with each other and building a supportive community. To do this, coaches can come up with icebreakers or activities such as feeling games. Some examples include:

- What superpower would you chose and why?
- What word would you add to the dictionary and what would it mean?
- If you were to write a book, what would it be about?

The key to this informal time is for athletes and coaches to feel comfortable and make meaningful connections outside of sports. Leave time for students to check in about how they feel and what they are looking forward to each day.

Pronouns

Ask students the names they prefer to be called (nickname vs. full name) and introduce the pronouns such as she/her or he/him or they/them. Do not require anyone to identify their pronouns but make sure it is an option for everyone.

Pre-Teach

If you have new health and safety protocols, please pre-teach and model these with your students to help them feel comfortable with the new routine. Also, allow for time to answer questions that may come up. Daily structures have drastically changed for students. Going over the daily schedule keeps students informed when there are changes.
SEL Tips for Coaches

Use Visuals to Convey Concepts and Norms

There are many different learning styles and having visuals to convey concepts and rules assists young people with different learning styles. Set rules and expectations as a group. Ask the students for input into what your group norms and rules should be as a way to establish what’s most important to keep everyone’s bodies and feelings safe during your time together. Engage students in creating posters and artworks for them to see and use when they are with you.

Communication

Encourage students to use a positive tone of voice when things don’t go as planned. Practice giving and receiving compliments in a circle or individually, find ways to recognize kindness publicly each day, and give them language to talk about their feelings.

Cooperation

Practice fun team-building activities each day. It is important for everyone to work on getting to know each other, so you must introduce all adults. This will help students see themselves as an integral part of their team, increases the sense of belonging and helps to build trust among each other.

Warm Up and Play Time

All student athletes have their unique needs. Give athletes few extra minutes during the warmup to meet their bodies’ unique needs. Also, create an environment where athletes feel empowered to take on a challenge without the fear of failure. This can be done by practicing different team-building activities, promoting the concepts of shared responsibility, and seeing failure as a learning opportunity.
SEL Tips for Coaches

Protect Tomorrow

If a child or teen has a hard day, always repair the same day. Consequences should ALWAYS stay on the same day as a transgression or mistake. This way, you can say goodbye with easy hearts and minds and look forward to a fresh day together the following day or week. There is so much external stress right now, so this space needs to be a safe space for children and youth to process.

Transition Out and Informal Time

It is equally important to set aside a few minutes at the end where coaches remain accessible to players wanting to connect with the coaches without the pressure of practice or other athletes around. Transitioning out with a good conversation with coaches helps remind athletes that they matter, that it is okay to express their feelings and that they can always count on the coaches if they need any support.