

LAMOILLE AREA COACHING COLLABORATIVE



YOUTH COACHES

Building Protective Factors

A handbook

01	Our Story
02	Coaches as Protective Factors
03	A Closer Look
04	Our Why
05-07	As Coaches We Model: Tips for Success!
08-11	Understanding Youth Development
12-15	Know Your Rules & Policies, Contacts, Resources, and Connections
16	Notes
17	Thank yous!

This is a guide for youth sports volunteer coaches.
We recommend reviewing it each season with all
coaches in your league.

The content of this handbook is also available as a training. For more
information please contact us at: info@healthylamoillevalley.org

Table of CONTENTS

2022



Our STORY



The Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative, a workgroup of Healthy Lamoille Valley, was designed to bring coaches together with the common goal of supporting youth throughout the Lamoille Valley.

We recognize the unique relationships that coaches have with their players. We also recognize that rural coaches need connections & support. Together we are stronger!

Your STORY

Why do you coach?

Each day on the field, court, or rink you make a difference by helping youth build resilience!

COACHES AS PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Warm Up

Protective factors are conditions that buffer young people from the negative consequences of exposure to risks.

Protective factors reduce the impact of risk or change the way a person responds to risk.

Public Health Dept, Lane County Oregon

What do you think of when you hear the term protective factor?



Write 3 things you can do to build factors for your players?

Conversely:

Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, system, or cultural level that are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes, including substance misuse.

Think About It!



Are sports ever a risk factor?
Why or why not?



Who are the people responsible for building protective factors for youth when they are participating in youth sports?

A closer look at risk and protective factors

Examples of Protective Factors for Youth

- Has supportive adults in their life and views them as allies
- Has people in their life who teach and model resilience and self-worth
- Involved in substance-free activities
- Has positive future plans
- Has friends who disapprove of substance use
- Is given clear expectations and limits
- Has family members who are nurturing and support each other
- Knows how to cope with stress in a positive way
- Lives in a home where adult-use substances are monitored and secured



Examples of Risk Factors for Youth

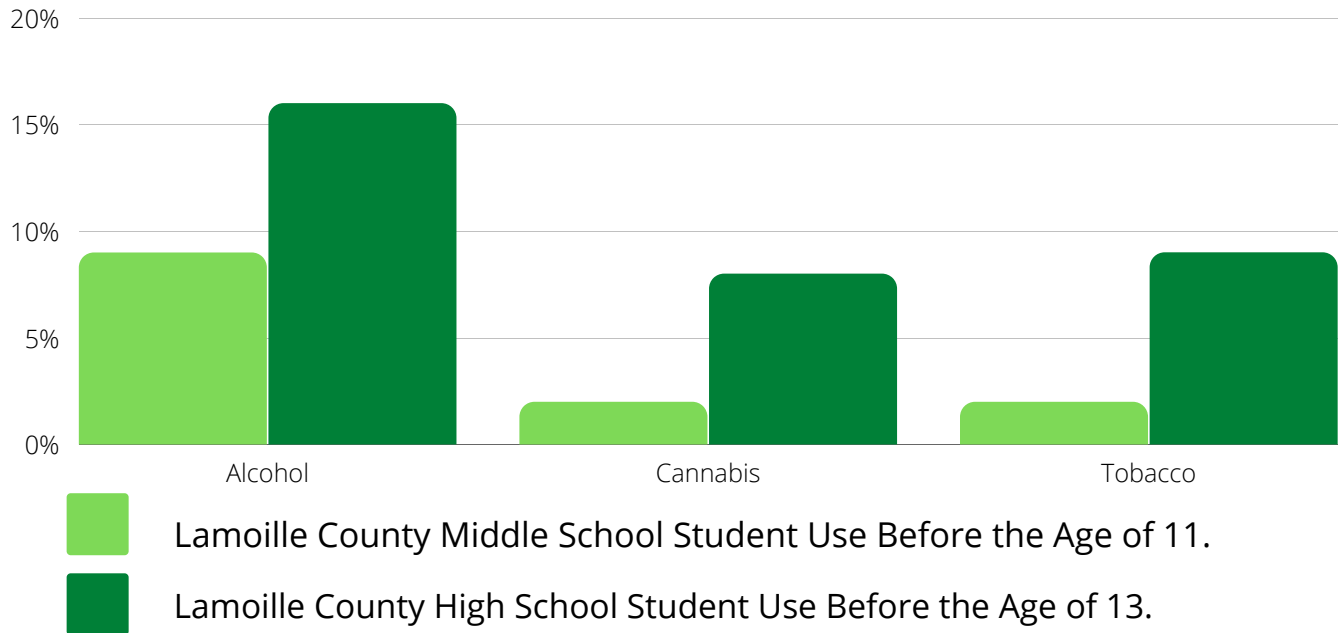
- Believes most of their peers use substances
- Thinks of substance use as cool
- Begins using substances at a young age
- Has a low perception of harm around substances
- Doesn't have clear expectations and limits
- Doesn't have consistently enforced consequences
- Doesn't have a sense of commitment or belonging at school
- Doesn't have actively involved parents and other adults in their life
- Lives with family and community norms that promote substance use
- Has easy access to substances in their home or community



When we know the risk and protective factors for youth, we can work together to support our players!

Our WHY

1 Lamoille Area Youth Are Using Substances Too Early



2 Youth need to know they matter!

Only 56% of Lamoille County middle school students feel like they matter to people in their community.

That number is 57% for high school students.



3 When we put things in perspective we realize the importance of our coaching

- Not just about winning but creating team members that feel valued.
- A relationship with a CARING ADULT is one of the most important factors for healthy youth development. You may be the ONLY caring adult in the life of a team member.
- A coach's intentional planning and influence can have a ripple effect towards building protective factors that will positively change the course of a player's life.

Caring Relationships and Sense of Safety and Belonging

Tips for Success!



- Listen and pay attention with all of your senses.
- Create connection between coaches, players, families, and community. Support the development of positive and healthy relationships: adult-youth, adult-adult and youth-youth.
- Connect with each team member in a positive, age appropriate, culturally sensitive way about what is going on in their lives, and connect with parents/caregivers, too.
- Create opportunities to belong, where everyone feels like they matter and can contribute.
- Teach teamwork and build a positive team with the expectation that peers support each other.
- Support integration of family, school and community.
- Support parents/caregivers in being protective factors.



**Which of these tips will you make a priority this season?
Make a plan to incorporate these into your coaching.**

Healthy and Safe Team Culture and Norms, Spaces, and League Culture and Policies

As Coaches WE MODEL



Tips for Success!

- Create or review your coaching philosophy, expectations and supports.
- Create the appropriate culture for youth development. Consider verbal tone, physical space and atmosphere that supports social-emotional development and psychological safety.
- Think about what you unintentionally model. T-shirts or hats with pro-substance branding can make substance use seem cool to players.
- Communicate a Code of Conduct for youth and parents/caregivers with expectations (including when "representing us when on the road" or "in the community").
- Find out what policies exist for your league or town fields, game, and practice sites. What is the impact of the policies (or lack of) on health and positive youth development? What policies might you like to put in or see on different levels?
- Learn about and incorporate restorative theory and practices.
- Treat officials with kindness and respect. Many are student athletes. Encourage them!
- Enforce policies consistently. Know how you would respond if you notice parents drinking or drunk during a game, practice, or at pickup.
- Make sure parents and anyone volunteering with you also follow the rules.



What is your coaching philosophy?



When building protective factors this year, what can you do differently or more intentionally?

Healthy Boundaries, Decision Making, and Expectations

As Coaches WE MODEL



Tips for Success!

- Coaches are role models in the community - on and off the court/field/mountain/rink.
- Create positive social norms.
- Have expectations for youth and parents/caregivers of how to act and treat each other and referees.
- Communicate your expectations.
- Share healthy expectations of success. Find the balance of contribution, feeling valued, and competition.
- Communicate the importance of proper nutrition and rest during the season and through the year.
- Communicate the importance of being active outside of your season. Encourage youth to play different sports and be active in other ways!
- Understand that kids are there for different reasons and motivations, and have different skills (athletic, social, emotional, leadership).
- Think about competitive outcome vs. long term participation. Find the balance.
- Build foundation and confidence in your players in why and what they are doing.



What is a healthy expectation of success this season?



How can you continuously communicate this with your players?

Understand YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: PHYSICAL

Consider physical developmental milestones and coaching considerations based on age and positive behavior techniques.



Physical Developmental Considerations for Youth Sports:

- In early years, focus sport experiences on simple, large-muscle activities.
- As development progresses, introduce more difficult skills and activities focusing on small-muscles.
- Modify or adapt rules to allow for meaningful participation in the early years.
- To maximize developmental benefits, provide opportunities for all young athletes to participate.
- Young athletes develop at different rates and in different ways.
- Allow young athletes to participate at different positions to maximize physical learning.
- Take into account physical fitness, skill levels, and biological age when planning practices and game situations.
- Plan practices and games to maximize vigorous physical activity.

Humphrey, J.H. (2003). *Child Development Through Sports*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.



**Circle the physical considerations
that might be especially important for your team.**

Understand YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: SOCIAL



Social Developmental Considerations for Youth Sports:

- All young athletes should be given an equal opportunity in sports participation.
- Coaches should impress upon young athletes their importance to the team.
- Young athletes become more aware of their abilities by assuming different roles on a team (different positions, leadership roles, etc.).
- Coaches should emphasize importance of positive social relationships in sport.
- Coaches should be sure that choosing sides, teammates, etc. is done in an equitable way.
- Focus on use of language to help promote body awareness (i.e. “good foot, Jane” or “good arm, Bob”).
- Focus on active play in sport experiences for maximum self-expression.
- Resistance is an indication of coach domination—coaches should redirect to promote positive social development.
- Coaches should focus on developing positive social relationships between young athletes.
- Above all else, sportsmanship and fair play should be encouraged and modeled—playing skills are maximized in these environments.

Humphrey, J.H. (2003). *Child Development Through Sports*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.



Circle the social considerations that might be especially important for your team to implement.

Understand YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: EMOTIONAL



Emotional Developmental Considerations for Youth Sports:

- Coaches should make efforts to ensure successful experiences for every young athlete by providing for individual differences within sport experiences.
- Sport settings reinforce a feeling of personal worth through some sort of positive contribution to the experience.
- Coaches should consider planning experiences with their young athletes to ensure that activities are meeting their needs.
- Coaches should reward positive emotional responses with praise.
- Sports have potential to help contribute to a solid base for total development.
- Sport experiences should be designed to build confidence—satisfactory self-concept is closely related to body control.

Humphrey, J.H. (2003). *Child Development Through Sports*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.



**Circle the emotional considerations
that might be especially important for your team.**

Understand YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: INTELLECTUAL



Intellectual Developmental Considerations for Youth Sports:

- Differences in intelligence levels as well as physical skill and ability need to be taken into account when planning sport activities.
- Poor performance in sport activities might be due to difficulty with athlete-coach communication.
- Sport experiences should provide challenging, problem-solving opportunities.
- Sport experiences should provide a large degree of variation to maximize learning opportunities.

Humphrey, J.H. (2003). *Child Development Through Sports*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.



Circle the intellectual considerations that might be especially important for your team.

Know Your LEAGUE RULES & POLICIES

Knowing your league rules and policies will help you be a stronger coach for your players. It will also give you the support you need to make difficult decisions.



Know your league-specific protocols

Concussion and injury protocols

Weather policies

Mandated reporter

Late pickups

Parent or spectator under the influence

Substance-free park policies



Are there other league protocols that are important for you, your players, or parents to know?



Know Your LEAGUE CONTACTS

Sometimes knowing who to ask will help you better serve your players.
Write in your contacts:

League Contacts:

During business hours:

After hours:

Know Your COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As a coach you are in the unique position to recognize needs of players and their families. Knowing where to find concrete help to meet tangible needs can help your players succeed not just in the game, but in everyday life.



United Way Community Resource Page
uwlamaille.org/get-help/covid-19-resources.html



Healthy Lamoille Valley Youth Resources
healthylamoillevalley.org/youthresources



Healthy Lamoille Valley Coaching Collaborative
healthylamoillevalley.org/sports



Learn to be an Askable Adult!
vtnetwork.org/askableadult

Know Your COACHING CONNECTIONS

The Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative is here to help you connect with other coaches and league leaders.



Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative

Basecamp Online Networking Community
Quarterly meetings
Training Materials

To join, please email Info@healthylamoillevalley.org
Subject: Coaching collaborative



Who are your mentors in coaching? Who might you mentor?



Who could you share this handbook with?

COACHING NOTES



A space to collect and organize your thoughts...

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!



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Alison Link & Jessica Bickford

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COACHES MATTER

HealthyLamoilleValley.org
LamoilleFamilyCenter.org

Healthy Lamoille Valley

A stylized graphic of a leaf or branch with several oval-shaped leaves extending from the right side of the text.

A Program of the Lamoille Family Center