

Coaches Dealing with Change – a new situation...due to COVID-19

Developed by Prof Sophia Jowett (Loughborough University)

It is natural to feel like that ...**accept** the situation... and **move on** with the new situation in mind

Rationalise, think through the situation. Thoughtfully consider: What is this new situation like – for me? How important is it? Where am I going/want to go from here?

How am I (as a coach) going to deal with this new situation?

You are not alone! To deal with this new situation you need to tap into your relationship, leadership, communication skills. Speak with each one athlete in your team or squad

Talk the situation through with your athletes - discuss how much this big change (e.g., training, competitions) impacts each of you personally and interpersonally (i.e., in terms of what you are trying to achieve individually and together).

Empathy (listening and understanding) is key in his process. Thoughtfully consider your athletes' points of view about the current situation and how your athletes might wish to proceed into the future (from such a discussion, you can build athletes' motivation and self-determination as well as their trust and commitment to the new working conditions)

Together with your athletes navigate the situation by *leading* (reminding them the vision, strategy, meaning – it may need re-focusing), by *connecting* (clarifying the commitment, new ways of working together), and by *communicating* clearly and convincingly...

Tap into the knowledge that you have about your athletes (e.g., coping mechanisms, personality, attitudes, preferences and so on) in every interaction

Plan together with your athletes taking responsibility for the “here and now” and for what is to follow given this new situation (e.g., plan, plan and plan together) – deal with the new situation in a systematic way that is open, positive and supportive, optimistic and reassuring

Involve your athletes on one to one basis first (and the squad/team second - if required) – draw a plan of action (a flexible one) where *objectives* are agreed and aligned (use the TARGET principle)

Monitor and **review** individually and together the agreed plan (objectives/goals) as you go along on a frequent basis

Check motivation, willingness and intentions: your own and your athletes

Feeling Stuck?

Take some time to self-reflect as a coach/athlete (Why are you stuck? Explore why and what this change/new situation means to you?) Get a third party involved (e.g., a mentor, a psych, a friend). They can help you: they can ask different questions making you think about the change/situation you are facing in a different way...It is likely that you will create different meanings as you talk to others!! Communication is key in “unpacking” what you are dealing with and can help you understand why you feel stuck...and how you can best move on. It is important to gain perspective – your clarity and vision will affect you and the people you work with.

Relevant Literature

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