Two or more players in your team are fighting with each other on the playing field during practice time. They shout at each other and eventually they also become physical and hit each other.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Call the players over to you, and ask them to stop their fight, let them continue the practice and ask them to come to you after practice.

- If the players start fighting again, ask them to sit on the side till the practice is over.

- After practice sit with both players and ask them to explain why they were fighting.

- Remind them of their pledge and commitment to non-violence and let them identify the codes of conduct that they broke with; enforce the penalty that the team had agreed upon.

- Emphasize that violence - be it verbal or physical never helps to solve a conflict.

- Get an agreement from them to deal with the conflict differently next time.

**TIME**

- The first two steps immediately - Since you do not want to interrupt the practice for other players you will only sit together with the players after the practice.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- Code of conduct / list of un-acceptable behaviour.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

Fighting amongst players for example over a foul or a shot on the goal often has a deeper cause. The purpose of talking to the fighting parties after the practice or the game is to get to these deeper causes and to prevent that in the next practice session the same players start fighting again. To allow the deeper causes to surface and to find a solution you should make sure you follow the rules of a mediation process - See Lesson 3.
Your team is playing a match in your league. The emotions are high, there already have been a lot of fouls and shouting on the field. Suddenly a fight breaks out between one of your players and a player of the opposing team.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Gather your whole team at the next opportunity.
- Remove the offending player and eventually substitute or leave the team less one player (coach’s choice).
- Talk to the player(s) involved in the fight, and ask what happened.
- Let them and the whole team know that a healthy competitive spirit does not include breaking the rules.
- Explain that violence has no place in sports and that resorting to violence does not mean that you are a stronger player; also explain that the violence (foul play) of the opposing team does not justify them using violence too.
- Remind them about their pledge to avoid violence and to respect everyone.

**TIME**

- At half time or after the game.
- Allocate at least 10 min for the discussion with your team.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- Code of conduct / pledge

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

If you observe that the same team again and again uses foul play to intimidate your team you may want to speak to the coach and remind him of the pledge of the league to commit to non-violence; you may also raise the matter at a coordinating meeting of all league coaches.

*NOTE* - the action to take depends also on the setting of the match - are teams playing with or without referee.
You hear that your players have been in a fight with players from another team. They were fighting about access to the playing field. Some of your players got badly hurt.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- At the next training session gather your players.
- Ask them to explain to you what happened (how did the fight start, who was the other team, what was the issue).
- In your discussion listen for the deeper issues that may underlie the conflict around access to the playing field.
- Explain to your players that violence is always ugly, and that violence is a bad way to solve a conflict (remind them of their pledge); involve all players and ask everybody to suggest non-violent ways of solving the problem / conflict: e.g. in the described case: come back for practice at a later time when the field is empty (the other team will get tired at some stage!), ask the coach or the field manager to negotiate / mediate, create a timetable for practice times of different teams.
- It may be useful to meet the coach or players of the other team to solve the conflict. If so, follow the steps outlined in pages 18 - 19, discuss possible solutions to the conflict: e.g. create a time table for the use of the playing field and allocate practice times to each team.

**TIME**

- Next time you see the players as a team, latest before the next practice session - allocate at least 30 min.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- Pledge.
- Piece of paper to make a time table for the use of the playing field.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

Seemingly straightforward conflicts or fights often have a deeper cause. In this case, if it was a girls team they were fighting with it is possible that your players have a lack of respect for girls and their right to play football; if they were fighting with a team with players from other cultural backgrounds it may be that your players have racist or xenophobic attitudes which you need to address. If it was your team that has been attacked by players of another team, you may want to talk to the coach or players of the other team to apologize and to find a long term solution to the problem.
Your players are in the final phase of a tight game. The referee has given already several yellow cards. Now the referee takes a decision against your team, which seems to be unfair. Your team is extremely upset; they run up to the referee and insult him.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Stay calm yourself, even if you are also upset about the referee’s decision.
- Call your players and ask them to stop insulting the referee at once.
- Ask the team captain to approach the referee in a calm manner to request an explanation of the decision; your team captain may offer his view in a calm and respectful way.
- After the game gather your players and give them space to share their frustration.
- Explain to your players that even if they do not agree with the decision of the referee they have no right to become violent; remind them of their pledge and explain that violence will even make the situation worse as the referee will get irritated with your team; enforce the penalty players have agreed upon for such behaviour.
- Encourage your players to understand that the referee is fulfilling his duty by enforcing the rules of the game. (see Lesson 8.2.5)
- If your players are often unhappy with the referee’s decisions, give them the duty of being the referee for a game at practice session. This way they may experience how hard it is not only to judge situations and to make decisions, but also how annoying it is to deal with the complaints of players.
- Explain that they have to use the official way to complain about the decision next time.
- If you have a strong feeling that the referee is acting unfairly or may not have the skills to do his job, you should talk about the incident at the league coordination meeting.

**TIME**

- Steps 1 - 3 immediately when the insulting occur.
- Steps 4 - 5 after the game.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- Pledge.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

In such situations you can teach your players to respect the rule of law, and to use non-violent ways of protest and complaint. You can also show them that non-violence pays in the long run (e.g. referee does not loose respect for your team and punishes the team even more). You can also use this situation to teach players about anger management. It is important that you act as a good role model, and that you illustrate to players that there are indeed non-violent ways of solving problems. (e.g. using the league’s coordination body to lodge a complaint or to make changes to certain league rules)
One of your players is frustrated and angry; he/she shouts at you and insults you.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Stay calm, do not shout back.
- Allow the player to let off steam.
- Ask the player to see you after practice. However, if the player is too aggressive, take him/her out immediately.
- Sit down with the player alone and try to find a solution to the problem. Ask him/her what made him/her so angry. Find out whether the player may have been frustrated by some of your decisions in the past, and whether he collected a lot of frustration over time.
- Remind him/her of the pledge and that he/she has broken the code of conduct; emphasize that shouting at people is disrespectful behaviour and no means to deal with a problem.
- Enforce the penalty that the team has agreed upon.
- Encourage the player to speak to at an early stage if s/he is disappointed, angry or frustrated about any of your actions; Remind him/her that it is easier to talk about things early when one is not hurt yet.

**TIME**

- Step 1 and 2 immediately when the incident occurs.
- Step 4 - 6 after practice: allow 15-30 min for the talk.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- Pledge.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

In such situations it is important that you reflect on your actions: is there anything that may have been seen or experienced as unfair or offensive and may have contributed to the anger of the player? If so, it is important that you let the player know that you may have made a mistake. Strong leaders are able to reflect their own mistakes. It is also possible that your player is a victim of abuse. Many traumatized children are aggressive and “displace” their anger. Observe the player and find out whether this could be the case. If it is see below in of how to deal with such a situation.
One of your players starts fighting with a player from another team. There have been a few fouls on both sides, and now they shout at each other and call each others names. Your team captain and other players run up to the two fighting players and stop them from fighting. The game continues.

Or, one of your players makes a defensive mistake and the other side scores. Some players in your team make some bad remarks about the player who made the mistake, but the captain or another player goes up to him and says: “Good try, you’ll stop the next one”

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Deal with the player who was fighting in the same way as stated in Example 2.
- At half time or after the game praise the captain and the players who displayed the positive action; tell them that you are proud of their leadership and team spirit.

**TIME**

- At half time or after the game.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

It is important to praise positive behaviour. Do this as much as you can, in particular if you can see that players are trying hard to improve their behaviour; your praise will be a big encouragement.
In a girls team: one of your players has a boyish look, she has very short hair, and very flat breasts. She is one of your best players. During a match, players of the opposing team call her names, intimidate her, question her gender and provoke her to give proof that she is a girl.

LESSON & INSTRUCTION

Ideally the referee intervenes in such a situation and penalize the offending players; if not:

- If the rules of your league allow, call a break and speak to the referee and the coach of the opposing team; request that the players stop the intimidating action; refer them to the players ID card that proves that the girl is a girl.

- Call a break and speak to your player that has been offended; tell her that she is stronger than the provocation, she does not have to fight back, and she does not have to be intimidated; she is who she is and she is perfect as she is. Remind other players to show loyalty to their team mate, but that they should not respond with violence in doing so.

- After the game gather your players and...

  ▲ remind other players that the behaviour of opposing team members was disrespectful and intimidating; highlight what the offended player says how she feels about it; remind players to never offend someone because of his / her looks.

  ▲ discuss with players what makes a girl a girl; remind players of the danger of stereotypes.

- Report the incident at the next league coordination meeting and include in the league’s code of conduct.

TIME

- Step 1 and 2 when the inappropriate behaviour happens.

- Step 3 and 4 after the game.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- Material to work on stereotypes.

NOTES FOR THE COACH

Humiliation is a form of violence. Stereotypes about women and men lies at the heart of this case. Stereotypes about gender roles are the cause of much sexual violence. You can use this incidence to talk about the damaging power of stereotypes as well as cultural and social beliefs that support violence against girls and women.
You are in a practice session with your players and a group of girls are passing by. Some of the girls are wearing revealing clothing. The players start calling out to them, making lewd comments and sexual gestures.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Call all your players over and tell them...

  ▴ that taunting people is disrespectful and is a form of violence that may hurt people.
  ▴ that no matter what a girl is wearing she does not deserve sexual violence.
  ▴ that most people do not welcome that type of attention and that no one is impressed by that behaviour.
  ▴ that their behaviour is not gentlemanly.
  ▴ enforce the penalty that they have agreed upon.

- Have a discussion with players about what makes a man a man.

- Emphasize that strong men do not need to insult women to get their attention.

**TIME**

- Step in as soon as the inappropriate behaviour starts.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

It is important to make players aware that even language can be abusive and can cause damage. With their abusive language they commit sexual violence.
You find out that one of your players had a fight with his girlfriend and he has hit her badly. You have seen her with bruises on different body parts. Other players have heard about it too.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Talk to the player alone and confront him with the allegations; ask him what made him hit his girlfriend; emphasize that jealousy or a disagreement about a matter is never an excuse for violence; discuss the importance of respect and non-violence in relationships and tell him that real men do not hurt women.

- Ask him to think about how he can prevent to become violent next time he is jealous, angry or has a disagreement with his girlfriend and ask him to tell you at the next practice session what his strategy will be.

**TIME**

- Step 1 - 6 at the next practice session following the incident.
- Follow up with the perpetrator at following practice session and after a few weeks again.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- A story written by a girl that talks about how it feels to be abused by a boyfriend.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

You need to make sure that the allegations are correct and that you are not acting on gossip or rumours. Therefore it is important that you speak to the player directly.
A prominent athlete is charged with raping (or abusing) a woman. It's in the news and people are talking about it.

**Lesson & Instruction**

- Talk about the allegations, ask your players what they think about the allegations - whether it is right or wrong to charge the prominent person - does he have a right to abuse a woman, because he is famous, or because the women may have worn revealing clothes?

- In your discussion make sure that the following messages are emphasized:
  - Violence against women and girls is wrong: no means no. Never force yourself on a woman or a girl when she says that she does not want to be sexually involved with you; never assume that a girl wants to have sex with you, she might be too shy to say so. Be sensitive and ask her directly and respect her answer.
  - Athletic talent or prominence does not give you the right to assault or disrespectful someone; no matter how famous or talented you are, you are still responsible for your actions.
  - Point out prominent players that have taken a public stand against violence and how the serve as role models.
  - Encourage players that they too can be positive examples for their peers if they have healthy, non-violent relationships and if they do not tolerate violent behaviour of their friends / peers.
  - Discuss how the controversy around the prominent player will affect the perpetrator’s team and his country - make them aware that this may happen to their team if one of them becomes a perpetrator.

**Time**

- At the next practice session - before you start practice.

**Tools & Equipment**

- Bring a newspaper article about the case.

**Notes for the Coach**

Whenever a prominent person that your players may look up to is charged with rape or abuse, you should use this as an opportunity to discuss rape and abuse with your players.

**Note** - if there are repeated cases of sexual violence in your team or in your league, it might be useful to organize a special tournament that communicates a message to stop violence against children and women.
You overhear a couple of your players insulting another player of a different ethnic background. The player who is the target of their comments is humiliated and either withdraws or reacts aggressively.

**Lesson & Instruction**

- Call over the players who were making the racist remarks.
- Tell them that...
  - disrespecting a team mate is not allowed and is destructive to the team spirit.
  - insulting or taunting someone because of his ethnic background is wrong and will not be tolerated by the coach personally.
- Ensure that the offending players apologize for their behaviour.
- Talk to your team about tolerance and respect...
  - ask them how they would feel if someone was making jokes about them, or calling them names, because they are black, coloured, Zulu or Sotho etc.
  - ask whether they have experienced this before and ask them how they felt in that situation
  - emphasize that racism is wrong because it degrades an individual and reinforces negative attitudes about an entire group of people
  - remind them that racism is what their parents may have fought against during the Apartheid struggle

**Time**

- Step in as soon as the inappropriate behaviour starts and stop what your players may see as innocent fun.

**Notes for the Coach**

Humiliation is a form of emotional violence. The experience of continued humiliation can also cause the humiliated person to resort to violence - either directed towards him / herself (e.g. drug abuse or suicide) or against others (aggression, desire to retaliate).

The same action can be taken if players insult someone because of his / her gender, physical appearance, sexual orientation or religion.
There has been an important match between two prominent teams. After the game it comes to violent clashes between the fans of the two teams: fans of the winning team are roaming through the streets of the city and taunting the loosing team. Fans of the loosing team attack a group of fans of the winning team and soon the violence spills over. The incident had been all over the news.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

Gather your team and ask them about their views about the incident; ask them what they think what has caused the violence; in your discussion emphasize that...

- the overexcitement and taunting of the fans of the winning team may have provoked the violence.
- we are all fans (of teams) and it is fine to be passionate about your loyalties, but there is never an excuse for violence.
- discuss with your team how they can react when they are provoked to be violent.

**TIME**

- At the next practice session following the incident.

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

- A news article with the report on the violence.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

Use such event to discuss fan violence and how to react to provocation. You can transfer this to other life situations, e.g. fights in schools, fights between gangs etc.
You know that gangs are a problem in your community. You notice that gang members are hanging around the practice field to recruit your players. One or more players of your team have already been recruited by one of the local gangs.

LESSON & INSTRUCTION

- Inform yourself about gang activities in your community.
- Look out for signs of gang involvement of your players.
- Talk to your players openly in a team meeting:
  - discuss with them what attracts them to gangs, and what may be dangerous about gangs.
  - ask your players whether they know anyone in a gang.
  - discuss what gangs do and highlight that gang members are often involved in vandalism, theft, the sale of drugs, assault, rape and even murder (as a rite de passage) - these are all criminal activities and becoming a gang member may be your players’ ticket to prison.
  - find out whether your players seem to rather admire gang members (e.g. because of their status in the community or access to money) or whether they are scared, but feel much pressure to join a gang.
- Ask players to make suggestions of how they can deal with the pressure to join a gang, and how can they support one another on and off the playing field.

TIME

- Be on a constant look out for signs of gang membership.
- Talk to your players when you deem it necessary.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- A story of a gang members life.

NOTES FOR THE COACH

Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons: boredom, unemployment, academic failure, low self-esteem, the need to belong or an admiration for seemingly strong, tough, popular and wealthy gang members. Gangs also forcefully recruit members and there can be a lot of peer pressure on your players to join a gang. Your football team can take some of the pressure by offering support and by providing a sense of belonging and confidence that gang membership offers.
A drug dealer or a group of drug dealers are approaching your players; they hang around the playing ground and seem to offer drugs to your players.

**LESSON & INSTRUCTION**

- Call your team and tell them that you are aware of a drug dealer trying to sell drugs to them.
- Talk to the whole team about drugs; ask them...
  - what experience they have with drugs.
  - why do youth take drugs.
  - what makes them feel good about.
  - why is doing drugs dangerous.
  - what can youth do to abstain from drugs.
  - discuss with them how they can support their team mate to abstain from drugs in the future.
  - discuss how they can support one another in avoiding the drug dealer, e.g. walking each other home after practice.
- Reinforce the code of conduct to abstain from drugs with all players.
- If your practice field is on the premises of a school speak to the principal and the school's security guards.

**TIME**

- First step as soon as you become aware of the drug dealer approaching your players.
- Take at least 30 min at the next practice session.

**NOTES FOR THE COACH**

To prevent the drug dealers to approach your players is out of your control. It would be dangerous for you to directly confront a drug dealer. If necessary, should seek support from other community structures.
Case Study Box - Gang Violence & Drug Abuse - Example 3

Responding to Gang Violence and Drug Abuse

A prominent football player has been charged with drunk driving. He smashed his car and was badly injured. The story is in all papers, radio and TV news and everyone is talking about it.

LESSON & INSTRUCTION

- Talk about the allegations.
- In your discussion make sure that the following messages are emphasized:
  - Abusing alcohol is wrong but it is even worse to drive when you are drunk; it is a criminal offence and may people lose their lives because of drunk drivers.
  - Athletic talent or prominence does not give you the right to break the law; no matter how famous or talented you are, you are still responsible for your actions.
  - Let the players experience the lack of control one has when drunk by doing this exercise. Tell the players to place their one hand on the ground run around it five times without their hand leaving the floor. After five ‘laps’, the players can try and walk around a bit. They will quickly experience the lack of stability and control that comes with being intoxicated.
  - Point out prominent players that have taken a public stand against drunk driving and how they serve as role models.
  - Encourage players that they too can be positive examples for their peers if they do not drink and if they do not tolerate drunk driving.

TIME

- At the next practice after the news break.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- News article.
- News articles of cases where people died because of a drunk driver.

NOTES FOR THE COACH

Even though the drunk driving of the prominent player may not be 100% relevant to your players since they do not drive yet, you can use the incident as an opportunity to talk to your players about the issue of drug abuse, and to understand their thinking, and feelings around the topic. It may also be a starting point to talk to your players’ own problems with drugs.
Dealing with Overwhelming Emotions of Players

Example

Below you find an example how to encourage players to deal with these emotions such as frustration and disappointment in a constructive manner. Having learned this in the context of football, may allow players to apply this in other spheres of life.

A successful team looses an important game.

LESSON & INSTRUCTION

- Collect your player(s) after the game and give them space to express their disappointment. Do not brush their feelings away, nor do shout at them or make fun out of them because they are sad.
- Say something like “I can see you are very disappointed / frustrated / angry.”
- Ask the player(s) what caused their disappointment / frustration / anger: “What is making you disappointed / frustrated / angry?”
- Ask the player(s) about how they have coped with this emotion before: “When you have felt this way before, what helped you calm down of feel better?”
- If there are other players watching you can ask them what are some of the things they have done that helped them when they were feeling this way. Involve the other players and encourage to help each other with suggestions of how they deal with these emotions. You can also say how you are dealing with disappointment yourself.
- Encourage the player or the team to try one of these strategies.
- Lastly you should also discuss what they can do to avoid the disappointment next time (what can they change in their behaviour to avoid the disappointment/frustration etc); this may be an analysis of the technical reasons for the loss (e.g. weak defence, lack of team play ...), and discuss what needs to be done to improve the play.
- In the next practice sessions focus on exercises that address the identified weaknesses.

TIME

- Immediately after the game or after practice when you notice the disappointment.
- Check on players emotions again at the next practice.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- See Lesson 6, pages 35 - 43, for tips on anger management.

NOTES FOR THE COACH

Unless players learn to express negative feelings and channel them into positive behaviour, they stand a good chance of becoming either victims or perpetrators (or both) of the vicious spiral of violence.
You can use the same steps to deal with other negative emotions such as anger, frustration or jealousy. You will get to know what each player or your team needs to manage their emotions. You can remind players what helped on previous occasions.
It is useful to involve other players in the discussion as described in step 5. Fostering connections with kids in front of other kids is important; it fosters team work and connection between them.