# Personal development coaching in sport

## A guide for practitioners

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# Introduction to the book

**Personal development support is a fast-expanding sector within professional and high performance sport. As sports administrators recognise the duty of care they have to the individuals they support, during and beyond their sporting careers, there is an increase in dual-career, transition and after-career support. But this growth in support is barely keeping pace with the challenges brought about by professionalisation of sports, ever-increasing pressures to perform and centralisation of high performance programmes.**

The role of the personal development practitioner is far from straightforward and new practitioners will have many questions about their role. This book aims to give early career practitioners an oversight of the broad range of areas for development. It will guide them to further resources and provides tools and techniques to get them started. Experienced practitioners will be inspired to extend their knowledge and skills and will gain ideas on where to learn more.

Some of the questions you might have and which this book will help to answer:
- What standards and ethical guidelines should I be working to?
- How do I become more confident within my role and my own professional philosophy?
- There are many different psychology, coaching and counselling theories, approaches and modalities. What is the right fit for me and my clients?
- I've been tasked with delivering a series of personal development workshops to a group of sportspeople. Where do I even start?
- What can I do to further develop as a practitioner?
- I want to read more. What's out there to help me?
- How do I effectively promote personal development support and manage the expectations of others?

We've written this book because we're passionate about raising the standard of personal development support and highlighting the need for ethical, creative and engaging delivery. We recognise that not everyone is in a position to undertake a formal coaching qualification before engaging in personal development support delivery, so we have endeavoured to provide as much useful information and guidance in one place as possible. And we're always keen to grow and develop ourselves, so writing a book was the obvious next challenge.

This book collates theory, skills and techniques from executive and life coaching, counselling, career development, behaviour change and other relevant fields. It gives sports-specific examples of how that knowledge can be applied and points you to sources of further information.

While we cover a broad range of areas across three main parts (the professional and ethical practitioner; the theory and skills behind the support; themes and topics), this is not intended to be the only text that you read. Additional key books are suggested on p.7 and additional reading and resources are highlighted throughout. We assigned a page per topic, where possible, so you can open the book at any point and learn the basics of a specific area. But it can be read cover to cover if you prefer.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, this book should be considered a supporting guide. The information should be applied in conjunction with organisation guidelines, professional standards and the law.

**A note on terminology**

Though many other terms are used to describe the personal development support provided to high performance sportspeople (e.g. performance lifestyle, player care, life skills support), we use the term personal development throughout, unless referring to a specific context where a different term is used.

For ease, we use the term practitioner throughout to refer to the person delivering personal development support. When referring to other practitioners or professionals (e.g. strength and conditioning coaches, physiotherapists, sports coaches), we use the term 'other professionals.'

While we would like to refer to the people to whom personal development support is provided as individuals throughout, rather than athletes or sportspeople, we realise that this would be confusing. Instead, we've called them clients. While not without it's flaws, the term serves to remind practitioners that we have a duty to provide them, as clients, with the highest quality of support.

Additionally, we use the term client to refer to the person we're providing support to, irrespective of who is paying for the support to be delivered. However, when describing group activities in part III we use the term participant rather than client.

# Why personal development support is useful

In an ideal world, coaching-style conversations which empower individuals would be commonplace and the role of the personal development practitioner would be a redundant one. But the ever-increasing professionalisation of sport ensures that there is still work to be done. Skilled practitioners bring objectivity and independence from the individual's sporting performance, an ideal platform from which to provide support. The focus should remain on helping individuals acquire the skills and resources to build their support network, make their own decisions and overcome their obstacles. Here are some of the reasons why personal development practitioners have a role to play in high performance sport.

**1. There is more to high performance sport than training for an event, turning up and competing.**
Sportspeople, particularly in the professional era, have much to think about, and they may benefit from support that helps them manage their many demands.

**2. Professional sport can sometimes be disempowering...**
...especially when a win-at-all-costs approach removes the opportunity to make mistakes. Cooking meals and opening a bank account are basic life skills that individuals in some high performance settings have not had to do until they retire from sport. Practitioners can encourage individuals to gain basic life skills in a way in which sporting performance isn't negatively impacted.

**3. Not all high performing sportspeople earn a living from their sport...**
...and many will have to work alongside their sport. Practitioners can support the search for work and help clients balance the related demands on their time and energy.

**4. Many of those who do earn a living from sport, will not be set up for life...**
...and will have to find paid employment at some point. Practitioners can help clients explore different income streams while still competing, gain money management skills and prepare for the world of work after sport.

**5. Dual careers can help sporting performance**
Having interests outside of sport and engaging in learning and personal development opportunities alongside sport can increase wellbeing, and may even help performance.

**6. There's a high incidence of poor mental health and wellbeing in sport.**
The high incidence of everything from eating disorders to depression suggests that sportspeople are just as susceptible to poor mental health as the general population. A significant number of sportspeople have also suffered physical, emotional or sexual abuse at some point and high performance environments may be a source of that abuse. Personal development practitioners are in an ideal position to support disclosures and to signpost for further help.



To do list:

- Eat well on a tight budget.
- Fit in some sort of a social life.
- Deal with the media.
- Keep sponsors happy.
- Handle expectations of others.
- Cope with long periods of time 'on-the-road'.
- Maintain functional relationships with coaches and team-mates.
- Submit anti-doping whereabouts information.
- Deal with injury.
- Have a presence on social media.
- Prepare for life after sport.
- Ensure there's enough money to live on.
- Engage with fans.

**7. Retirement from sport is particularly difficult.**
Only three in ten former professional sportspeople were able to choose when they stopped playing professional sport.[1] Approximately half did not feel in control of their lives two years after finishing their careers.[1] Many former sportspeople report a loss of identity and subsequent depression after retirement.

**8. We are all more than what we do.**
With an early adoption of a sporting identity not just common, but often reinforced in sport, particularly at the highest level, there's a need for people that help uncover, build, and reinforce the individual within the sportsperson.

**9. It's good to talk...**
... and most people will benefit from speaking to a non-judgemental, independent person. Increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence can be beneficial in all walks of life; a personal development programme may be the ideal way for sportspeople to work on these areas.

[1]Professional Players Federation (PPF) Initial career transition research findings, 2018.

# Continued professional development

**Your development as a practitioner doesn't finish with your initial training. In fact, it never ends. A commitment to continued professional development (CPD) is an important element of your work and something you should proactively set time aside for. Accreditation with professional bodies will require a set number of CPD hours to be completed each year, but that's far from the only reason to engage in ongoing development.**

Professional development isn't always in the form of training courses, though these can form a large element of your regular CPD, and quality CPD doesn't have to cost a fortune. Any form of formal or informal training or development activity can be considered CPD.

**Examples of CPD include:**
- Attending formal CPD training sessions and conferences.
- Joining webinars, forums and other online events.
- Listening to relevant podcasts.
- Reading books and journal articles.
- Engaging in peer-to-peer coaching triads to practise coaching skills.
- Engaging in case discussions with colleagues.
- Conducting a skills audit or availing of peer review.
- Undertaking research in an area of interest.
- Writing relevant blogs and reports.
- Presenting to colleagues and contributing to conferences, forums and other events.
- Mentoring other practitioners, tutoring and lecturing.

**Areas for development**

The role of the personal development practitioner is primarily one of a coach, and the majority of your training and ongoing development should be in the field of coaching (reading coaching books, attending coach training and CPD sessions, practising coaching and having others observe and give feedback on your coaching skills). None of this needs to be specific to sport.

It is also useful to learn about elements of the sporting life. There are numerous research articles on retirement from sport and a growing bank of resources relating to wellbeing and welfare concerns in sport. At least a basic understanding of anti-doping procedures is also essential.

Other relevant areas include career development, wellbeing and mental health.

**Sources of learning**
- Professional coaching bodies such as the Association of Coaching provide a broad range of CPD opportunities, including courses, podcasts, co-coaching opportunities, group supervision experiences and access to journal articles (many of which are available to non-members).

- Free webinars allow you to gain a brief snapshot of a topic or approach and decide on its relevance and appeal before committing to more in-depth courses.
- The International Lifestyle and Personal Development Practitioners' Forum (p.134), run by Elizabeth Egan, provides opportunities to learn and connect with other practitioners.
- The suggested reading and resources at the end of each section provide further inspiration for continued learning and development.
- Gaining accreditation through one or more of the professional coaching organisations (the International Coaching Federation, the European Coaching and Mentoring Council, the Association for Coaching) or through any another relevant organisation can provide a focused approach to your CPD.

**CPD portfolio**

Professional bodies require those who have and who are working towards accreditation to keep a CPD portfolio to demonstrate the types and quantity of CPD completed. But even if you're not yet working towards accreditation, completing a record of CPD activities completed and writing reflections will greatly enhance the impact any learning will have on your practice.

The CPD summary could consist of:
- What the learning activity was.
- What was learned.
- How this will impact your practice.
- Any further actions or learning needs identified.

You can easily put together your own CPD portfolio, though apps and websites specifically designed for storing and monitoring your CPD activity are also available for a small annual fee (e.g. CPDme).

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**Suggested reflective exercises**
- List the competencies needed for your role (you could use the competencies of one of the professional bodies as a starting point). Audit your current knowledge and skills against each competency.
- Select three areas for development in the coming year.

# Self-care

**Due to the nature of their work, practitioners in the helping professions are particularly susceptible to burnout. While personal development practitioners don't always deal with traumatic situations, the toll of any role dominated by conversations where only one of the parties' needs are being met should not be underestimated.**

**Some warning signs of emotional fatigue and burnout**
- Finding work and life increasingly stressful or frustrating.
- Becoming less able to cope with simple life tasks.
- Headaches or other unexplained physical complaint.
- Feeling tired or drained.
- Difficulty concentrating, reduced creativity, irritability and procrastination.
- Increased cynicism and frustration.
- Reduced satisfaction from your achievements.
- Using food or alcohol to feel better or to suppress feelings.
- Altered sleep habits.
- Withdrawing from people.

**Some work-specific signs of burnout and complacency**
- Giving advice as a shortcut, rather than helping the client grow or come to their own solutions.
- Zoning out and not fully hearing what the client is saying.
- Believing you know exactly what the client is going to say, or how the session will turn out before they start speaking.
- Pushing your agenda rather than listening to the client.
- Feeling relieved when clients cancel sessions.
- Being judgemental or feeling strong negative feelings (anger, resentment, annoyance) towards clients.
- Needing to feel heard during sessions, and finding yourself self-disclosing when it is not helpful for the client.

**Why practitioners are at risk of burnout**
- Practitioners are human and have their own needs.
- Helping others can be exhausting work.
- Emotions are infectious. While meeting with enthusiastic young people can have a positive effect on your mood, you are unlikely to go through a whole day without meeting with a client who is expressing negative emotions.
- Staying focused on a conversation, maintaining confidentiality, watching out for mental health warning signs and focusing on saying the right thing, can all be draining work irrespective of the topic of the conversation.
- Practitioners are helpers by nature and want to do their best for clients. However, there is a limit to what you can humanly give or achieve before your own life is impacted.

**Some tips to reduce the risk of burnout**
- Actively use the support and resources you have available and learn to 'put on your own oxygen mask first'.
- Set clear boundaries (p.12).
- Refer clients to other professionals where required (p.20).

- Maintain sight of where you end and the client begins, so that you are not unnecessarily taking on their worries and problems. Reflection and supervision can help with this.
- Set limits on the number of clients you work with each day or week. Build in breaks between sessions. Schedule recovery time after busy periods.
- Learn to identify and acknowledge the early signs of physical and emotional fatigue and burnout in yourself.
- Ensure you have your own 'stuff' sorted through reflection (p.25), supervision (p.26), coaching or counselling.
- Be prepared for value and belief clashes (p.22) and things clients might say which could hit a nerve.
- Use supervision and the support of colleagues and critical friends to offload and debrief, as required.
- Take recovery and relaxation seriously and learn to switch off and unplug from your work (e.g. reduce screen time, having periods where you're not 'on call').
- Cultivate a rich life outside of sport and your work.
- Remember that it's ok to say 'no' sometimes.
- Ensure you receive the appropriate care and support after dealing with a crisis (e.g. serious client mental health referral).
- Utilise some of the self-care processes you recommend to clients, including mindfulness, meditation, journaling, savouring and therapeutic lifestyle changes (Walsh, 2011).

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**Suggested reflective exercises**
- What strategies do you currently have in place to prevent emotional fatigue and burnout? Are there additional measures you can put in place? How are you going to implement these?
- Are you currently showing warning signs of emotional fatigue or burnout? What are you going to do to address any current burnout or emotional fatigue?

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**Further reading and resources**
- Walsh, R (2011) Lifestyle and mental health. American Psychologist, 66 (7), pp 579 –592.
- McCormack, H, et al. (2015) Practicing what we preach: investigating the role of social support in sport psychologists' well-being. Frontiers in Psychology, 6, article 1854.

# Person-centred coaching

**Person- or client-centred counselling, originally developed in the 1940s and 1950s by Carl Rogers, is a non-directive approach that sees the client as the best expert in their own life. It is built on actualising tendency, an assumption that people are intrinsically motivated, on a biological level, to grow and develop in the direction of optimal functioning.**

Rogers believed that individuals have within themselves vast reserves of the resources they need for self-understanding, altering their self-concepts and directing their behaviour. This realisation of potential is not, however, automatic, and humans require the right social environment to realise their potential for growth and development.

Rogers' work is based on the premise that the relationship between practitioner and client can provide optimum conditions for that growth. Practitioner empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard for the client are the core conditions associated with this relationship.

Person-centred coaching:
- Places client autonomy and resourcefulness at the heart of the partnership.
- Allows the client to hear their inner (expert) voice.
- Encourages the client to explore issues at a deeper level and to gain new insights.
- Is ideally suited for exploring values, beliefs, assumptions, purpose and direction.
- Is suitable for those who are capable of obtaining the relevant information but are struggling to choose their direction.
- Places more emphasis on reflection and empathic highlights than on questions (which may inadvertently direct the client). Questions are generally used only to clarify understanding.

Practitioners working to a person-centred approach:
- See the client as their own best expert and trust that they have the ability and potential to find their own best direction.
- Offer a working alliance or partnership which is authentic and genuine and where the client feels accepted and understood.
- Show empathetic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference through empathic highlights (p.38) and reflections.
- Are non-directive, following the client's lead, rather than the other way around.
- Display unconditional positive regard (an acceptance of the client's experiences, positive and negative, without any conditions or judgement) for the client.
- Ensure that they are working to the client's agenda, not to their own (or anyone else's).

The basic principles of the person-centred approach influence many psychological approaches. While Rogers developed his approach for therapy, the person-centred approach is ready-made for application to coaching and personal development support, particularly in terms of empathy, congruence and the practitioner way of being. Its non-directive nature, the belief that the client is their own best expert and the skill of active reflective listening are particularly relevant in coaching.

Motivational interviewing (p.50) is person-centred in nature and utilises the practitioner-client relationship and reflective listening to make the client feel understood and, where desired by the client, to bring about behaviour change.

The person-centred approach also shares many similarities with positive psychology (p.49). It sees and acknowledges the limitless possibilities that the client holds, values wellbeing and optimal functioning, and is not concerned with diagnosis or fixing and healing clients.

Person-centred coaching's non-directive nature makes it incompatible with contexts where the sports coach, performance director or other personnel determine the topics or direction of support, or where performance outcomes are the only measure of success.

The person-centred approach, in its truest form, uses skills rather than tools. An approach which is non-directive on content but directive on process, however, can use tools, including those from cognitive behavioural approaches, so long as it is the client who is driving the session. The purpose of tools (p.64) should be for clients to gain additional insights into their own world, and from that respect they fit perfectly with the person-centred approach.

**Further reading and resources**
- Rogers, C (1995) On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy, Houghton Mifflin.
- Rogers, C (1995) A way of being, Houghton Mifflin.
- Joseph, S (2006) Person-centred coaching psychology: a meta-theoretical perspective, International Coaching Psychology Review, 1, p47-54.
- Mearns, D, Thorne, B & McLeod, J (2013) Person-centred counselling in action, Sage.

# Positive psychology coaching

**Positive psychology is a science based on testing happiness, wellbeing, personal growth and 'the good life'. It is the study of what makes life most worth living as it strives to understand, test and promote the factors that allow individuals and groups to thrive.**

Martin Seligman, the founding father of positive psychology, believed that traditional psychological practices concentrated on disease, weakness and damage. He set out to study how to help people flourish. The resulting psychological approach focuses on individual wellbeing, happiness, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, imagination, optimism and hope as well as happiness and flourishing at a group level.

Positive psychology is not simply a focus on positive thinking and positive emotions; it is much more than that. It challenges the deficiency approach to living and looks at strengths rather than weaknesses.

Positive psychology has applications in healthcare, education and a variety of other settings, but it is a ready-made approach for coaching. Positive psychology coaching specifically helps clients improve performance and achieve valued goals while increasing wellbeing and enhancing strengths.

Not only is it a good fit in coaching and personal development work in sport, where wellbeing is also a major concern, but positive psychology's strong evidence base has helped coaching psychology become a recognised field within psychology.

Practitioners working to a positive-psychology approach:

- Are not just concerned with the absence of disease, damage or unhappiness, but actively help clients thrive.
- Promote positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment and help clients find sources of all these in their lives.
- Help clients explore strengths, values and other resources, and pay little, if any, attention to weaknesses and deficits.
- Do not disregard or ignore negative emotions.
- Use evidence-based interventions.
- Are likely to use a number of the multitude of available evidence-based tools, interventions and psychometric measurements.
- Are likely to follow a much more structured programme of coaching than other coaches and place a much greater emphasis on psychometrics than other humanistic approaches.
- Are likely to use the Values in action inventory of strengths (VIA-IS) to identify character strengths. These character strengths will then be used to help the client find ways to bridge the gap between their current situation and their desired goal.

## PERMA model

Wellbeing is a major area of interest for positive psychologists. Studies by Seligman and others have highlighted that wellbeing has five elements:

| P | **POSITIVE EMOTIONS:** Promotion of satisfaction, happiness, joy, love, or any emotion that feels good or makes you feel kind. |
| E | **ENGAGEMENT:** Absorption in what you're doing, at its best being in a state of flow. |
| R | **RELATIONSHIPS:** Feeling supported, valued and loved by others. |
| M | **MEANING:** Belonging to or serving something greater than yourself. |
| A | **ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Striving for and achieving intrinsically developed goals. |

## Evidence-based positive psychology interventions

*Gratitude diary:* Keeping a record of everyday experiences for which you can be grateful.

*Character strengths:* Developing and using your key character strengths (p.70).

*Savouring:* Focusing on a routine event (e.g. the meal in front of you) and asking what you appreciate about it (e.g. the colours, texture, smell, flavour).

*Designing a beautiful day:* Describing what you would love to do and reflecting on what makes it special.

*Active constructive responding* is a way of sharing in other people's good news that can help strengthen personal relationships. This is achieved through three steps: sharing their happiness and excitement (e.g. 'I'm so happy you told me this; I'm very excited for you!'); asking questions to encourage further discussion about the news (e.g. 'When did you hear the news?'); and reaffirming you feel happy for them (e.g. 'You've put a lot of work into this; I'm so happy it's finally paying off').

### Further reading and resources
- Seligman, M (2012) Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being, Simon and Schuster.
- Boniwell, I & Tunariu, A (2019) Positive psychology: theory, research and applications, Open University.
- Positive Psychology: positivepsychology.com
- Positive Psychology Centre: ppc.sas.upenn.edu
- VIA Institute on Character: viacharacter.org

# Using metaphors and clean language

**Our everyday language is littered with metaphors. Those which are obvious and intended (explicit), however, make up only a tiny portion of the metaphors used in everyday speech. Most of our metaphors are disguised in familiarity (growing as a person, a rock of strength, missing the boat) and the meaning that is implied can vary greatly from individual to individual.**

Take the phrase 'we're all in the same boat'. What boat have you got in mind? Are you in a canoe, a yacht or a cruise ship? Are you on a calm sea, or chasing down rapids? Everyone will have a different boat and a slightly different situation in mind. We're not in the same boat at all.

## Clean language

Developed from the clinical work of David Grove, clean language is a way of working in which the practitioner pays careful attention to their own language, to minimise the introduction of unintended bias or inaccurate interpretation, during coaching. The emphasis instead is placed on exploring the client's interpretation of and meaning placed on the words, phrases and metaphors they use.

Clean language is particularly useful for exploring a client's visual and verbal metaphors and Grove discovered that when he enquired about clients' metaphors using their exact language, they stayed in the metaphor, and after some time, their perception of the problem changed.

There are 12 basic clean language questions which are commonly used to explore metaphors. While normal coaching questions move the client away from the metaphor, using and reusing these 12 questions will keep the client in their metaphor and can accomplish an extraordinary amount.

- And what would you like to have happen?
- And what kind of [word or phrase]?
- And where is/whereabouts is [word or phrase]?
- And does [word or phrase] have a size or a shape?
- And is there a relationship between [word or phrase] and [another word or phrase]?
- And that's like what?
- And where could [word or phrase] come from?
- And what happens just before [word or phrase]?
- And then what happens?
- And what needs to happen for [word or phrase]?
- And is there anything else that needs to happen for [word or phrase]?

Notice that all the questions start with 'and'. This helps the conversation flow. It allows the client to stay with their metaphor and suggests that what the practitioner is about to say is a continuation of what's just said.

The use of metaphors and clean language:
- Is a way of tapping into the creative subconscious.
- Can help increase awareness of a situation, identify personal resources, solve problems and create new ideas.
- Allows clients to create unique solutions for their unique situations.
- Allows the client freedom to come to their own conclusions and solutions.
- Leaves no room for advice giving, paraphrasing, or interpretation (or misinterpretation) by the practitioner.
- Motivates the client to act because they're using their own words and symbols.
- Requires the practitioner to tune into the client's metaphors and bring them to their attention.
- Releases the practitioner from having to come up with clever questions.
- Is simple, though not always easy. It's a way for you to do less and clients to do more.
- Requires you to trust that the client really does have all the resources they need to solve their own problems and achieve their desired outcomes.

## Visual metaphors

You don't have to wait for a client to introduce a verbal metaphor. If they have become stuck, give them a deck of picture cards, and ask them to choose one which represents what they'll feel like when the problem is resolved or the goal has been achieved. Then explore the image using clean language questions.

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**Further reading and resources**
- Way, M (2013) Clean approaches for coaches: how to create the conditions for change using clean language and symbolic modelling, Clean Publishing.
- Sullivan, W & Rees, J (2012) Clean language: revealing metaphors and opening minds, Crown House Publishing.
- The Clean Collection: cleanlanguage.co.uk (contains a wide range of articles relating to clean language and metaphors).
- Clean Learning: cleanlearning.co.uk; Clean Change: cleanchange.co.uk; Clean Coaching: cleancoaching.com (for courses)

# Supporting the travelling sportsperson

**The opportunity to travel and experience different cultures is one of the more glamorous perks of being a high-performance sportsperson but is often offset by the stress of travel, the expense involved and the negative impacts of jet lag, travel fatigue, heat and altitude on performance.**

Spending prolonged periods 'on the road' and away from support networks is often an integral part of the life of a sportsperson and can negatively impact physical and mental wellbeing. Boredom is a real issue for those whose sporting lifestyle requires long periods in hotels.

You are not trying to replace the physiologist, nutritionist, coach or team manager, but you may be in an ideal situation to provide holistic support, particularly to clients who travel independent of national or professional teams.

**When clients might need support around travelling**
- To help plan and organise their schedule and routine so that travelling becomes less stressful.
- To plan around the things they'll be missing while away (e.g. work or study commitments).
- To reduce the expense. Good planning can help minimise the need for last-minute taxi rides, premium train tickets, and needless overspending on overpriced airport food.
- To find worthwhile activities to make travel less tedious, and to help kill the hours spent in hotel rooms, without negatively impacting performance.
- To find ways to connect with others and feel less isolated, particularly if travelling alone.
- To prepare for things that might go wrong (e.g. travel delays, annoying roommates, inadequate food).
- To simply have someone objective to talk through their travel stresses when away and to have space to find solutions to any issues that arise.
- To help reduce the risk of injury and illness while away.
- To make the best use of the periods when they're not travelling.
- To learn about and prepare for the things they've not experienced before (e.g. jet lag, food halls, extreme heat).

**Some possible approaches**
- Work with the physiologists, nutritionist and other support staff to put together resources on various related topics (e.g. jet lag, travel nutrition, immunisation and other preparation; see p.129 for example).
- Use coaching to help clients build any information and advice they receive from other practitioners into their routines (e.g. adapting their schedule to take jet lag adaptation into account).
- Refer or signpost them to other practitioners and support where necessary.

- Get them to work through some possible scenarios, based around top concerns, in group settings so they are more prepared for all eventualities.
- Link them with more experienced sportspeople who can share guidance on how to deal with common concerns.
- Help them review what went well, what didn't go so well, and what they can change for the next time they travel.
- Help them find ways to make travel a more enjoyable experience and savour the opportunities that arise (e.g. sampling and savouring new experiences; documenting experiences through photo stories, a travel journal, blogging or vlogging; using downtime to learn new things about themselves and teammates).
- Help them explore interests outside sport (p.88) which may make the time they have to kill less boring.
- Help them make packing less stressful. Get them to put together lists for domestic and international trips and to update those lists each time they travel, rather than always starting from scratch. Suggest they duplicate some of the items they always need so that they can leave their bags half packed for the next time.
- Support around any mental wellbeing issues they have relating to their travel and make appropriate referrals (p.20) where necessary.
- Educate them around anti-doping issues that may arise when travelling (e.g. that they have enough of any medication they require, that they carry any prescriptions with them, that medications are transported in their original packaging, that they are aware of the risks associated with purchasing medications abroad) and ensure that they are making relevant preparations.

**Some common travel concerns**
- Passport forgotten or stolen.
- Bank card lost or blocked.
- Checked baggage doesn't arrive.
- Dead phone battery with nowhere to charge it.
- Don't like local food or get sick from it.
- Annoying roommates.
- Boredom and isolation.
- Jetlag and temperature extremes.
- Travel hygiene and getting sick.
- Expense.
- Language barriers.
- Cancelled and delayed flights.

# Group activity: human bingo

This is a very simple icebreaker activity particularly suitable for a programme induction session where participants don't already know each other. If your questions cover a broad range of topics (i.e. are not just about sport), then you can demonstrate straight away that you are interested in the whole person and participants can get to know each other beyond the sporting context.

**Equipment**
- Bingo cards
- Pens
- Suitable space
- At least 20 participants

**Time**
Approximately 30 minutes

**Ideal for**
Breaking the ice

**Procedure**
- Put together a list of questions that at least one person in the group can answer (see examples below).
- Using an online bingo card generator (e.g. myfreebingocards.com) create bingo cards for each participant. Leave space in each cell for participants to write a name or get a signature.
- Each participant gets a different individual, who meets the appropriate criteria, to sign each square.
- Add a competitive element by awarding a prize to the first person to get a full house.
- Use questions which highlight what individuals have in common beyond sport, and what, apart from sport, may make up their identity.
- This task involves participants moving and interacting with many other participants. Ensure that the space is suitable for those with mobility issues to do just that (e.g. not a tiered lecture room).

**Sample questions**
*Find someone who…*

Has never broken a bone.
Has two or more pets.
Loves jazz music.
Is afraid of spiders.
Has done ballet.
Was born in a different country.
Does the same sport as you.
Can play the guitar.
Has been to Poland.
Has three or more siblings.
Can speak a foreign language.
Has never been to France.

Can juggle.
Is wearing red.
Was born in June.
Was born in the same year as you.
Has the same first name as a grandparent.
Can't swim.
Doesn't have a smartphone.
Has never watched Love Island.
Doesn't have a Netflix subscription.
Has been to Africa.
Has fainted in public.
Knows how to surf.

# Resources: courses and other useful information

**If you're keen to learn more, then please check out the courses we recommend below, join the practitioners' forum and get in touch if you'd like to book us for some work.**

## Some learning sources

These are just some of the training providers the authors recommend for aspiring personal development practitioners:

*Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS):* TASS run the 1st4Sport level 3 Athlete Personal Development and Lifestyle award, currently the go-to qualification for practitioners starting out in personal development coaching. They also run a Level 3 award in Understanding Athlete Transitions.
*Website: tass.gov.uk*

*SDS Seminars:* SDS Seminars run introductory courses in positive psychology, solution-focused brief therapy and motivational interviewing, a short course on social media use in adolescence and the two-day 'I Want to Stop Procrastinating Now™' course, which may all be relevant to the personal development practitioner.
*Website: skillsdevelopment.co.uk*

**Contextual Consulting:** Contextual Consulting provide high-quality, evidenced-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) training for professionals working in a variety of settings and with a range of clients.
*Website: contextualconsulting.co.uk*

*MI Cardiff:* Stephen Rollnick and Orla Adams run two-day introductory Motivational Interviewing courses in Cardiff which are ideal for those looking for basic motivational interviewing skills to incorporate into their practice.
*Website: micardiff.co.uk*

*3D Coaching:* Claire Pedrick and the team at 3D Coaching run a range of affordable courses for those looking to use coaching skills in their work. Transforming Conversations, a 30-hour online course, is perfect for anyone wanting to become proficient in basic coaching. This course, which has no written assessments, forms part of a level-one coach training package which can lead to International Coaching Federation (ICF) accreditation.
*Website: 3dcoaching.com*

**Wellbeing Science Institute:** Steve Johnson and his team at the Wellbeing Science Institute in Australia have put together the industry-leading Elite Athlete Wellbeing Management Program, currently being run virtually from Australia and via its European partners at Loughborough University.
*Website: wellbeingscienceinstitute.com*

## International Lifestyle and Personal Development Practitioners' Forum

This group is open to anyone who works in or is interested in working in a lifestyle, personal development, wellbeing or related role within sport. At the time of publication, the group is made up of more than 250 practitioners, including those who have worked in sport for more than 20 years and postgraduate students with aspirations of supporting high performance sportspeople in the future.

The group runs an annual in-person forum event in the UK, approximately 10 other online learning experiences and informal monthly online discussion groups. All events are free to attend.

To join the group, drop Elizabeth Egan an email at e.egan@uel.ac.uk requesting to join.

## Elizabeth's work

If you'd like to find out more about the work Elizabeth does or book her to deliver support for sportspeople, students or practitioners, please check out her website (somuchmore.ie).

## Rob's work

If you'd like to find out more about the work Rob does or book him to deliver support for sportspeople, please check out his website (themindsethub.org).

### Some other useful links
The following links have a wealth of information on relevant topics.

*IOC Athlete 365* (olympics.com/athlete365): has courses, information and other resources for current and retiring sportspeople.

*TASS Extra* (tass.gov.uk/tass-extra): contains research summaries, project results, TASS publications and other resources, largely focused on dual careers.

*The World Players Association* (uniglobalunion.org): has some useful report summaries relating to player rights, safeguarding concerns and the role of the personal development practitioner.

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