OpenLearn

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Developing anti-racist coaching practice in sport



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Contents

Introduction 5
Introduction 5
Session 1: What is anti-racist coaching? 8
Introduction 8
1 The many roles of a youth sports coach 9
2 Youth sport, diversity and inclusion 10
3 What is anti-racism? 12
4 Introducing the ARC (anti-racist coaching) model 13
5 The benefits of adopting the ARC model 15
6 Summary of Session 1 16
Session 2: Using the ARC model to improve your coaching 18
Introduction 18
1 Developing self-awareness and reflection 19
2 Becoming culturally competent 20
3 Building trust and supportive relationships 22
4 Adapting practice to meet different cultural needs 24
5 Reflection point: tips for before, during and after coaching sessions 26
6 Summary of Session 2 28
Session 3: Using the ARC model to influence others 30
Introduction 30
1 Becoming an ARC influencer 31
2 Sharing your ARC practice with others 32
3 Developing anti-racism among players 35
4 Creating and sustaining an ARC environment 38
5 ARC and you: starting to make the change 39
6 Summary of Session 3 41
7 Course summary 42
Tell us what you think 43
Where next? 44
References 45
Acknowledgements 46
Glossary 47

Introduction

Introduction

Sport has the power to bring people and communities together, to promote social inclusion and encourage connections and friendships between people from all different backgrounds. Perhaps because sport is associated with so many positive aspects of life, discrimination such as racism can be mistakenly viewed as something that only really exists *outside* of sport. Sport organisations have begun to acknowledge that sport is not always as inclusive and accessible to all as people might assume. It is recognised that sport harbours elements of institutional racism that can cause barriers for racially minoritised people to participate and gain success, not only as players but also in roles like coaching. There are, unfortunately, many examples where racially minoritised players have been subjected to racist abuse, bullying and unfair treatment.

In the UK, high-profile sports like professional football have become important vehicles to promote wider social campaigns for racial equality and anti-discrimination. Campaigns such as Kick It Out and The Premier League's No Room for Racism are well supported by professional sportspeople, coaches and sport organisations – people involved in sport are increasingly encouraged to challenge and report discrimination whenever they witness or experience it, to help make their environments welcoming and inclusive places for everyone. While there is support for these initiatives, it can sometimes be hard for people to know how they can contribute to ensuring sport is welcoming to all and play their own small part in helping community cohesion and inclusion.

This OpenLearn course is designed to help empower coaches –either actively coaching or thinking of coaching in the future – and other people who hold supporting roles in sport settings to confidently and competently support ethnically diverse participants. Completing this course will help you to ensure that every participant you coach or support feels welcomed, able to 'be' their authentic selves and play sport in an environment that encourages them to enjoy themselves and thrive to reach their sporting potential.

While the course is designed primarily for coaches supporting children and young people in youth sport settings, many of the principles outlined in the course can apply to coaching adults too. Although the course is not just for coaches, for simplicity the term 'coach' will be used as a general term for anyone supporting people in a sport related setting.

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- identify the benefits to coaches and participants of adopting anti-racist coaching-practice
- compareanti-racist coaching practice with your current coaching practice
- demonstrate a variety of ways to shareanti-racist coaching practice with others
- identify the difference between non-racist and anti-racist positions.

Tips for completing the course

In the 'Summary' at the end of each session, you will find a link to the next session. If at any time you want to return to the start of the course, click on 'Full course description'. From here you can navigate to any part of the course.

It’s also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page, to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you’ve come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

You will see that each session contains a glossary at the end, which contains definitions of some key terms used. When working through the course, you will also see these glossary terms highlighted. You can use your cursor to hover over these highlighted words to see the definition appear as you come across them.

For most of the acitivities across the course, you will have the option of typing your answer into a text box. When you get to the end of the course you can download all of your answers, via the ‘My answers’ box on the course description page. Please note that these notes are only available to you.

Once you have completed the course you will have the opportunity to complete a short survey to tell us what you thought about it. You will find the link to this at the end of the course. We would love to get your feedback so please spare a few minutes at the end to complete it if you can.

You can now go to Session 1.

Session 1: What is anti-racist coaching?

Introduction

This first session outlines the purpose of the course and the benefits of adopting anti-racist practice in sport environments – both for coaches and for the participants. It will explore how such practice can make people better coaches and help ensure players from all backgrounds can have fun, be themselves and thrive in the sports they love. You will also be introduced to some of the key terminology associated with anti-racist coaching and take a first look at the anti-racist coaching (ARC) model that this course is designed around. Here, you will find out why the term **anti-racism** has been specifically chosen to describe the practice recommended in the ARC model.

You'll be introduced to the two coaches who feature across the course – Asad Qureshi (who you may have already met in the introductory video) and Sulayman (Sully) Hafesji-Wade. They will share their own experiences of coaching **ethnically diverse** young players and pass on their own tips and ideas to help coaches embed aspects of the ARC model into their future practice.

1 The many roles of a youth sports coach



If you are currently coaching children and young people (or adults), or have another supporting role in sport, what is it you enjoy most about what you do? As much as it may be exciting to see players learn new skills, techniques and explore new tactics and compete in their sport, seeing young people in particular have fun, making friends with people from many different backgrounds and playing a role in their wider development as they grow up is probably just as or *even more* rewarding to you.

It can be easy to forget the role that a coach can play in shaping a young person's development. For some children, at some periods in their life, their sports coach may be the most influential adult to them – perhaps even above teachers and family members. The coach can also be an extremely influential person in an adult sportsperson's life. This can come with responsibilities far beyond improving a player's sporting skills and abilities. Whether it is a role that a coach actively seeks or has never really considered, or would even rather avoid, a sports coach is an important role model and mentor – with the potential to impact them in both positive and negative ways.

The video below introduces you to one of the coaches who will feature across this course, Sulayman (Sully) Hafesji-Wade. In this clip, he shares his views about what his role as a youth football coach is.

Video content is not available in this format.



It is clear that the coach has significant responsibilities that go well beyond simply teaching sport techniques and skills to players. For players to thrive in their sporting environments they need to feel safe, comfortable and confident. The next section considers how youth sport can sometimes not always feel this way for some young people.

2 Youth sport, diversity and inclusion

A passion for sport is shared right across communities and provides an opportunity for children from different backgrounds to come together and make friendships with people that they may otherwise not encounter. It can help develop a sense of belonging and cooperation between families and across diverse local communities in relation to people's racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. This ethnic diversity can vary considerably depending on the demographic of specific communities, some of which might be extremely diverse, such as large, densely populated urban areas while other areas may contain a high percentage of people who might identify as having the same ethnicity.

As any coach will know, no one child is the same. Working with young people over any period of time can highlight how each individual has their own particular interests, ways of acting, views about things and, of course, their own specific strengths and abilities when it comes to sport. At the same time, however, some people share similarities with others that can become markers of difference to other people too.

A young person's ethnic background can influence how much they feel welcomed into a new sport, which in turn can shape the decisions they make about which sports to pursue or to avoid (Bopp *et al*., 2022). In many cases, the coach can be the most significant person in shaping the initial and ongoing experiences of children and young people in sport.

Activity 1 Thinking about your current practice

If you have experience of coaching, or supporting people in another role in sport, how welcome do you think you make new participants to your environment? How well do you know all of your players? Do you find it easier to get to know some players more than others? Why do you think that might be? It is recognised that people tend to gravitate towards people they feel connected to in some way or have things in common. Lots of different reasons could be common interests, such as where they live, their heritage, shared personal connections, what they look like, shared cultural practice (e.g. religion). Think about all the people you coach – which ones do you know more than others and reflect on why that might have come about?

Provide your answer...

In the next video you will hear from Asad Qureshi – the coach that featured in the earlier introduction to the course. Watch Asad briefly discuss how he draws on his own personal experience to inform how he tries to get to know his players.

Video content is not available in this format.



In the video, Asad mentions the importance of building early connections with young players and also recognising that some young people may find attending sport sessions quite daunting or intimidating, particularly if they are not made to feel welcome or find it difficult to immediately connect with people in the environment. Later in the course you will explore some practical tips that coaches can use to include and connect with new and returning players and ensure a welcoming environment is created.

3 What is anti-racism?

The term anti-racism can mean different things to people. Like many contested terms, how it is defined, understood – and what it represents – can invoke a range of different responses. What immediately sprang to mind when you first saw the title of this course? Did it make you feel more or less curious about its content and coaching approach? Or perhaps sceptical or cautious about what the course may involve?

The term anti-racism has been used to describe the type of coaching practice that is presented in this course because, for the authors, anti-racism represents a social, political and theoretical body of ideas that broadly seek to identify, challenge, disrupt and dismantle **racism** in all its various forms.

Now watch the short video below which briefly introduces some of the key terms used in this course and considers how they can be applied to sport settings.

Video content is not available in this format.



4 Introducing the ARC (anti-racist coaching) model

This OpenLearn course is designed around the 'ARC' model of anti-racist coaching practice that was developed primarily by the authors of this OpenLearn course, Jim Lusted and Daniel Kilvington, with support from their colleagues Anika Leslie-Walker and Asad Qureshi (Kilvington, Lusted and Leslie-Walker, 2025; Lusted, Kilvington and Qureshi, 2021) following a research project undertaken with the English Premier League. This project identified best practice among football coaches working with young players from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

The ARC model is also informed by anti-racist education and **pedagogy** research, drawing on key concepts and approaches that have been utilised to enhance teacher training and educator practice over many years.

In particular, the ARC model is underpinned by an educational approach termed 'culturally relevant pedagogy', developed in the 1990s to address the systematic disadvantages faced by young Black pupils in the US education system (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This approach proposed that young learners who belong to marginalised groups struggle to 'fit in' or be successful in educational environments that fail to recognise, value or draw upon their cultural diversity.

Across Sessions 2 and 3 of this course, you will explore in some detail each of the six core principles that make up the ARC model of practice. Along the way, several top tips and practical examples will be discussed to help you consider how coaches adopt these principles into their everyday practice supporting in sport settings. The next activity introduces the ARC model and encourages you, at this early stage of the course, to reflect on how these core anti-racist coaching principles relate to your current practice.

Activity 2 An introduction to the ARC model

Take a look at the interactive diagram below which provides a basic overview of the six core principles. Spend a little time familiarising yourself with the ARC model by reading through the descriptions of each principle provided.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Now complete the table below to help you reflect on how your approach might align to the ARC model – you may find the principles are quite familiar and close to your practice, or the ARC model may reveal areas that you have not considered before.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Identify the areas you feel you want or need to focus particularly on initially – and check again at the end of the course.

Provide your answer...

Having been introduced to the ARC model, the next section looks into some of the potential benefits of adopting ARC into a coach's practice.

5 The benefits of adopting the ARC model



As you progress through this course and learn more about each of the six principles of the ARC model of coaching practice, you will learn specifically about the potential benefits that adopting each of them can have – for your players, for you as a coach and for your own coaching development. Some of the many benefits of embedding the ARC principles into your everyday coaching are listed below.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Activity 3 Using ARC in your practice

Take a moment to reflect on what you have learned across this first session. Use the text box below to capture your initial thoughts on the following points:

- what you are hoping to get out of completing the course
- which aspect/s of the ARC model you are most interested in finding out more about
- what you have learned that has already made you think a bit differently about any aspect of your coaching.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Across this course you will be encouraged to reflect on your learning and how it might relate to, and impact on, your own practice as a coach or another role supporting people in sport. These can be important opportunities to pause and consider your key take aways.

You have now completed the first session of the course – well done! The final section that follows provides an overall summary of the learning from this session.

6 Summary of Session 1

This first session has introduced you to some of the key elements of an anti-racist approach to coaching, noting the important role that youth sport coaches play in the development of children and young people and the influence that the coach and others in supporting roles can have on the experiences of participants, including those from **racially minoritised** backgrounds. A coach is likely to support people who are different in all kinds of ways, including diversity associated with ethnicity, culture and religion. While it can be an instinct to want to treat all people in exactly the same way to ensure fairness and equality, there are multiple reasons why differential treatment and meeting the needs of individuals may be essential in order to ensure players from ethnically diverse backgrounds are able to thrive, enjoy themselves and reach their full sporting potential.

You can now go to Session 2.

Session 2: Using the ARC model to improve your coaching

Introduction

In this session you will have the opportunity to explore in some detail three of the six ARC principles that were briefly introduced in Session 1. these are:

Interactive content is not available in this format.



These three principles relate specifically to the type of support that coaches and those in other roles in sport can operate more effectively and inclusively, with some practical ideas designed to enhance their interactions and develop more meaningful, trusting relationships with players and their families. Along the way you will hear again from coaches Sully and Asad who share their experiences and challenges of developing some of these principles in their coaching. Look out for some simple, practical top tips that can be used to embed the three ARC principles into everyday coaching practice, the support of young players and shaping longer-term planning/goals.

1 Developing self-awareness and reflection

Reflective practice is increasingly encouraged in a range of professional settings, including sports coaching. This often takes the form of ‘looking back’ at a previous coaching or support session and considering how effective it was, what changes could have been made to make it more effective and taking that learning into future sessions to continually seek to improve them (Downham and Cushion, 2024).

Another key aspect of reflection is on the self, i.e. you. If you coach or support someone, do you ever reflect on how they may view you? Or, for a young person, how you may be perceived by the family and other key stakeholders around them? Developing self-awareness is a crucial component to the ARC model and is presented as the ‘first’ principle to be considered in the course in part because of the foundational importance it has for all other ARC principles.

Taking the time to really reflect on who ‘you’ are and how you might be perceived by others – often in different ways – can be a good starting point to enhancing coaching and support practice with young players from diverse backgrounds. Watch the short video below where our coach Sully reflects on his own position and his interactions with players.

Video content is not available in this format.



Developing this type of self-awareness and reflection is an integral foundation for a coach to be able to adopt other elements of the ARC model, as this session will explore further. It is also an important step towards developing cultural competency – a crucial skill required to enact anti-racist coaching practice. The next section explores this skill further.

2 Becoming culturally competent

In the video in the previous section, coach Sully referred to a common Muslim greeting 'As-Salamu Alaikum', noting how his own **lived experience** as a Muslim has enabled him to connect well with players who have the same faith. He also recognises some moments when he may have not quite got an interaction right with a young person and his own curiosity to reflect on why that may have been the case and to learn more about other cultural practices and norms. This type of self-reflection relates to the idea of **cultural competence** which is a term used to describe the importance of recognising, acknowledging, embracing and supporting differences between people – in relation to diverse views, needs, cultural values and norms.

Activity 1 Developing cultural competence

It can often be a good starting point to reflect on your own cultural position and how this may contribute to other people's perceptions of you. Ethnicity, age, social class, disability and gender can all play a part in shaping perceptions. Use the text below to describe yourself and then consider how other people may perceive you.

Provide your answer...

Now look at Figure 1 which represents a continuum that highlights the different stages that are often needed to progress through before one becomes proficient in cultural competency. Draw on your own skills of self-reflection and awareness to place yourself – and your practice if you are currently working with young people – on the continuum. Be as honest as you can!

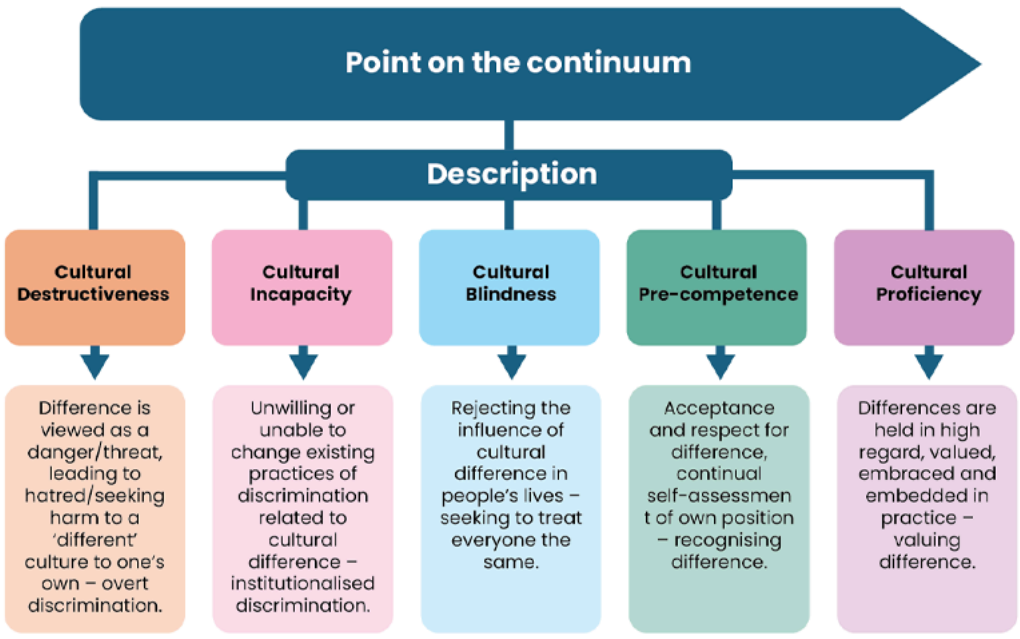

Figure 1 The cultural competency continuum (adapted from Cross, 2012)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

It is not uncommon for cultural differences to generate strong feelings among people – either feeling uncomfortable about not knowing the cultural norms and expectations that are very familiar to other people, or perhaps fear of accidentally offending someone by saying or doing (or not saying or doing) something that may be considered offensive or rude. Cultural competence is an important skill to develop to help overcome these fears or worries and learn to become much more confident in operating in settings with people from a diverse range of backgrounds. It requires a curiosity to learn and understand more about different cultural practices and to recognise the value of cultural diversity and ways of life that may be quite different to your own.

It may be useful to think of the development cultural competence as an ongoing process, rather than just something that can be immediately 'learned' or understood:

> Developing cultural competence is a daunting task and not one that is ever complete – it requires not only new knowledge and skills but also a continuous monitoring of one's own evolving cultural assumptions and positioning.
>
> (Gorczynski *et al*., 2021, p. 391)

One of the most valuable sources of learning to develop cultural competence is the people around you. Developing trusting and supportive relationships that are based on a principle of valuing and embracing cultural differences is the second core component of the ARC model that is explored in the next section.

3 Building trust and supportive relationships

It is well recognised in sport research that the coach–athlete relationship is extremely influential in shaping people's overall experiences of sport, their likelihood to remain in the sport and their sporting performance (Jowett, 2017). Despite this, such relationships are often under-appreciated, with coach education historically focusing on the importance of developing sport specific techniques and tactics. The development of relationships can also be time consuming, which can be a real challenge in sporting settings where time can be limited.

Making connections with, and getting to know, players and their parents/carers can be easier in some situations – and for some people – than others. You may remember from Session 1 when you were prompted to reflect on how well you many know the players you coach or support that you may feel instinctively 'connected' to some more than others, often because of some shared interest or circumstance – including having a similar lived experience which could be shaped by commonalities associated with culture, ethnicity and/or religion. Developing skills around cultural competence mentioned in the previous section can help to establish trusting and supportive relationships with players and their wider support network who come from backgrounds different to your own, or those you are familiar with. Such relationships can also be crucial sources of learning for you too, providing important spaces for cultural exchange and the fostering of mutual understanding between the coach, the player and their wider support networks.

Activity 2 Developing culturally competent relationships

Watch the short video below where coaches Asad and Sully explore some of the ways they try to get to know players and families and the benefits this relationship 'work' can have.

Video content is not available in this format.



Based on the tips provided in the video, make a note of three practical steps or approaches you could take to build an early relationship with a young player and their family.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Some of the tips provided in the video include spending time listening and watching players to first find out a bit about them, and then seeking ways to develop strong connections with young players and families, which can come through getting to know a young player's values, their family dynamic, household expectations, school life and a good sense of 'who they are'. Finding a mutual connection, even just around shared siblings, or interests, or cultural connections like religious practice, clothing/fashion/style or music tastes or similar experiences of different countries can help develop these bonds.

You might have thought about some 'starter' topics for very informal conversations with players, such as 'how was school/work today?', 'who is your favourite teacher/celebrity?', 'what will you be doing at home after training?', 'do you have any brothers or sisters?', etc. These can open up avenues for connections that can be gradually built on in future sessions and chats.

One of the benefits of building culturally competent relationships with players and their friends and families is that, through getting to know them and developing trust, a coach can begin to understand and predict the different needs that some players will have in order to fully participate and thrive in a sport environment. The next section explores how coaches can adapt their practice to meet specific needs of players and recognising some of the limitations of 'treating everyone the same' – an approach referred to as 'cultural blindness' in the cultural competency continuum you saw in the previous section.

4 Adapting practice to meet different cultural needs

In Session 1 you were introduced to a number of terms related to anti-racism, one of which included the notion of **non-racism**. To re-cap, *non-racism* refers to the position that many people take that focuses mainly on ensuring they are not undertaking behaviours or practices that might be seen to be discriminatory or racist. In contrast, an *anti-racist* approach seeks to take pro-active steps to create more inclusive environments and directly challenge practices and systems that can lead to discriminatory outcomes based around ideas of race and one's ethnic background.

In sport environments, adopting a non-racist position can often inform the view that coaches and those in other support roles must treat everyone the same, because differential treatment of individuals may lead to accusations of discrimination (or discriminatory outcomes). **Colour-blindness** is a term that has been used to characterise this type of position, whereby seeking to treat everyone the same can ignore or downplay both the dominance of one particular set of cultural norms (that some may find easier to conform to or be part of than others) and the racial inequalities that exist in wider social life (Bonilla-Silva, 2021).

This also chimes with the different ways that people understand how social inequalities should be tackled, either through equality of treatment or through equity – a term used to describe the importance of recognising the different needs and barriers that individuals and groups of people face in life. Crucially, such differences and barriers tend to be the product of historical processes of inequality (such as the Atlantic slave trade and European colonialism from several hundred years ago) and contemporary systems (e.g. institutional racism) rather than being caused by the individual themselves. Figure 2 offers a useful illustration of the difference between conceptions of **equality** and **equity**.

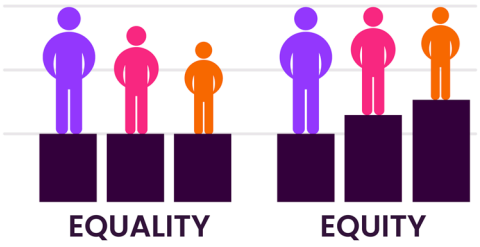

Figure 2 The contrasts between equality and equity

A core pillar of anti-racist practice is to recognise that:

- people have different needs and barriers that can lead to exclusion
- this requires the adaptation of practice to ensure diverse needs can be met – so that people can feel equally included, welcomed and able to thrive.

Watch the video below where Asad and Sully both discuss some of the ways they adapt their practice and expectations to meet the various needs of their players.

Video content is not available in this format.



Some further examples of adapting a coach's practice to meet the needs of an ethnically diverse group of players include the following:

1. Ensuring that all players can take authorised time out from their sport so that they are able to fully observe religious festivals.
2. Being flexible around clothing and equipment requirements to ensure all cultural norms around dress are respected.
3. Taking a flexible approach to time-keeping and considering when to run sessions so that they do not automatically exclude some people.
4. Checking your player's understanding of language and your adapting instructions/ communication as needed.
5. Learning and then being sensitive to cultural norms around body language/touch (such as eye contact and handshakes) and expectations around social hierarchies.

The next section encourages you take some time to reflect on your learning across this session.

5 Reflection point: tips for before, during and after coaching sessions

As you reach the end of this session, it is a good time to pause and reflect on your learning so far. In this session you have explored three of the core pillars of the ARC model of practice: developing self-awareness and reflection, building relationships and adapting practice to meet different needs. The final section of this session encourages you to take some time to reflect on what you have learned so far and how this learning might inform your future practice.

Take a look at the table below which offers both a summary of the key tips from this session and also some additional ideas you may find useful. It has been structured around the delivery of a coaching session: thinking about things to consider before a session (preparation and planning), during a session (delivery) and after a session (reviewing).

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Activity 3 Top tips for your own practice

Review your notes for this session and make a list of the following on the basis of what you have learned:

Add your answers to the right-hand column of this table.

What you to intend to START doing that you haven't done before.	*Provide your answer...*
What you will CONTINUE to do from your current practice.	*Provide your answer...*
What you will STOP doing from your current practice.	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Learning new ideas for coaching practice can be quite daunting and overwhelming with lots to take on board, and implementing these ideas can be even harder, particularly if a coach operates in environments where time is very tight and there is little space to really prepare, plan and execute new ideas. This activity is designed to help a coach break down the broad ARC principles of practice that have been introduced so far into very small, practical steps that can be introduced at various time phases of a season and session. Trying out small bits here and there is a good way to slowly start modifying and improving practice so it gradually becomes normal and embedded in what a coach does.

You have now reached the end of Session 2 and by now should be starting to get a better sense of how ARC principles can be put into practice to enhance a coach's effectiveness in working with ethnically diverse cohorts of young people. As with Session 1, this session concludes with a summary of your learning.

6 Summary of Session 2

This session has introduced you to three of the foundational pillars of the ARC model of coaching practice. These three components specifically relate to you and your practice as a coach or someone who supports young people in sport settings. As you have learned about these three principles, you may already recognise things you are currently doing (or would like to do) that connect well with the ARC model, and you should now begin to see how such practice can have significant benefits to including children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In some cases you may have come across some content that has prompted you to reflect on your current practice and identify areas you could improve, strengthen or may not have considered before. Coaching practice is an ongoing process that is fluid and constantly changing – hopefully you find at least some of the ideas contained in this session useful and will be brave and confident enough to try them out in the future.

You can now go to Session 3.

Session 3: Using the ARC model to influence others

Introduction

In the final session of the course you will explore the remaining three principles that make up the ARC model of coaching practice that was briefly outlined in Session 1. These are:

Interactive content is not available in this format.



These three principles relate specifically to the ways in which a coach can influence those around them, whether it be the players, other coaches and colleagues, parents, managers and anyone else involved in their particular sport environment. A coach can play a crucial role in creating, developing and sustaining environments which are underpinned by inclusion and anti-racism.

Embedding anti-racist principles into practice requires a collective and collaborative effort and action to ensure it becomes a core feature of an organisation's policies, procedures and culture. In this session, you will once again hear from coaches Sully and Asad, who will share their top tips and guidance around these three ARC principles. Practical measures will be outlined around how to influence those around you and play your part in embedding these three principles of ARC beyond just your own practice.

Before you explore these principles, you will consider the importance of a collective approach to anti-racist action and how this can result in positive organisational change.

1 Becoming an ARC influencer

You may have heard the term ‘influencer’ used to describe a novel marketing approach whereby a famous person and/or someone who has a large following on a social media platform such as YouTube is used to endorse or promote a particular product with the aim of using their popularity and profile to increase awareness of and, ultimately, its sales. Influencers like these can also promote certain ideas or opinions through social media.

The principle of becoming an ARC influencer connects to this by considering the role that individuals can play in encouraging the people around them to learn about, embrace and adopt ARC practice in their own roles. This can help embody the anti-racist position that was outlined in Session 1, one that advocates for people to pro-actively seek positive changes in themselves, other people and the organisations around them, making the shift from a more passive, reactive ‘non-racist’ viewpoint.

Some key aspects of being an ARC influencer can include the following:

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Many coaches operate within a wider team – including working alongside other coaches, volunteers, support staff and family members of young players. It is quite possible that a coach will observe, or be told about, or even discuss with colleagues aspects of coaching practice that may clash with core ARC principles and wider anti-racist practice. The coach is well placed to influence those around them by positively developing the **organisational culture** and ensuring that anti-racism is built into the foundations of practice of those close to them.

The next section explores how an ARC influencer might go about challenging poor practice among colleagues or others within their sport setting by adopting the roles outlined above.

2 Sharing your ARC practice with others

As a coach develops their own ARC practice, it is quite possible that they may observe actions, language and/or behaviours among other adults involved in their youth sport setting that could lead to discriminatory experiences or outcomes for some players. For example, a fellow coach using negative racial or cultural stereotype to make judgements about the ability or potential of certain players.

These types of incidents are an important opportunity for an ARC coach to influence others – whether it be a fellow coach, player, parent or guardian, or even a member of the senior leadership team – and to showcase their pro-active anti-racist position. In becoming an influencer, or **ally**, a coach will find ways to spread ARC principles with others and share examples of best practice, not only during training and matches elsewhere, such as in coach or management meetings and when holding discussions with players or parents. An ARC influencer can promote themselves as an institutional 'champion', someone who leads the way, helps develop others' practice, and ensures that ARC is systematically embedded at their club or organisation.

Watch the following video that outlines some of the ways coach Asad has tried to influence other coaches around him.

Video content is not available in this format.



It can be uncomfortable to challenge someone's practice or behaviour – and it is important to carefully consider how best to approach a conversation with a colleague to discuss their practice. The 'IDEA' method outlined below can be a good way to approach a discussion to ensure it is well received and not considered hostile criticism or over-accusatory.



Activity 1 Encouraging others to adopt ARC principles

Read the following scenario.

> **A youth cricket coach tells you a young Black player's appearance is 'inappropriate'**
>
> Imagine you are one of three coaches stood on the sidelines watching an under-12s cricket match. One coach, who only recently joined the team, leans in and says: 'That lad can't bat because he's wearing the wrong shoes. With those dreadlocks he probably can't even see the ball! Probably why he hasn't scored any runs lately, too. I'm going to tell him to get his hair cut and buy some proper cricket shoes if he wants to play for us next season, it's just inappropriate – he's disrespecting me and the game.'

Use the IDEA method outlined above to consider how you might challenge your fellow coach's view of this particular player. Click through the image belows below that represent the scenario and how the IDEA method could be applied, and then add your responses to the right-hand column in the table below.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

IDEA method	Your response to the scenario
Identify the right moment	*Provide your answer...*
Describe the behaviour/language/actions	*Provide your answer...*
Explain the impact it could have	*Provide your answer...*
Agree a more appropriate approach	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

You may have come up with something along the lines of the following:

Method	Your response to the scenario
Identify the right moment	It may be best to avoid immediately responding, particularly in front of the players and also the third coach. Try to find a moment when you are alone together or in a more private space – if not possible ask to speak with them after the session.
Describe the behaviour/ language/actions	I would want to flag up the mention of the player's hair in a negative way and say that it is inappropriate and disrespectful. It shouldn't really be a coach's job to control players' appearances. There may be lots of reasons why they have chosen to wear that pair of shoes. It is wrong to assume that all players should have specialist footwear.
Explain the impact it could have	If the coach were to follow through with their plan to talk to the child, it could make them feel singled out and worry unnecessarily about their appearance which, to them, is just normal. There could be lots of reasons why the child is wearing shoes that are different to the expected kit, including the costs involved, not being aware of the expectations and a physical issue. Just being told to change the shoes without exploring the reasons why may make them feel unwelcome or singled out.
Agree a more appropriate approach	The coach should recognise that it is up to the child how they wear their hair – and that this style may be an important aspect of their cultural identity and sense of self. The coach could be encouraged to get to know this child and their family a little more through informal conversations and dialogue. They could check sensitively if the child has any issues seeing the ball during batting and fielding and support them accordingly. Are the shoes the child is wearing a safety concern? Are they really impacting upon their ability to play the game? Is it more about conforming to a certain 'view' of what is considered 'proper' cricket kit? The coach should reflect on how important it is to make a point about kit requirements. If specialist shoes are deemed necessary, then this should be made clear to the family in a supportive and sensitive way (perhaps giving guidance on where such shoes can be purchased or even providing some second-hand kit from the club).

Alongside seeking to influence fellow coaches and other people in similar supporting roles for young people, there is also an important opportunity to encourage some basic appreciation of anti-racism among players themselves. The next section explores this further.

3 Developing anti-racism among players

A coach can be one of the most important role models and mentors in a person's life – and their responsibilities can go well beyond simply developing sport-specific skills and techniques. One of the core pillars of the model of culturally relevant pedagogy (introduced in Session 1) is the importance of developing an **anti-racist consciousness** among people, so they can gain a stronger understanding of the world around them, how it is organised and how they can help transform it for the better.

As an ARC influencer, the coach can play an important role in supporting people to develop a critical understanding of the world around them and how ideas of 'race', ethnicity, religious and cultural difference can impact people's lives. They can also help to empower people to actively contribute to an anti-racist sporting environment and be sure to play their part in creating a welcoming and inclusive space for people of all ethnic backgrounds to feel they can be their true, authentic selves and not feel under pressure to 'conform' to certain cultural norms and expectations. Sport is often a place where people meet, interact and become friends with others they might otherwise rarely come into contact with. The coach can help to develop **cultural competence** among their young players too, by seeking to value and celebrate cultural differences between themselves.

Another way to build confidence and feelings of safety for all players is a consistent and clear approach to incidents of racial abuse and **discrimination**, ensuring that all incidents – small or significant – are recognised and not ignored or downplayed. It is important that players are also encouraged and empowered to share any incidents they experience or witness with their coach.

Watch the video below where coach Asad reflects on an incident of racist abuse and how he initially handled the situation.

Video content is not available in this format.



The coach plays a crucial role here in educating the players about all forms of discrimination, such as racism, and can use cultural touch points and references, such as music, where possible, to help educate the players around racism and anti-racism. The next activity explores this further with another scenario to consider.

Activity 2 Encouraging anti-racism among young players

Scenario: players playing music containing racist and misogynistic language

Imagine you are a coach of an under 16s rugby team, getting ready to deliver your team talk to the players just before a match. You have encouraged the players to listen to music before the games and each week someone new chooses a playlist as a way to share their music tastes. This week, one player chooses some songs with lyrics that repeatedly use the 'n-word'. You look around and see some players joining in and singing the lyrics while others stay quiet and look uncomfortable. It also makes you feel very uneasy.

Why might this be an issue

Although coaches should encourage an environment where cultural practices are shared and celebrated, there are times when this might be problematic. The issue with these types of songs is that they are at odds with the ARC environment which is fundamentally an inclusive one. Although the 'n-word' is clearly discriminatory and has strong connections to racism (including slavery, racial segregation and prejudice), it has also tried to be 'reclaimed' by Black music artists. Its use is therefore contested and highly contextual (how, why, when, were, to whom the word is used). The issue here is that while some players may connect strongly to the music being played, it clearly contains language that is discriminatory and offensive which could be distressing for some players or staff – the coach has observed it has made some people uncomfortable so it must be addressed.

Read the questions below and then have a go at writing an initial answer to each of them.

1. How would you respond in this situation?
2. How might you encourage the players to openly discuss this matter and agree what music is/isn't acceptable for everyone?
3. How might these conversations help encourage a culture of anti-racism among the players?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. You may consider quietly asking the player who has chosen the playlist to skip songs which contains lyrics at least some players find offensive. Explain the reasons why, briefly, with the player and then highlight this decision, briefly, with the rest of the team.
2. After the game, you could discuss this decision in more detail with the rest of the team and allow them to share their thoughts and opinions on what music should be played in future and why. The players could explore the varied responses to such music and language and that to create an inclusive ARC environment, they must respect each other's positions and avoid playing music that may offend some of them.
3. By taking this collaborative approach, the coach is empowering the players to take their own responsibility in co-creating the ARC environment for the team.

> By more sensitively choosing the music that is played in future, shows respect and the development of cultural competence among them.

Having now considered the ways a coach could influence other coaches and colleagues while also helping to develop an anti-racist consciousness among their young players, the next section explores some ways that a coach can help create and then sustain a wider anti-racist environment within their organisation.

4 Creating and sustaining an ARC environment

For anti-racist coaching practice to be sustained, it requires much more than one individual coach to adopt it.

Creating and sustaining an ARC environment involves ensuring that anti-racist practice and considerations are embedded in all aspects of an organisation providing youth sport activities.

Things to consider to help build and then sustain an ARC environment include the following:

- Review and amend policies, procedures and practices to ensure anti-racist principles of valuing diversity and seeking to eliminate racial discrimination is at the heart of the club.
- Create and display a policy for dealing with incidents of racial abuse and discrimination – both from within the club/staff itself and from external sources (i.e. opposition players or support staff).
- Make anti-racism a core component of the club itself – promote and advertise the club's position and provide examples of the types of activities that take place to ensure ARC is being embedded at the club.
- Ensure that all club members and stakeholders are aware of the ARC principles and understand the organisation's commitment to it, and their responsibility to embed it in their own practice and regularly endorse it in their interactions with others.

Changes such as these go well beyond one individual and are likely to require significant buy-in from organisational leaders. It represents the stage of furthest development of embedding anti-racism in youth sport and should be viewed as a strategic goal to work towards once ARC practice has been embedded across a critical mass of employees or volunteers within the same organisation.

Having now explored in some detail the ARC model of practice, the next section encourages you to take a moment to reflect on your learning across this course and consider what you can start doing to incorporate the ARC model into your own practice.

5 ARC and you: starting to make the change

You have now been introduced to several ARC principles that are designed to help coaches and others supporting young people in sport settings to adopt and embed core anti-racist principles into their practice. By starting to consider these principles – or by building on existing practice in these areas – those supporting young athletes can help to create inclusive, welcoming spaces and relationships for them to thrive and really be themselves without fear of being judged or treated inequitably to their peers.

Activity 3 Pledge, take action and review

First, download a copy of your responses to all of the activities from the course, by clicking the link in the 'My answers' box on this page.. Then, take some time to read through and review the top tips and good practice that you have picked up across the course. You may want to return to specific sections of the course for further clarification or to re-cap some of the content as you review these responses.

Finally, complete the following task which will help you create a plan for the coming weeks ahead to try out some of the ARC principles in your coaching. You may want to look at the example ARC plan provided in the table at the bottom of this activity to help you create your own plan.

	Your plan
Pledge – why is ARC important to you? What is going to keep you motivated to try out and then sustain your adoption of ARC principles?	*Provide your answer...*
Action – what will you actually do? a. Before your next coaching session b. During your next coaching session c. Planning for next season	*Provide your answer...*
Review – how will you check on your progress? How will you know whether your practice is improving?	*Provide your answer...*
Who can act as a critical friend to keep you committed to this plan with and help you review it?	*Provide your answer...*

The table below gives you an example of an ARC plan of one of the authors of this course for their own coaching practice:

Pledge	I want to ensure every child who I coach feels included and able to be themselves. And I want to influence others around me to do the same.
Action	Before: I am going to reach out to parents to find out more about their kids' cultural needs. During: I am going to ensure I get the pronunciation of all my players' names correct and ask if I'm not sure. After: I want to get back some honest feedback from parents and players about what more I can do to support them and make them feel included.

Review	I will record a reflective voice note after each coaching session about how I can improve. I will regularly check in with parents to ask for feedback.
Critical friend	I want my co-coach to do this with me so we will regularly check and challenge each other.

Discussion

Your answers to this activity will be personal to you – so there are no 'correct' answers, provided your suggested practice can be clearly connected to your learning from this course and the ARC principles you have been introduced to. This is a good opportunity to reflect a little more deeply about your commitment to anti-racism and in creating inclusive, welcoming spaces for young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds to be able to enjoy, be themselves and thrive thanks to the support you offer them.

It is also a useful exercise to drill down your learning from the course into one or two practical, achievable actions that you can implement to start to enhance your coaching practice – and to bring in some accountability to your pledge by drawing on a trusted colleague to help check and challenge your own progress.

The next section offers a summary of the session of the course.

6 Summary of Session 3

This session has explored the last three principles of the ARC model, all of which focus on influencing others to engage with and adopt anti-racist principles in their own practice. The role of an ARC influencer was introduced, whereby coaches who have become familiar with ARC and started to embed core principle in their own practice can act as critical friends to colleagues around them to help develop their coaching and to constructively review practice they may consider to be potentially discriminatory or exclusionary for some players. You then considered how a coach can help to create an anti-racist consciousness among their young players, encouraging and empowering them to develop their own anti-racist outlooks while also playing their part in creating a welcoming, supportive and thriving environment for their fellow players. Finally, it was considered how ARC can inform the wider organisational culture of a sports club – ensuring that anti-racist values are considered beyond just individual behaviours of coaches, support staff and players but more widely embedded within the club or organisation itself.

7 Course summary

Well done for completing this free Open Learn course. We hope you have found it valuable and thought provoking. The course has introduced you to the ARC (Anti-Racist Coaching) model, an evidence-based framework designed to help coaches create inclusive, welcoming and supportive experiences for ethnically diverse groups of participants. Across the three sessions, you have learned how adopting anti-racist principles can enhance coaching practice, while considering how a coach can influence others to embed anti-racist practice across sport settings.

Along the way you may have developed a deeper understanding of key concepts such as racism(s), anti-racism, cultural competence, equity and inclusion, and reflected on how these relate to sport. You examined the six principles of the ARC model and have been provided with several practical tips that coaches can use to develop their practice.

Having studied this course, you should now be able to:

- identify the benefits to coaches and participants of adopting anti-racist coaching practice
- compare anti-racist coaching practice with other types of coaching practice
- demonstrate a variety of ways to share anti-racist coaching practice with others
- identify the difference between non-racist and anti-racist positions in relation to coaching.

If you are a coach, or an aspiring coach, we hope that by completing the course you now feel confident and competent in coaching participants from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Developing one's ARC practice is an ongoing process that requires continual self-reflection and a willingness to bring new, different approaches to traditional sport coaching methods. Applying ARC principles can positively influence individuals, teams and wider sporting communities to foster sporting environments that are fair, inclusive and welcoming for all.

Tell us what you think! In the next section you will find a short course survey that should take 5 minutes to complete. We would love to hear what you think about the course and what impact it may have had on you. Thank you in advance.

Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short end-of-course survey. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

Where next?

If you've enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on OpenLearn.

Specifically, you might be interested in our Sport and Fitness Hub.

Interested in taking your learning further? Explore the OU's BSc (hons) Sport, fitness and coaching and BSc (hons) Sport and exercise science.

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Glossary

anti-racism

Refers to the active process of identifying and challenging racism in all its forms.

ethnically diverse

Refers to groups which are diverse in terms of ethnic background. This might include a sports team made up of players from Black, Asian, White and Latin American backgrounds.

pedagogy

Refers to the process of teaching and learning. There are models of pedagogy that exist which help educators to deliver classes effectively.

racism

Refers to the process of discriminating against an individual or a group based on their race, ethnicity, religion or cultural background. There are many different types of racism that exist which include overt, symbolic, institutional and systemic.

racially minoritised

Refers to the process whereby people are designated into groups according to ideas of 'race', often informed by negative stereotyping and leading to marginalisation. This is a socially constructed process that leads to power imbalances. This term recognises that certain racialised groups are minoritised within a UK context, but often make up a majority in global terms.

colour-blindness

Means downplaying a person's race or ethnic background and treating them the same as anyone else. Although this might appear the right thing to do, it ignores the role that race and ethnicity plays in shaping peoples' experiences, and the challenges they may encounter because of this. Therefore, by being colour-blind, it can act as a barrier against anti-racist action.

cultural competence

Relates to the ways in which an individual is able to understand and effectively interact with people from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. This is drawn from a genuine curiosity in learning about and valuing cultural differences.

equality

Refers to the equal treatment of people based on their rights, opportunities and status. In the UK, people are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

equity

Acknowledges that people, based on their identities and backgrounds, may not have the same experiences and opportunities as everyone else and therefore equitable practices attempt to account for this and try to level the playing field.

lived experience

The first-hand experiences people accumulate through their everyday lives that can give them knowledge and understanding about social life that others may not have

non-racism

Refers to the process of not actively identifying and challenging racism. In other words, someone who is ‘non-racist’ might oppose racism, but they do not actively do anything to stop it and are therefore complicit in its perpetuity.

ally

A person who expresses or takes action to support another person or group who are marginalised or discriminated against.

anti-racist consciousness

Means being actively conscious about ‘race’ and racism and taking action to end racial inequities in our daily lives.

cultural competence

Refers to a person’s ability to interact and develop relations with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

discrimination

Means unfair, biased and differential treatment of a person or group, often drawn from predjudice that leads to negative experiences and outcomes.

organisational culture

Refers to shared values, beliefs and assumptions that shape how people behave and interact within an organisation.