Inclusive Coaching for Multicultural Communities.



This fact sheet provides practical guidance for coaches, Associations and Clubs to create culturally safe, welcoming and inclusive coaching environments for participants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), migrant and refugee backgrounds.

By understanding the diverse experiences of participants and adapting coaching approaches, coaches can build confidence, foster belonging and create positive lifelong connections with netball.

WHY INCLUSIVE COACHING MATTERS

For many participants from multicultural backgrounds, netball may be their first experience of organised sport in Australia. A positive coaching experience can help participants:

- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Develop new skills
- Make friends and feel connected
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Build a sense of belonging within their community
- Continue participating in netball for life

Coaches are often the first point of contact with a netball organisation and play a critical role in creating welcoming and inclusive environments.

SUPPORTING COACHES

Associations and Clubs can empower coaches to deliver culturally inclusive experiences by:

- Developing participation programs that prioritise fun, learning and development over winning.
- Encouraging coaches to undertake inclusion and cultural capability training.
- Supporting coaches to complete Netball Australia Coaching Accreditation Pathways.
- Embedding inclusion into club values, policies and coaching expectations.
- Providing coaches with practical resources and mentoring to build confidence when working with diverse communities.

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COACHING MULTICULTURAL PARTICIPANTS

Coach the Person in Front of You

Every participant is unique.

Avoid making assumptions based on someone's culture, language or background. Take time to understand each participant's individual strengths, interests and support needs.

Good coaching principles remain the same—adapt your coaching style to suit the individual.

Keep Communication Simple

Many participants may be learning both netball and English at the same time.

Support understanding by:

- Using plain English
- Avoiding slang or sporting jargon
- Giving one instruction at a time
- Demonstrating activities visually
- Checking understanding before moving on

Visual demonstrations often communicate more effectively than lengthy explanations.

Create a Safe Environment to Ask Questions

Some participants may feel uncomfortable asking for help or admitting they do not understand.

Create opportunities to:

- Ask questions
- Seek clarification
- Practice skills without fear of judgement
- Learn at their own pace

Regularly check in with participants rather than waiting for them to approach you.

Coach with Empathy

Different life experiences may influence how participants engage with netball.

For example:

- Arriving late may reflect transport, work or family commitments rather than a lack of commitment.
- Difficulty applying skills during games may be due to limited previous sporting experience or unfamiliarity with structured competition.

Approach situations with curiosity, understanding and flexibility.

Focus on Fun and Belonging

Positive social experiences are one of the strongest reasons participants continue playing sport.

Include opportunities for:

- Team-building activities
- Partner work
- Small group games
- Social interaction
- Celebrating individual and team achievements

When participants feel connected, they are more likely to remain involved.

Continue Learning

Communities are the experts in their own experiences.

Seek opportunities to:

- Learn from multicultural organisations
- Connect with community leaders
- Listen to participant and family feedback
- Share experiences with other coaches

Developing cultural capability is an ongoing learning journey.

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INCLUSIVE COACHING PRINCIPLES

Simple coaching strategies can make a significant difference.

Create a Safe and Practicable Environment

Participants are more confident when they know what to expect.

Consider:

- Consistent session routines
- Clear expectations
- Structured activities
- Positive reinforcement
- Respectful interactions

Use Multiple Ways to Communicate

Support understanding through:

- Demonstrations
- Pictures or diagrams
- Hand Signals
- Whistle cues
- Visual markers
- Clear body language

Using different communication methods benefits all participants.

Give Clear Instructions

When explaining activities:

- Keep instructions short
- Demonstrate first
- Break activities into small steps
- Check understanding
- Repeat key messages where needed

Encourage Positive Participation

Use encouraging language that builds confidence.

Examples include:

- "Great effort"
- "Well done"
- "Let's try that together"
- "You're improving every week"

Celebrate effort, improvement and teamwork—not just performance.

Maintain Professional Boundaries

Coaches should always:

- Follow child safeguarding policies
- Maintain appropriate professional relationships
- Respect cultural and personal boundaries
- Seek consent where physical assistance may be required
- Avoid one-on-one situations outside authorised activities

Professional behaviour builds trust with participants and families.

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Practical Tips for Every Session

- Prepare visual demonstrations.
- Plan simple coaching messages.
- Learn participants' names.
- Understand any individual support needs.

During training:

- Demonstrate before explaining.
- Use encouraging language.
- Allow extra processing time.
- Regularly check understanding.
- Include everyone in activities.

After training:

- Acknowledge achievements.
- Speak with participants and families.
- Reflect on what worked well.
- Consider any adjustments for next session.

COMMON COACHING MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Assuming all participants understand English sporting terminology
- Speaking too quickly or giving multiple instructions at once
- Focusing only on winning
- Mistaking cultural differences for poor behaviour
- Waiting for participants to ask for help
- Assuming one coaching style suits everyone

KEY TAKEAWAY

Inclusive coaching is about coaching the individual, not their cultural background. By communicating clearly, coaching with empathy, creating welcoming environments and focusing on fun, learning and belonging, coaches can help every participant develop confidence, enjoy netball and feel valued as part of their netball community.