

Resource 40: Coaching people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

Everyone participates: Welcome

What coaches need to know

Research has identified that while many people from culturally diverse backgrounds have participated in sport in their own countries, it has often been in an unstructured setting.

The structure of an organised session may be unfamiliar to some individuals from CALD communities and often they will be eager to begin before you have had a chance to introduce yourself or explain the session. As with all sessions, try to be flexible and interact with the group in a less structured way.

You will encounter different levels of confidence and knowledge so ensure you talk to the group before the session in order to assess the competency level of the group.

Engage in conversations about what sports they have played before or how much they know about the specific activity – this will give you an indication of their skills and level of English.

Some newly arrived refugees may have experienced trauma or difficult circumstances before arriving in Australia. As with any group, patience and understanding are essential so that the young people can have a positive experience.

Some sports we play in Australia are not as widely played around the world, so if you are looking to engage CALD communities in sports that they have not traditionally been exposed to, you may like to organise the group to attend a local or state competition or show some video footage of the sport being played.

Remember members of CALD communities who have recently arrived in Australia face many competing responsibilities and challenges such as learning a new language, seeking employment and secure housing, cultural and religious activities and familiarising themselves with their new community. In dealing with this range of competing priorities it may be difficult to prioritise time for leisure and to participate in sport. As a result, don't be discouraged if participation numbers at your sessions fluctuate; keep communicating and work towards a mutual understanding and respect of the commitments of the participants and you as a coach.

What can you do?

Before the session

- Identify the group leaders or youth worker. Find out about the level of English of the group. Use lots of visual aids and demonstrations.
- Migrant or refugee young people, especially boys, have spent a lot of time playing sports like soccer and basketball. However, while they have the skills they may be unfamiliar with all the rules of the game.
- Think about the sizes of the groups you work with and be mindful that you may need to reduce the size when working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, or maybe get someone to help you.
- They may also not understand the role of the umpire or the officials, as this might be the first time they have played in a structured setting.
- While it's OK to be flexible, try not to modify the rules too much. People from culturally diverse backgrounds often don't want special treatment and want to participate like everyone else.
- Speak clearly and use words and language that is simple and easy to understand. Try not to 'dumb down' your language too much – just be yourself and people will respond.

- Ask questions to see if they have understood what you are explaining, but be aware that people from culturally diverse backgrounds may not feel comfortable about being tested or quizzed.
- In some cultures, women and girls are required to dress conservatively. Try to remember to schedule in extra drink breaks to combat heat and dehydration from heavy clothing and attire.
- Consult with the community and establish if separate sessions for the genders will support greater participation of boys and girls.
- If you have time before the session it's a good idea to write down key words and concepts that you will be using during your session. If you think that they may not be understood, think of alternative words or descriptions that you can use instead.

During the session

- If people are talking when you are demonstrating or explaining, it might be because they are translating for someone else. This is a good time to try some visual demonstrations.
- Sometimes even the best-planned session doesn't work. Use your knowledge and experience to constantly assess and change something that is not working. Don't be put off, keep the lines of communication open with the community with whom you are working.
- See if there are videos of game play or drills that you could show to demonstrate activities; or source coaching activity cards that have good visual representation of drills or plays.

After the session

- Ask the group leaders, workers or teachers how they felt the session went or if they have any suggestions.
- Gauge feedback from the participants both during and after the session.

Things to remember:

- make it visual
- be patient
- use simple language
- be flexible
- make it fun
- enjoy yourself
- ask questions
- understand the needs of the group you are working with.

Frequently asked questions

Do we need an interpreter?

There are many other ways to communicate other than language. Some participants may have English skills as they may have spent time in other English-speaking countries and may be able to support activities through translation.

Do we need to translate material?

Translated material would be helpful for parents but translations can be expensive. Just be prepared to give verbal instructions and explanations if necessary. There may be someone in the community or another person in the group that may be able to help translate.

Is it dangerous for women to wear the hijab (head scarf) when playing?

If your sport involves activity where there may be contact to the head (e.g. soccer vs. archery), let women and girls know *before the program begins* that they need to adjust their headscarf and tie them without pins, since pins may

result in injury. If it is the first session of the season, you might need to have hair elastics or ties available to assist this change. If it's an all-female environment the young women and girls may choose to remove their hijab.

Modified from sources with permission:

Australian Sports Commission 2010, *Running a session in a club*, www.ausport.gov.au

Centre for Multicultural Youth 2005, *Tip sheet no. 1: For coaches and trainers*, www.cmy.net.au

Developed in collaboration

Collaboration leader:

Sources:



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

