



PILLAR 3. POSITIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication is a skill that is fundamental to success in volleyball. We need to be able to communicate to each other on the court so that we work together as a team. However, communication off the court is just as important - we need to ensure that positive communication skills are practiced and embedded by everyone involved in volleyball so that we create a positive and supportive environment.

Research has shown that members of the sport community are less likely to seek help due to complex factors, such as gender, sport culture, and ethnocultural reasons (Van Slingerland et al, 2018 and 2019). It is therefore important that we create a volleyball community that acknowledges these potential barriers to help-seeking. This means identifying ways to better communicate at all levels from recreational to high performance volleyball and to reduce stigma so participants will feel comfortable and open to speaking freely about mental health and wellness the way they would any other health domain such as sport injury or nutrition, for example.

In this section, we introduce information and techniques to create positive communication skills. By teaching and modelling new ways of communicating, you can enhance open and authentic conversations and create a culture of positive support. As a result individuals are much more likely to seek and receive the help they need to overcome mental health issues.

Tools and Templates in this Pillar

- 3.1 Cultivating Empathetic Communication in Volleyball
- 3.2 Active Listening Skills – Listening to Understand



Next Steps

- ✓ Share these handouts with other leaders in your organisation - empathetic communication can be used at the Board table just as much as it can be used to athletes.
- ✓ Seek out further learning or training on empathetic listening if you would like to learn more or share with others in your organisation.
- ✓ Integrate practicing empathetic communication into coach or leadership training. Role play with each other on typical scenarios that come up on or off the court. Learn from each other about what works well or where changes might be needed.
- ✓ Encourage athletes to practice empathetic communication and active listening within the team environment. For example, set questions for team members to reflect upon and then share their answers in pairs, practicing techniques for empathetic communication and active listening. Reward and acknowledge techniques when you see them take place on and off the court.