



Portraits of GRS students/staff. Credit: Jonx Pillemer



SKILLZ COVID-19 RESPONSE CURRICULUM FACILITATION TIPS

- FACILITATION TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE SKILLZ COVID-19 RESPONSE CURRICULUM
- SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE FOR COACHES, PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, TEACHERS, PEERS, HEALTH WORKERS, AND MORE

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the SKILLZ team! A Grassroot Soccer SKILLZ Coach is a community health worker, teacher, parent, soccer coach, or anyone else who supports young people to develop the *skillz* to be resilient, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities. The presence of a caring adult relationship is the most important factor for building resilience in young people. By using the SKILLZ COVID-19 Response Curriculum, you are now a SKILLZ Coach and that caring role model for young people in your home or community.

The document below is intended to support SKILLZ Coaches to facilitate more effectively by sharing some common tips and tricks from GRS's experience. The first section, GRS's '11 BEs', outlines tips for how to be a great SKILLZ Coach and role model behavior that is supportive, engaging, and informed. The second section recognizes that many different people can be a SKILLZ Coach and offers a few supportive thoughts for different individuals when working with young people. The last section outlines tips for how to make the most of each session when facilitating the COVID-19 curriculum. We recognize that any curriculum can be facilitated in a hundred different ways, we're offering suggestions for how to make the most of your specific situation when facilitating the COVID-19 Curriculum. Most importantly, remember to stay safe, have fun, and be a game changer!

1. THE 11 BES

Tips for how to be a great SKILLZ Coach and role model behavior that is supportive, engaging, and informed.

1 | BE FLEXIBLE:

- **This curriculum is a tool that can be used in diverse contexts, through a variety of media and platforms, and for a wide range of audiences. You know your circumstances best. It is your job to understand how to most effectively utilize this tool. Flexibility and ingenuity are key! Consider new ideas, change plans when appropriate, and encourage and collaborate with players to implement creative solutions.**

- Adapt the practice as necessary to the medium or platform that is being used and to avoid physical contact or other preventative health measures.
- Innovate by modifying activities to make them more relevant to your context, audience, community, or players.
- When facilitating from the Coach's Guide, use alternative materials when suggested materials aren't available or the medium you're using requires you to do so.

2 | BE ENGAGING:

- **Whether at home, at a health facility, or in the community, bring excitement, energy, and enthusiasm to the practices. Your job is to bring the curriculum to life. Make it fun for yourself and players!**

- Open every practice with an energizer to get players excited! Remember to choose energizers that do not involve physical contact between players or can be easily facilitated through online platforms.
- Use different engagement and praise techniques to make everyone feel more relaxed and comfortable throughout the practice.

- If facilitating online, say/tag player's names as facilitating to keep players engaged, or think through other creative ways to maximize participation and engagement.
- If facilitating in person, ensure that all participants feel included and involved through arranging participants in a circle. Make eye contact with the players to remind them to focus. Smile and be friendly. Walk and stand next to the participants that are not focused.
- Use fun call-and-response techniques to engage the group, for example, "if you hear my voice - clap once, if you hear my voice - clap twice, now if you hear my voice - don't clap", "All set, You bet", "Chika - chika, boom - boom" or have players come up with their own. Discuss with players how these can be used if you're implementing through an online platform.
- Write key messages on pieces of paper, and give or send them in an SMS or WhatsApp to a few players before you start the practice. Signal when it's time to read or send the key message to the group. Have players creatively present the key messages to encourage participation.

3 | BE AN ELEPHANT:

- **An elephant has big ears and a small mouth—listen more than you speak! Listen to the real issues that young people are facing around COVID-19 and give them space and opportunity to have vital conversations with you, fellow players, family members, and friends about these issues.**

- Ask probing questions. Use your questions instead of your answers to guide players towards exploration, discussion, and learning.
- Be patient and comfortable with silence. It won't always be easy for players to answer questions right away.
- Count to 10 after asking a question to allow players to think and respond before you speak again. Re-word the question and ask again.
- Give time for participants to discuss and let players answer each other's questions before you speak and provide the answers in the guide.
- Don't feel the need to answer the question, but allow the participants time to answer it for themselves.

4 | BE AWARE:

- **This pandemic is evolving daily and your players will be experiencing a variety of emotions. Understand the background of your players and personal challenges they face. Regularly reflect on whether you are responding to their needs and whether you are being dependable, reliable, authentic, non-judgmental, and supportive.**

- Know and call players by their names.
- Show them that you are open to listening to them.
- Talk/call/SMS/WhatsApp/spend time with players individually before or after the session to build personal connections. Get to know your players, however, be aware and respectful of personal boundaries.
- Share your own experiences and stories.

5 | BE A REFEREE:

- **A referee makes the game safe, fair and fun for all players. Create a safe and engaging environment for everyone involved in the program. Create a “balanced playing field” where adolescents feel comfortable asking questions, advocating for themselves, and staying healthy.**

- When working with groups, make sure to adhere to all national and international guidance around COVID-19 including the spacing (2 metres) of the participants in your program, handwashing before and after practices, using alternative forms of greetings and ‘air’ highfives or foot-taps etc.
- Make sure participants are respecting each other.
- Make sure there is equal participation, praise players who are very actively participating and ask them nicely to let other players share so that everyone is part of the practice.

6 | BE A TEAM PLAYER:

- **Remember that you are a member of a team as well as the Coach.**

- Use language that is relatable and that players understand.
- Allow players to choose where and when they would like to meet or which platforms work best for them to access this information, whether it's SMS, phone calls, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger groups, etc.
- Treat them as equal partners who are critical to the success of the program and stopping the spread of COVID-19.
- Bring out your inner adolescent! Have fun and laugh with players.

7 | BE PREPARED:

- **Be prepared for every practice. COVID-19 is a new and evolving disease and guidelines and information are changing daily. Make sure that you are prepared with the most accurate and up-to-date information to share with your players before every practice.**

- Review the practice goals, schedule, and preparation sections in the curriculum before each practice.
- Read through the practice at least 2-3 times before facilitating.
- Practice facilitating the activities beforehand.
- Prepare all the materials before you facilitate the practice and prepare yourself with accurate information or links to information and services.
- Test out any technology that will be used during implementation of the practice.

8 | BE POSITIVE:

- **COVID-19 has come with a lot of uncertainty. Be positive and encourage players to remain upbeat and hopeful despite the uncertainty of the times. Use a strengths-based praise approach to build the self-efficacy and resiliency of your players. Build the confidence they need to invest in their health and well-being.**

- Continually celebrate players for positive behaviors by giving specific and targeted praise that has the potential to change the way players think about themselves.
- Create an environment of resiliency through focusing on positives and the tangible things that you and players can do to protect yourselves and the community from COVID-19.
- Always conclude the practice on a positive note to leave players motivated!

9 | BE FOCUSED:

- **When facilitating, ensure practice goals are achieved and keep discussions relevant and on-topic.**

- When facilitating with young people in person, turn your phone off and give the players your undivided attention.
- Actively listen to players to ensure their questions are answered and that they feel heard.
- If facilitating online, make sure that the group chat is utilized appropriately and is focused around the topic being presented.
- Always address and clarify misinformation that may be presented during an activity. However, do so in a way that is positive, continues to encourage participation, and supports participants' learning.

10 | BE A CAPTAIN:

- **As a Coach you must lead by example and role model positive behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

- Consider sharing personal stories of challenges you've overcome, what you've learned, and what players can learn from your past experiences.
- Role model prevention techniques (handwashing, coughing into elbow, cleaning surfaces, keeping distance) for COVID-19 both in and out of practice.

11 | BE REAL:

- **Allow your own personality to shine through and form authentic relationships built on honest and open communication. Use the curriculum as a guide, not as a script.**

- Add in probing questions to spark dialogue amongst your players.
- When you don't know the answer to something, be honest. Do research and respond later with accurate information.
- Contextualize the information to your community and the audience you are working with.

2. TIPS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF COACHES

This section provides some tips for the different types of Coaches who may be implementing this curriculum. Remember, no matter who you are, where you're from, how old you are, whether you're a master facilitator, or it's your first time using a curriculum – we are all learning! Just by picking up this resource, you're on your way to becoming a game changer in your family, community, and country and are contributing to stopping a global pandemic.

PEERS/NEAR-PEERS/YOUTH LEADERS

Knowledge is power! You know what young people need and want in this moment. Leverage your ability to relate to the experience of those you are working with to build trust and provide critical life skills and health education. Build strong personal connections that allow you to facilitate deeper and more honest levels of discussion to provide crucial support and build your players' confidence to make positive and healthy decisions.

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Take advantage of the fact that this time may allow you to spend more time with your family, children, and/or young people in your home. Allow this resource to help build and strengthen your relationships and get to know each other in a different way. Get creative! Write the key messages out and post them around your home to remind each other of how to stay healthy. Support each other by holding each other accountable for things like, staying at home, washing your hands, avoiding touching your face, etc. It doesn't need to be formal implementation: play fact/nonsense while eating dinner, shout and do WASH, WASH, WAVE before washing your hands or if someone forgets to wash their hands. Do deep breathing exercises before going to bed.

SPORTS COACHES

Grassroot Soccer believes wholeheartedly in the power of sport. Incorporate games and activities from your coaching toolbox that will complement the activities in the curriculum, get young people excited and energized, and provide relief during a time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety. Encourage young people to stay active to support their physical and mental well-being.

HEALTH WORKERS

Tap into your inner young person! Capitalize on your health expertise to answer questions and clarify myths and misconceptions young people may have about COVID-19. However, remember that not everyone has your training. Use language that is relatable and accessible to the audience you're working with. Be a source of accurate information, but don't be afraid to admit when you don't have the answer to something. COVID-19 is new and evolving every day, stay up to date with the most accurate information and guidelines.

TEACHERS

COVID-19 has forced us to change the way we teach and learn. Use this resource as an opportunity to engage students in a new and different way! Take your teaching experience and techniques into the facilitation of this curriculum. Support players to learn through asking open-ended questions, encourage them to discuss and find solutions themselves. Have fun with it – laugh and participate alongside your players.

EVERYONE

The most important thing is to have fun with it!

3. PRACTICE SPECIFIC FACILITATION TIPS

The following section highlights best practices and key facilitation tips for each practice in the curriculum.

PRACTICE 1: KNOW THE GAME

- > If this practice is being facilitated in person or via video, it should be done using ‘FACT/NONSENSE’ cards. The use of a prop makes the activity more engaging, fun, and therefore, memorable for players. Have players make their own at home.
- > As much as possible, ask follow-up questions to spark discussion with players about the ‘FACT/NONSENSE’ statements and how they relate to their lives and community.
- > If pressed for time, do not facilitate every statement. Pick out statements that will allow you to hit the following key topics:
 - Transmission
 - Symptoms
 - Prevention
 - Supporting each other
- > The key learning objective from each statement (1 - 12 in order as the curriculum):
 - 1. This is a warm up statement to get players comfortable with the ‘FACT/NONSENSE’ activity, sharing their opinions and having dialogue.
 - 2. Highlight that while COVID-19 and the flu have similar symptoms, COVID-19 is new, more severe and contagious, and could have worse consequences if not handled properly.
 - 3. Emphasize how a person can transmit or contract COVID-19 and debunk any myths or misconceptions about the transmission of COVID-19.
 - 4. Make players understand that everyone is at risk for contracting COVID-19. Do not scare participants, rather, encourage young people to recognize how important it is to stay healthy for themselves and others and their role in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

- 5. Encourage players to support themselves and those who may be more vulnerable to maintain their overall health and well-being. Support each other!
 - 6. Focus on the ‘Do the Five’ resource for preventing COVID-19. Discuss some of the challenges of implementing the ‘five’ in their daily lives and develop ways to overcome them.
 - 7. Relate this statement back to the previous statement. COVID-19 can be asymptomatic which is why it is so important to ‘Do the Five’ as discussed in the previous statement.
 - 8. It is crucial for you to know and share the services that are and are not available in the community you are working.
 - 9. Highlight that we can only stop the spread of COVID-19 if we all work together. Get participants thinking and discussing how they can support each other around COVID-19, but also, the other challenges in their lives still exist during this time and how they can overcome those.
 - 10. Have participants reflect on how COVID-19 relates to sexual and reproductive health. COVID-19 is not categorized as a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), but because sexual acts often involve close physical contact between people it increases the risk of transmission.
 - 11. Discuss mental well-being during this time and reassure participants that it is ok to have a range of emotions during this time.
 - 12. END ON A POSITIVE NOTE!! We can stop the spread of COVID-19.
- > Always address the key information from each statement, read through all the key messages, and present the ‘Do the Five’ flip chart.

PRACTICE 2: WASH YOUR HANDS

- > If facilitating remotely, take a picture or video of you washing hands.

PRACTICE 3: FOCUS

- > Don’t rush to the main activity. Make sure to focus on the warm-up breathing exercise to support participants to learn breathing techniques that can help mental well-being.
- > Create a buddy system with players to avoid face touching. Partner players and have them hold each other accountable to bring awareness for when one touches their face to help reduce face touching.
- > Remind participants that it is ok if your mind wanders during this activity. This type of exercise may be new, and we are all learning and practicing together.
- > Make sure it is clear that it is not a race to count to 60. It is a competition to see who can count most accurately to 60 seconds versus a stopwatch.

CONTACT

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS

- > Let us know if you need any help. We will regularly update the SKILLZ COVID-19 RESPONSE curriculum. We would love to learn how you are using it and get your feedback on how we can make it better.

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