

# COACHES NOTES - INTRO



At Buddy Check for Jesse we believe that coaches are youth leaders and can play a significant role beyond teaching the skills and strategy of your sport. You also contribute to character-building and have an incredible opportunity to impact your players' perception of the importance of their personal mental health and the mental health of their teammates.

## COACH

**C - Community.** You have a positive impact on the athletes you lead in your **COMMUNITY**.

**O - Observe.** You **OBSERVE** your athletes for their *visible* and *invisible* gifts and challenges.

**A - Atmosphere.** You promote an open and transparent **ATMOSPHERE** surrounding mental health.

**C - Care.** You show your athletes that you **CARE** about them beyond their athletic pursuit.

**H - Health.** You promote the importance of *physical* and *emotional* **HEALTH**.

Your position as a youth leader imparts on you a level of wisdom and respect from your players, and that is something we hope you never take for granted. Realize that as a coach, you are in a position to easily enhance young lives with information and knowledge extending beyond the skills of the sport.

Your athletes need to know that you care about them and because you're "Coach", the position you have to educate your athletes that mental health challenges can affect anyone at any time is incredibly important.

As a Coach, we hope that you'll help encourage your players to keep a supportive eye out for each other.

Youth are sponges for information and are inherently caring, emotional, and intelligent. We can add to their emotional intelligence by briefly discussing a topic that will, ultimately, be one of the most important aspects of their lives now and in the future—Mental Health.

Passing on a message about mental health can plant a seed in your athlete's brain that can grow in a positive, accepting and understanding direction. Simply talking about this subject can be an enormous relief to many athletes you will coach. We know this as fact based on feedback we have received from coaches, youth, sport associations, governing bodies, and families who have reached out to us at Buddy Check for Jesse.

Your Buddy Check Talk does not require you to be a mental health expert in any way. We are simply asking that you open the door to mental health conversations with your athletes and encourage them to "Buddy Check" one another.

Don't overthink what you are going to discuss. The chat a coach has with their players need not be intimidating.

Our best tip? Be open, authentic and lead by example. If you are open to having these conversations, so will your athletes.

During your chat, we'd love to encourage you to incorporate the color green in your practice, game, tournament, etc. Green tape and/or shoelaces are simple and inexpensive ways to show your support for mental health and they're also easily found!

Our **customized green wristbands and bag tags** are very popular (we can assist with ordering these - just ask). Please also reach out to us at BCFJ for other ideas.

Choose something that works for your athletes/sport. Uniting through the color green gives the athletes a sense of camaraderie and alerts others to the importance of mental health.

Feel free to read directly from the downloadable coach chats or customize the chat for your age group/athlete profile and share some of your own or your coaching staffs' personal experiences. For younger players (generally < 10), the message can be a simple one about teamwork, anti-bullying, and remaining "positive" with the color green being symbolic of that.

Choose whatever time you feel works best for your team to deliver your message. This may be prior to a game, match, or during a practice session. The impact is more meaningful when delivered in person. **The time required to have an impact is 10-15 minutes!**

## HELPING COACHES SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH