

Getting your message across

When we need to get our message across, we often think carefully about what we want to say. What we should be thinking about is what we want people to hear.

Whether speaking to the people you coach, addressing your coaching team or talking to parents, you want, and need, to say the right thing so that the other person **understands your point of view**.

To do that, you'll need to consider the following points.

Who is your audience?

When your message is **tailored to the people you're speaking to**, you're more likely to get your message across.

Consider:

- What do they want to hear?
- What do they care about?
- Why are they here?

The words and tone in which you deliver are also important. Think about who you're planning to talk to. What will they be expecting and what do they need?

What's your message?

Be prepared and **write down the key points and messages** that you want to make. Consider the rule of three: a maximum of three things and three points to support them. A brainstorm of everything you think they want or need to know is a good

starting point.

Have a go

Highlight these into themes and sub messages, then rank them into an order and select the top three.

You can reinforce your message by highlighting your top three. That's the power of three.

How do you reach them?

Once you have considered the message, how your audience receives it is even more important. It's best to avoid big words and coaching jargon. With the people you coach, you should **only be introducing cues or terms that they are familiar with** or that will be used going forward.

It's also important to be specific with what you're saying and **ensure that the message is clear.**

Consider

Stories can be useful here as people are more likely to remember a story than facts. They can also connect with the emotion and event. But if you use a story, ensure that it is relevant to the people you are speaking to.

Make the message **come alive.** When the message is personal, you have a better **opportunity to connect and engage** with your audience. Involve them and **check for understanding** – never just assume. Checking for understanding can be as simple as a

show of hands, asking them to repeat what they have heard or discuss in groups what it means to them. A feedback loop is essential.

When speaking to the people you coach, **consider the context**: is the conversation a welcome meeting? Team talk? Before a competition? A post-event debrief? How will this influence the time you have, visuals you may use and your approach to delivering the message? Remember, you are aiming for maximum impact.

Making an impact

It's a good idea to practice delivering your message in advance. Knowing the outline and key messages in order will **give you confidence and will help you stay on track and clear** if you're interrupted, or something impacts on your meeting.

When you **practice**, do so out loud. You might even want to consider recording it so that you can hear it as your audience would. Consider the pace, pauses, key words and duration.

Also **consider the actions and mannerisms** you will use, as you want them to add to the message, not detract from it. Remember what it is you want them to 'hear', 'see' or 'feel.' Develop a pre-performance routine so that you are clear on your approach.

Consider

Messages are not just information: get to your point quickly and use the information to support these rather than lead with them.

If you're **using a presentation or similar visual**, try and use images, key words or a few bullet points maximum. Your audience are there to hear you and focus on you, and the visuals are there to add to your presentation, not to provide a distraction.

If you're **using media footage**, don't talk over the footage, and possibly play it a few times before following up with your questions or messages.