Transformational Coaching Workshop: Applying a Person-Centred Approach to Coach Development Programs

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It is well established that coach learning and athlete outcomes can be enhanced through participation in Coach Development Programs (CDPs). Researchers advocate that the quality of CDPs can be improved by: (a) placing a greater emphasis on facilitating coaches’ interpersonal behaviours (Lefebvre, Evans, et al., 2016), (b) using appropriate and systematic evaluation frameworks to guide the evaluation of interpersonally-focused CDPs (Evans et al., 2015), and (c) incorporating behaviour change theories into the design and implementation of these CDPs (Allan et al., 2017). In doing so, the relevance of CDP content and the uptake of this content among coaching practitioners may be enhanced. Transformational leadership theory provides a valuable guiding framework for designing CDPs that aim to promote positive development in youth sport. Thus, the goal of the present paper is to outline the development of a novel, evidence-informed CDP: The Transformational Coaching Workshop and to provide practical strategies for the implementation of this workshop.

Keywords: coach development, transformational leadership, youth sport, Positive Youth Development

Effective coaches play a vital role in facilitating athlete development. Previous research demonstrates that the interactions that occur between effective coaches and their athletes can have important implications for athlete development, including their performance, participation, and personal development (Côté, Turnnidge, & Vierimaa, 2016). Côté and Gilbert (2009) propose that coaching effectiveness is comprised of three key elements: (a) coaches’ knowledge/behaviour, (b) the outcomes that result from the consistent application of that knowledge/behaviour, and (c) the specific context in which coaching occurs. Within this definition, coaches’ knowledge/behaviour represents the integration of professional (e.g., sport-specific/teaching), interpersonal (e.g., relational), and intrapersonal (e.g., capacity for introspection and reflection) knowledge that is manifested by coaches’ behaviours in specific settings (e.g., practice, competition, etc.). Athletes’ developmental outcomes are conceptualized by the 4 C’s (competence, confidence, connection, and character) and coaching contexts refers to a typology of coaching environments that are determined by the age and competitive level of the athletes.

Coaching Effectiveness

A central issue within the field of coaching is how to enable coaches to express effective coaching knowledge/behaviour through their interactions with their athletes. One way researchers and practitioners have attempted to address this issue is with Coach Development Programs (CDPs). CDPs refer to systematically applied learning activities that are designed to change coaches’ behaviours through education, social interaction, and/or personal reflection (Evans, McGuckin, Gainforth, Bruner, & Côté, 2015). CDPs play a vital role in educating coaches on a variety of topics, including skill acquisition, instructional planning, and athlete development (Lefebvre, Evans, Turnnidge, Gainforth, & Côté 2016).

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Coach Development Programs

A recent review conducted by Lefebvre, Evans, et al. (2016), generated a classification system that enables researchers and practitioners to assess what forms of coaching knowledge/behaviour (i.e., professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) are being targeted by existing CDPs. In their examination of 285 CDPs, results indicated that the clear majority (n = 261) of CDPs focused on coaches’ professional knowledge/behaviour, including technical and tactical skills. Eighteen CDPs primarily emphasized coaches’ interpersonal knowledge/behaviour (e.g., leadership, team-building), while only six CDPs focused on intrapersonal knowledge/behaviour (e.g., reflection, self-regulation). Overall, the results indicate that the overwhelming majority of existing CDPs focus on facilitating coaches’ professional knowledge/behaviour. Conversely, coaches’ interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge/behaviour remain underrepresented within the field of coach education. Lefebvre, Evans, et al. (2016), posited that one possible explanation for the dominance of professional knowledge may be that technical and tactical coaching skills better align with a more traditional conceptualization of coaching effectiveness in which skill development and athletic performance are the primary desired outcomes.

CDPs that focus on coaches’ professional knowledge/behaviour have provided researchers and practitioners with a wealth of information on various aspects of coaching behaviours, including what professional knowledge/behaviours are exhibited by effective coaches, how these behaviours are shaped by coach, athlete, and situational variables, and how these behaviours can facilitate athletes’ development in sport (Erickson & Gilbert, 2013). Nonetheless, while professional knowledge/behaviours are an important aspect of the coaching process, it is important to recognize that they are not reflective of the full range of behaviours exhibited by effective coaches.

In line with this assertion, Côté and Gilbert (2009) suggest that an integral element of coaching effectiveness relates to a coach’s ability to develop high-quality relationships with others. Moreover, the quality of coaches’ relationships with their athletes can have important implications for the outcomes that athletes derive from their sport participation, including athletes’ perceptions of satisfaction with training and performance (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011), intrinsic motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010), and passion for sport (Lafrènière, Jowett, Valerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008). Numerous questions remain, however, regarding how interpersonal knowledge/behaviour should be addressed within CDPs. It may consequently be worthwhile for researchers to draw upon different theoretical frameworks both to explore the interpersonal dimension of coach-athlete interactions and to design effective, interpersonally-focused CDPs.

Recently, researchers have made considerable strides in addressing this gap in coach development. CDPs grounded in prominent psychological theories such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Achievement Goal Theory (AGT; Nicholls, 1989) have been developed to educate coaches on the interpersonal qualities of coach-athlete interactions, such as autonomy-support, mastery-orientation, and empowering climate (e.g., Duda, 2013; Smith & Smoll, 1997). For instance, Smith, Smoll, and Cumming’s (2007) Mastery Approach to Coaching program educates coaches on behavioural strategies (e.g., providing encouragement and minimizing the use of punishment) that can be used to create optimal sport environments for athlete development. Collectively, these CDPs illustrate how interpersonal theories can be integrated into coach education to shed new light on effective, interpersonally-focused coaching behaviours and their influence on athlete development.

While such interpersonally-focused CDPs have greatly contributed to our understanding of effective interpersonal coaching knowledge/behaviours and how coaches can be trained to develop these behaviours, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of existing CDPs. Evans and colleagues (2015) explored the extent to which published articles describing interpersonally-focused CDPs reported on the evaluation process, as conceptualized by the RE-AIM framework (i.e., Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance; Glasgow, Vogt, & Boles, 1999). Results suggested that the translation of these interpersonal CDPs into applied practice might be limited by the fact that the dimensions of this evaluation framework were not well-reported within the literature.

Building upon these findings, Allan and colleagues (2017) investigated if and how behaviour change theories and techniques have been employed to inform the design and evaluation of interpersonally-focused CDPs. Findings demonstrated that behaviour change theories were inconsistently and infrequently applied among the 29 CDPs included in their review. Moreover, results revealed an apparent disconnect between the behaviours change constructs targeted by CDPs (e.g., motivation) and the techniques that were chosen to influence the behaviour change process. Allan and colleagues (2017) thus propose that it may be worthwhile for researchers and practitioners to examine how behaviour change theories and techniques can be incorporated into the design and evaluation of interpersonally-focused CDPs.

Collectively, recent reviews of the coach education literature (Allan et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2015; Lefebvre, Evans, et al., 2016) reveal that there is a need for CDPs that are: (a) focused on coaches’ interpersonal knowledge/behaviour, (b) grounded in theory, with regards to interpersonal and behaviour change theories, and (c) systematically evaluated. In an effort to address these gaps in the current coaching field, the aim of the present paper is to outline the development of a new, evidence-informed CDP grounded in Transformational Leadership (TFL) theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006): The
Transformational Coaching Workshop (TCW). In this paper we first provide a brief overview of TFL theory and how this theory can be a valuable foundation for an interpersonally-focused CDP. We then discuss the process of developing a leadership-based training program for the sport context, with a focus on how the development process was informed by the principles of integrated knowledge mobilization. In the main sections of the paper we then provide a description of (a) the content and structure of the TCW and (b) recommendations and practical strategies for implementing the workshop. Finally, future directions regarding the evaluation and dissemination of the TCW are discussed.

Guiding Theoretical Framework: TFL Theory

Before describing the development process of the TCW, it is important to first understand the theoretical framework upon which it is based: TFL theory. TFL theory represents a follower-centred approach to the leadership process, in which leaders (i.e., coaches) aim to develop followers (i.e., athletes) into future leaders by using empowering and inspiring behaviours. A dominant conceptualization of TFL (please see Avolio, 1999; Barling, 2014; Bass & Riggio, 2006 for detailed reviews of TFL) suggests that it is comprised of four dimensions, referred to as the 4 Is: Idealized influence (coaches gain their athletes’ trust and respect by acting as positive role models), inspirational motivation (coaches inspire athletes with a compelling vision of the future by fostering perceptions of meaning and team unity), intellectual stimulation (coaches encourage critical thinking and creativity by engaging athletes in the learning process), and individualized consideration (coaches show genuine care and concern for each athlete’s unique needs and abilities). Please see Table 1 for a more complete description of each of these dimensions and associated coaching behaviours.

While there are several laudable leadership theories that could be effectively incorporated into CDPs, TFL theory was selected as the guiding interpersonal theory for this CDP for several reasons. First, with its follower-centred origins and emphasis on followers’ performance and personal development, TFL theory complements one of the fundamental aims of effective coaching: To facilitate an athlete’s acquisition of positive developmental outcomes (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Second, there are numerous studies across a variety of domains (e.g., business, education, health care, military, and sport) demonstrating both the potential benefits of TFL and

Table 1 Dimensions of Transformational Coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Coaching Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example Coaching Behaviours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>Coaches gain athlete trust and respect by acting as a positive role model and following a consistent set of values</td>
<td>Discussing or modelling prosocial values and behaviours (e.g., respect, teamwork, compassion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>Coaches inspire athletes by clarifying expectations and by fostering perceptions of team unity, meaning, and challenge</td>
<td>Discussing goals and expectations (e.g., discussing short- and long-term goals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>Coaches provide opportunities for athletes to actively engage in the coaching process</td>
<td>Expressing confidence in athletes’ capabilities (e.g., providing encouragement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>Coaches show genuine care and concern for the unique needs and abilities of each athlete</td>
<td>Eliciting athlete input (e.g., asking questions, challenging assumptions)</td>
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The mechanisms by which transformational leaders can positively influence their followers’ development (Turnnidge & Côté, 2016a). Given that a key goal of the current project was to create an evidence-informed CDP, it was beneficial to be able to draw upon such a substantial body of evidence.

Furthermore, researchers have explored the viability of TFL in the sport environment with promising results. Evidence exists to suggest that TFL behaviours can be linked with both positive individual and group level outcomes, including athlete satisfaction, effort, intrinsic motivation, performance, psychological well-being, and group cohesion (Arthur, Woodman, Ong, Hardy, & Ntoumanis, 2011; Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, & Hardy, 2009; Charbonneau, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001; Rowold, 2006; Sterling & Tafvelin, 2014). Moreover, results suggest that coaches’ and peers’ TFL behaviours are associated with positive outcomes in the youth sport context (e.g., Price & Weiss, 2013; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013a). For instance, Vella and colleagues (2013a) found that higher ratings of coach transformational leadership behaviours were linked with the development of personal and social skills, cognitive skills, goal setting, and initiative. Therefore, the potential for TFL behaviours to facilitate positive athlete outcomes parallels its influence in other contexts, such as physical education, organizations, and health care (see Turnnidge & Côté, 2016a for a review).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, previous research suggests that TFL behaviours can be effectively taught and developed through training interventions (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Beauchamp, Barling, & Morton, 2011). Moreover, such training interventions have positively contributed to followers’ development in both adult (Barling et al., 1996) and youth (Beauchamp et al., 2011) populations. Overall, it is evident that TFL has the potential to serve as a valuable theoretical foundation for the development of interpersonally-focused CDPs. The following sections of this paper are used to outline how TFL was integrated into the design of a new CDP: The TCW, as well as describe the content and structure of this workshop.

The Development Process of the TCW

One of the central aims in developing the TCW was to facilitate the uptake of this CDP in real-world settings. As such, the research team worked together with community partners throughout the development process to create a workshop that could be effectively applied by both researchers and coach developers. To this end, the development process was structured around five principles of effective knowledge mobilization (Martin-Ginis et al., 2012): (a) knowing the audience and the issues, (b) identifying credible messengers, (c) creating audience-specific messages and practices, (d) selecting effective methods for conveying messages, and (e) evaluating the product.

Principle 1: Knowing the Audience and the Issues

This principle was first addressed through a series of systematic reviews of relevant literature and resources (Allan et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2015; Lefebvre, Evans, et al., 2016; Turnnidge & Côté, 2016a) to ensure that the development process of this novel workshop took into consideration the current gaps that exist in the coach development and TFL literature. This principle was also addressed by: (a) the development of a systematic observational instrument to measure coaches’ leadership behaviours within the sport environment (Turnnidge & Côté, 2016b), (b) observational studies assessing coaches’ use of leadership behaviours in their interactions with their athletes and the influence of these behaviours on athletes’ development (Lefebvre, Turnnidge, & Côté, 2016), (c) stimulated recall interviews examining coaches’ (McGuckin, Bruner, Turnnidge, & Côté, 2016) and athletes’ perceptions of effective coach leadership behaviours, and (d) a mixed-methods study investigating coaches’ perceptions of the various barriers and facilitators to implementing Transformational Coaching behaviours (Rochon, Turnnidge, Cowburn, O’Connor, & Côté, 2017).

Target Audience. The TCW is targeted toward youth sport coaches working with athletes between the ages of 12–18. The workshop is designed for coaches from a diverse range of youth sport contexts, including multiple sport types (e.g., individual, team, etc.), competitive orientations (e.g., performance and participation-oriented; Côté & Gilbert, 2009), and athlete demographics (e.g., gender, SES, etc.). As such, most of the examples provided in the workshop (videos, quotes, stories, etc.) are representative of the youth sport context. Nevertheless, it is important to note that some of the community partners and organizational stakeholders provided feedback so that the workshop could be adapted for higher age groups and competitive levels (e.g., varsity sport coaches, high performance coaches, etc.).

Principle 2: Identifying Credible Messengers

The second principle was addressed via meetings with community partners and stakeholders (e.g., provincial and national sport and coaching associations) throughout the development process. Community partners from a wide range of sport organizations were engaged in several ways (e.g., providing documents and acting as key informants) to ensure that the content and structure of the workshop could be delivered in an effective manner. Qualitative interviews were also conducted with youth sport coaches to identify preferred and credible sources of leadership and coaching information (Rochon et al., 2017).
Principle 3: Creating Audience-Specific Messages and Practices

Drawing upon what the research team had learned regarding coaches’ current leadership behaviours, their perceived barriers and facilitators to implementing these behaviours, and their recommendations for designing effective CDPs (e.g., Lefebvre, Turnnidge, et al., 2016; McGuckin et al., 2016), the TCW was created. These findings also helped the team create sport-specific content for the workshop, such as background information, examples, practical advice, and follow-up resources. Importantly, the content and structure of the workshop was informed by both empirical evidence from the coaching literature (e.g., Allan, Turnnidge, Vierimaa, Davis, & Côté, 2016; Becker, 2009; Erickson, Côté, Hollenstein, & Deakin, 2011; Erickson & Côté, 2016; Turnnidge, Côté, Hollenstein, & Deakin, 2014) and meetings with community partners and stakeholders.

To enhance the relevance of the workshop to a wide audience, the sport-specific messages and practices were informed by empirical findings and community stakeholders from a myriad of sport contexts (i.e., competitive and recreational sports; individual and team sports; male, female, and coed sports; and able-bodied and disability sport contexts). Further, the development of audience-specific messages and practices was facilitated through various pilot tests that were conducted throughout the development process. Small-sample pilots of the workshop were offered to a wide range of stakeholder groups (e.g., coaching and sport associations, coach developers, researchers, and coaches) across several contexts (e.g., a variety of sport types, coach and athlete characteristics, and sport systems, including audiences from North America, Europe, and Asia). Feedback from these pilot tests helped the research team refine the specific content and structure of the workshop, including content delivery, interactive activities, and examples. In general, participants indicated that this workshop offers coaches a unique educational experience that could foster their own development as a coach and ultimately facilitate positive athletes’ growth through sport.

Principle 4: Selecting Effective Methods for Conveying Messages

With regards to the fourth principle, the content and structure of the workshop was informed by the preferences of community partners and coaches, as well as by behaviour change theories. To this end, the Behaviour Change Wheel framework (BCW; Michie, Atkins, & West, 2014), was used as a guide to select the appropriate intervention functions, mechanisms of action, and behaviour change techniques of the workshop. The BCW framework represents a synthesis of 19 behaviour change theories and has been effectively employed to design and examine a wide range of behaviour change interventions, such as understanding general practitioners’ use of cardiovascular risk assessment strategies (Bonner et al., 2013) and recycling behaviours (Gainforth, Sheals, Atkins, Jackson, & Michie, 2016). Please note that it is beyond the scope of the current paper to adequately discuss the behaviour change theories underpinning the design and implementation of the workshop and thus the present paper focuses more specifically on the content and application of the workshop.

One of the strengths of the BCW is that it identifies the elements of the behaviours that are most relevant to intervention design using the COM-B (Michie, van Stralen, & West, 2011) model. The COM-B model suggests that there are three essential ingredients for changing behaviour: (a) Capability (i.e., the physical or psychological capacity to perform the behaviour), (b) Opportunity (i.e., factors from the physical or social environment that may influence behaviours, such as time, resources, or social support), and (c) Motivation (i.e., the automatic or reflective processes that influence behaviours). The BCW also provides guidance regarding the intervention functions (e.g., education, environmental restructuring) that can be used to influence participants’ perceptions of capability, opportunity, and motivation, as well as appropriate behaviour change techniques (Abraham, Good, Huedo-Medina, Warren, & Johnson, 2012).

In applying the BCW to the development of the TCW, a mixed-methods study was conducted to assess youth sport coaches’ perceptions of their capability, opportunity, and motivation to perform Transformational Coaching behaviours. Findings revealed that a perceived lack of opportunity was a key factor inhibiting coaches from using Transformational Coaching behaviours (Rochon et al., 2017; please note that full results of this study are forthcoming). Psychological capability and reflective motivation processes were also identified by coaches as important targets for the workshop. Using these results and a matrix of COM-B constructs mapped against the BCW’s intervention functions (Michie et al., 2014), the intervention functions most likely to be effective in enhancing Transformational Coaching behaviours were identified. Appropriate behaviour change techniques were then selected through both a review of the literature and consultations with community partners. Lastly, the content and structure of the workshop was assessed by both researchers and community partners in relation to factors such as its affordability, practicality, effectiveness, acceptability, side-effects/safety, and equity (i.e., the APEASE criteria; Michie et al., 2014).

Principle 5: Evaluating Effectiveness of the Workshop

Evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop was addressed by using the RE-AIM framework as a guide for the design, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of the TCW. This framework has been effectively used to plan behaviour change interventions and to enhance the dissemination of evidence-informed initiatives to diverse
populations in community settings (Gaglio, Shoup, & Glasgow, 2013; Klesges, Estabrooks, Dzewaltowski, Bull, & Glasgow, 2005; Ory, Mier, Sharkey, & Anderson, 2007). Despite the RE-AIM framework’s potential utility for intervention research, this framework has received limited attention within the coaching literature (Evans et al., 2015). It is important to note that studies addressing the evaluation of the TCW are currently underway and will continue until the end of 2019. A discussion of these studies is provided in the Next Steps section of the current paper.

Content of the TCW

Whereas in the previous section we provide a description of the development process of the TCW, in the following sections we outline the content and structure of the workshop. Overall, the TCW is designed to enhance coaches’ leadership skills, and ultimately improve the quality of their interpersonal relationships. A formalized, facilitated workshop approach was selected as an appropriate mode of delivery because previous research indicates that formal coach education programs can be effective when they are adapted to reflect the interpersonal nature of the coaching process (Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald, & Côté, 2008; Lefebvre, Evans, et al., 2016).

The TCW was informed by previous TFL training interventions conducted in organizational (Barling et al., 1996), physical education (Beauchamp et al., 2011), and sport (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013b) settings. Drawing upon Kelloway and Barling’s (2000) recommendations for developing TFL-based interventions, the TCW emphasizes demonstrating what Transformational Coaching behaviours look like in practice and creating opportunities to reflect on, practice, and receive feedback on specific Transformational Coaching behaviours.

This half-day (4-hr) workshop enhances coaches’ understanding of themselves as a leader and helps them develop leadership skills that can foster athlete development. The workshop is comprised of interactive and reflective activities that increase coaches’ understanding of the principles of Transformational Coaching and their ability to develop strategies for implementing Transformational Coaching behaviours in their own coaching practice. In addition, the workshop provides coaches with an opportunity to develop action plans for positively changing their leadership behaviours.

Introductory Activities

The TCW begins with several introductory activities, including an introduction of the facilitators and their backgrounds, the objectives of the workshop, and the topics to be discussed. Participants are also provided with the opportunity to introduce themselves, including their coaching background and their reasons for participating in the workshop. These activities are implemented as a part of the trust and rapport building process between both the facilitators and the participants and the participants themselves. Further, these activities are important to ensure that participants feel comfortable to share their experiences with the facilitators and peers.

During the introductory activity component, participants are asked to participate in a Stand by your quote ice breaker activity, in which participants walk around to look at well-known leadership quotes that are posted around the room and to then stand by the quote which resonates most with their own perceptions of leadership. The leadership quotes are selected from a variety of domains, including sport, politics, and business. This activity is intended to provide participants with an opportunity to discuss the concept of leadership in sport and to reflect on how these quotes apply to their own coaching experiences. Moreover, this activity fosters informal discussions between participants and between the facilitators and the participants.

Coaching Effectiveness

Following the introductory activities, participants are asked to reflect on the concept of coaching effectiveness and more specifically, on what criteria should be used to assess whether a coach is effective. Participants are then introduced to Côté and Gilbert’s (2009) definition of coaching effectiveness in sport (as previously discussed) and the three key elements of coaching effectiveness: (a) coaches’ professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge/behaviours, (b) athletes’ developmental outcomes (i.e., the 4 C’s), and (c) specific coaching contexts. This section on coaching effectiveness provides the participants with an opportunity to understand the importance of coaches’ interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge/behaviours and to illustrate the potential contribution of these knowledge/behaviours to athlete development.

Leadership in Sport

The next section of the workshop focuses on how a leadership perspective can serve as a useful lens for understanding effective interpersonal knowledge/behaviours. In this section, coaches critically reflect on the concept of leadership, the potential influence of leadership on athlete outcomes, and their own leadership behaviours. One of the central elements of this section is the Best/Worst Coach Activity. For this activity, coaches critically reflect on the behaviours of the most effective and least effective coaches in their experiences and the behaviours that differentiated these coaches from all others. Participants are asked to both write down these behaviours and to share their experiences with the group. An example discussion question for this activity is: “How do these behaviours relate to the different forms of coaching knowledge/behaviours outlined in the coaching effectiveness (i.e., professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge/behaviours)?” Lastly, participants are introduced to a version of the full-range leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).
model that has been adapted to the sport context. This model conceptualizes leadership along two axes: One ranging from not engaged to engaged and the other ranging from ineffective to effective (see Bass & Riggio, 2006 for a review). The key aim of this section is to broaden participants’ perceptions of coaching leadership and to illustrate how their own sport experiences, as well as the sport experiences of their athletes, have been influenced by different leadership behaviours.

**Toxic, Laissez-Faire, Neutral, and Transactional Coaching**

For each of these leadership styles, participants are provided with a broad definition, associated coaching behaviours, and video examples. Facilitators also engage in an interactive discussion with participants on several aspects of these leadership styles, including the potential influence of these behaviours on athlete outcomes, facilitators and barriers to using these behaviours, as well as participants’ own experiences of these behaviours.

**Transformational Coaching**

The next section of the workshop introduces the participants to the principles of Transformational Coaching. More specifically, this section involves (a) an overview of Transformational Coaching, (b) a discussion of common myths associated with Transformational Coaching, and (c) a review of the empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Transformational Coaching and the mechanisms through which Transformational Coaching behaviours can positively influence athlete development.

**Transformational Coaching: The 4 I’s.** This section represents the central focus of the TCW. In this section, participants are introduced to the four dimensions of Transformational Coaching: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration (collectively referred to as the 4 I’s). For each dimension of the 4 I’s, participants are provided with an overview of the concept, a detailed description of coaching behaviours associated with the dimension, and examples (i.e., stories, videos, and quotes from coaches) illustrating how Transformational Coaching behaviours can be applied in sport.

During this section, facilitators also guide interactive discussions in which participants are asked to reflect on key questions (e.g., When in practice could you use individualized consideration?) and to share examples of when they have either experienced or used behaviours associated with each dimension. Lastly, participants are asked to complete an action plan for each of the 4 I’s in which they detail how they will integrate each dimension into their coaching practice. The action plan activity is designed to show participants how making small changes in their everyday behaviours can help them improve their leadership skills and to encourage goal setting and action planning practices. Overall, a key aim of the 4 I’s section is to provide participants with actual examples describing how Transformational Coaching behaviours can be enacted in practice and how these behaviours may influence athletes’ developmental outcomes (e.g., competence, confidence, connection, and character). Accordingly, participants are provided with numerous opportunities to share their experiences and consider how the information provided in the workshop can be integrated to their daily interactions with their athletes.

**Putting Knowledge Into Action: Interactive Activities**

The next section of the TCW consists of a series of interactive activities designed to help participants translate the principles of Transformational Coaching into practical strategies that they can apply in their everyday coaching practice. These activities also provide participants with an opportunity to collaborate with the facilitators and their peers (see Table 2 for a summary).

**Analyzing Coaching Clips.** This activity involves showing participants a series of five video clips of different coaching behaviours. For clips 1–3, participants are asked to identify which Transformational Coaching behaviours they see. For clips 4–5, participants are shown a video of neutral coaching behaviours and asked to reflect on how the principles of Transformational Coaching could be applied in each scenario. This activity offers participants an opportunity to apply their knowledge and to discuss practical strategies for implementing Transformational Coaching in real-world situations with their peers and the facilitators.

**Practice Time.** For this activity, participants are divided into small groups and provided with a role-playing scenario to act out in their group. One participant acts as the coach, one as the athlete, and one participant acts as the observer. Each role-playing scenario represents a real-world coaching situation, including suffering a frustrating loss, teaching a difficult drill, and integrating a new team member. The coach in this activity is provided with a card describing the scenario, relevant background information, and a key point-of-action question. Using this information, the coach is asked to use their knowledge of Transformational Coaching behaviours to respond to this scenario. The athlete is provided with a card indicating their character’s initial interpretation of the scenario, while the observer keeps track of the quantity and quality of Transformational Coaching behaviours that occur during the role-playing activity. This activity is designed to provide coaches with an opportunity to practice their Transformational Coaching behaviours and to both provide and receive feedback on the performance of these behaviours with the facilitators and fellow participants. This activity also offers a valuable avenue through which to consider how athletes may respond to the use of Transformational Coaching behaviours.
### Look, Listen, Feel.

In this activity, participants are divided into small groups. Each group is provided with a piece of chart paper and markers. They are then assigned to one of three questions: What does Transformational Coaching: (a) *look* like, (b) *sound* like, or (c) *feel* like? Each group is then asked to draw pictures or write words on their chart paper to describe what they feel Transformational Coaching looks, sounds, or feels like. This activity provides participants with an opportunity to share their understanding of Transformational Coaching.
with their peers and to apply their knowledge in a creative and collaborative manner.

**Follow-Up Activities.** The participants are provided with an overview for follow-up activities that can be completed following the workshop. In the *Leadership Calendar* activity, participants are asked to choose a partner and to complete the leadership calendar worksheet. This worksheet involves selecting 12 dates over the next three months on which they will write down a leadership behaviour that they applied in practice that day (either effective or ineffective) and to answer a series of reflective questions. At the end of each month, participants are instructed to set-up to further discuss this process at the end of the three-month period (in-person or via phone/skype). By adopting a partner-based approach, this activity provides the participants with a source of social support, which may help to enhance their commitment to the activity. This activity is also designed to help participants develop their action planning and goal setting skills in relation to Transformational Coaching behaviours.

In the *Practice Plan* activity, participants are provided with a practice plan template which illustrates how Transformational Coaching behaviours can be incorporated into their instructional planning. This template also includes a set of questions that serve to reinforce the importance of monitoring and reflecting on one’s Transformational Coaching behaviours. Collectively, the follow-up activities are designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to set goals and create plans to use Transformational Coaching behaviours and to demonstrate how Transformational Coaching behaviours can be applied in a timely and effective manner.

**Concluding Activities**

In an effort to integrate the material, the workshop participants are provided with an opportunity to reflect on the “*Stand by your quote activity*” to see if their perceptions of the quotes have changed over the course of the workshop. Participants are also provided with some *take home* messages regarding Transformational Coaching and its application to the sport context. For examples, participants will be encouraged to focus their efforts on making small changes to everyday behaviours to enhance the quantity and quality of their Transformational Coaching behaviours (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). Lastly, participants are provided with an overview of their take-home resources (e.g., workbook, Transformational Coaching cue cards, supplemental readings, etc.), an outline of the avenues for follow-up with the facilitators, and an opportunity to ask facilitators any questions they might have regarding the workshop content. These follow-up resources are designed to reinforce the principles covered in the workshop and hopefully, enhance the application of this content in real-world sport settings.

**Recommendations for Implementing the TCW**

One of the principles that guides the content and structure of the TCW is providing participants with an interactive learning experience. Specifically, participants are encouraged to share their experiences and to interact with their fellow participants. In doing so, participants can learn not only from the facilitators, but from their peers as well. Such discussions and knowledge sharing activities were identified as preferred sources of learning by community partners and stakeholders and have been shown to positively influence coach behaviours (Culver & Trudel, 2008). Furthermore, it is hoped that the connections formed during this workshop may potentially expand the breadth or depth of the participants’ social networks and may serve as valuable sources of social support once the workshop has formally ended.

Another key aspect of the TCW is its emphasis on helping participants to (a) identify potential facilitators and barriers to using Transformational Coaching behaviours and (b) develop practical strategies for optimizing these facilitators or overcoming these barriers. Results from both our empirical work with coaches and collaborative discussions with community partners and stakeholders revealed that time and resources were often viewed as barriers to effectively integrating Transformational Coaching behaviours into real-world sport settings. The TCW is thus designed to tackle this issue in several ways, including facilitator-guided and peer discussions and planning activities (e.g., action cards, practice plans) that enable coaches to create concrete strategies for adopting Transformational Coaching behaviours. Results from observational studies (e.g., Erickson et al., 2011; Turnnidge et al., 2014) and video examples are also provided to demonstrate how implementing Transformational Coaching behaviours can be implemented in an effective and timely manner. For example, drawing upon both research and anecdotal evidence, participants are asked to consider how changing the target of one’s coaching behaviours (i.e., directed toward the team versus directed toward individual athletes) might influence the quality of their coach-athlete interactions. Overall, the workshop aims to illustrate how making small changes to one’s everyday coaching behaviours can positively influence the quality of athlete’s sport experiences. In doing so, it is hoped that this workshop will empower participants to integrate Transformational Coaching behaviours into their coaching practice.

**Next Steps for the TCW**

Pilot test studies of the TCW with a variety of sport organizations are currently underway. The TCW is being evaluated using the RE-AIM framework, which is designed to enhance the quality, speed and influence of evidence-informed interventions in real-world settings. This framework outlines five factor that determine an
intervention’s impact: reach, efficacy, adoption, implementation, and maintenance (Glasgow et al., 1999). These factors will be evaluated at both the individual level (i.e., coaches and athletes) and the setting level (i.e., sport organizations). In the following section, each of the five factors and their accompanying evaluation methods are outlined.

First, reach refers to whether the workshop accurately reflects the characteristics of the target population. To assess reach, the number of coaches, athletes, and sport organizations which: (a) are contacted regarding participating in the workshop and (b) participate in the workshop will be recorded. Coaches’ and athletes’ demographic variables will also be collected pre- and postworkshop. Second, efficacy relates to the positive or negative influence of the workshop on important outcomes. The efficacy of the workshop will be assessed at multiple points. Coaches will be observed both pre- and post-workshop and their behaviours will be coded with an observational system specifically designed to capture coaches’ leadership behaviours in sport: The Coach Leadership Assessment System (CLAS; Turnnidge & Côté, 2016b). Coaches will also complete a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of their own Transformational Coaching behaviours (sport adapted version of the Transformational Teaching Questionnaire; TTQ, Beauchamp et al., 2010) and behaviour change constructs (Michie et al., 2014). Athletes will complete the 4 Cs toolkit (Vierimaa, Erickson, Côté, & Gilbert, 2012) to assess their perceptions of competence, confidence, connection, and character.

Third, adoption will be assessed by evaluating the number, proportion, and representativeness of the sport organizations that agree to host the TCW as compared with those who do not. Fourth, the implementation element of the framework will be addressed by examining the fidelity and quality of the TCW through a combination of implementation checklists, as well as questionnaires and interviews with participants and facilitators. Lastly, maintenance will evaluate the long-term effects of the TCW in relation to both coaches’ behaviours and athletes’ developmental outcomes (measured through observation and questionnaires) and the extent to which the workshop is integrated into sport organization’s practices or policies (measured through interviews and questionnaires). Research evaluating the TCW will yield findings that are both theoretically and practically relevant. By assessing and optimizing each of the factors of the RE-AIM framework, researchers and practitioners can ensure that the TCW can be effectively applied in real-world, youth sport settings.

Overall, the TCW represents an innovative CDP that is interpersonally-focused, evidence-informed, and systematically evaluated. Moreover, the TCW represents the culmination of a multidisciplinary partnership between research and community stakeholders that worked together to design, implement, evaluate, and disseminate the workshop. The TCW is designed to facilitate coaches’ use of effective leadership behaviours by providing coaches with both an understanding of the principles of Transformational Coaching and practical, everyday strategies for applying these principles in real-world sport settings. In doing so, it is believed that the TCW will provide coaches with a unique opportunity to improve their leadership behaviours, and ultimately enhance their athletes’ performance, participation, and personal development.

References


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