UK COACHING

‘Remembering You the Coach’: Looking after your mental health and well–being

So, let’s start with a simple question: how often do you think about your own mental health?

As a coach, your performance may, or will be, critical to success in your role. How you feel and what you think ultimately effects your behaviour in this performance role. Your mental health has a ‘two-way street’ relationship with how you feel and what you think. Therefore, it is of great significance to consider - to care for yourself and your mental health and well-being. The World Health Organization states that mental health is where an individual realises their potential, can cope with everyday stress, can work productively, and contribute to their community. Mental health and well-being is associated with positive physical health, pro-social behaviour and the ability to self-regulate and cope with adversity. Key aspects to positive mental health are as follows: you feel good on a regular basis; you can reflect positively on your life, your abilities and achievements; you can be self-compassionate to yourself; and finally, you feel and believe there is a sense of meaning in your life.

There are several ways you can develop and maintain a positive mental health state as a coach that will allow you to experience the key positive aspects outlined above on a regular basis.

Ensure you provide specific positive feedback on yourself a couple of times a week minimum. Using positive words and statements in your feedback can develop self-belief, confidence in your overall ability and decision making, and motivation to continue to drive forward. This feedback may include verbal or written self-talk in which you generate these words and statements based on any of your achievements, positive outcomes, or meeting targets.

Give yourself space away from the role of ‘coach’. This could include turning all devices on to silent, or even off, and immersing yourself in a different role or activity, whatever is most likely to achieve a change of direction away from your job role. Ensure you have more that being a coach doesn’t define you or consume you entirely.

Sleep patterns can be the route to a happier you, with a sunnier mood state. A positive mood state also may allow you to feel, and indeed succeed in coping with, any potential stressors or challenges you may face as a coach, and a person. Allowing yourself to unwind prior to bed and detaching from your role, removing your coach’s cap, may facilitate good sleep. However, it may be useful to have pen and paper by your bed (not your mobile phone) to note anything that may be racing through your mind preventing you from getting to sleep.

Food, mood and sleep are great friends. You may be in the habit of prioritising nutrition of your athletes and others over yourself. However, it is beneficial to eat and drink regularly throughout the day to sustain energy and clarity of the mind which may aid with the decision-making process. This may be easier said than done with busy schedules, yet it’s certainly worth considering.

Surround yourself with at least two to three (minimum) trusted people you can communicate effectively with (two-way communication). If you feel you can share thoughts and feelings it may allow you to reflect on any positives, identify possible solutions (where relevant), or just simply to be heard and offload.

Remember to be honest in your self-feedback; provide praise and empathy to yourself; and celebrate your positive attributes. If you solely focus on the negatives and self-criticisms it rarely has a positive effect.

So, let’s end with that simple question: how often do you think about your own mental health?

94320