

Tobacco and Substance Abuse: A Teachable Moment

A teachable moment is an opportunity to use the 6A's to communicate with the child a lesson through sport or life. The effective use of teachable moments requires a coach to have the requisite knowledge of the issue at hand while also having the ability and willingness to discuss the issue with the child.

Tobacco/Substance Abuse

Requisite knowledge for the coach:

1. The earlier an individual begins to use tobacco, the greater the risk for functional health.
2. Use of tobacco products starts for psychological reasons and does not contribute positively to physical development.
3. Children choose to use tobacco and drink because of peer pressure, they are curious about the substances, and they want to gain social status among their peers.
4. Substance abuse by children is sometimes a behavioral manifestation of other serious issues.
5. Smoking is responsible for more than 300,000 deaths each year in the U.S (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Recognizing a Teachable Moment

Example: You find that some of your young athletes have chewing gum that resembles a tobacco product or a candy snuff can.

Communication Points:

- “What are you chewing? Why do you think they put the gum in this type of container? Young athletes who use tobacco can get in trouble and harm their bodies. Getting to the professional level has nothing to do with using tobacco.”

Example: Several of your young athletes are seen regularly spitting.

Communication Points:

- “Hey, you have been spitting a lot. What is going on? I hope that you're not using chewing tobacco. Chewing tobacco is just as dangerous as cigarettes. Besides being illegal for young people, it is very harmful to your body.”

