

Empowering the Iowa Girl



Leadership - Culture - Character - Performance



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Teamwork

Featuring  **EXCELLENCE WITH INTEGRITY™
TOOLS & ASSESSMENTS**

Drake
UNIVERSITY

The Robert D. and
Billie Ray Center





Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Contents

Introduction	5
CHAMP Approach	11
Relationship-Building Activity – Boxes	14
Teamwork Activity Workout – River Walk	17
Teamwork Activity Workout – Most Important Thing	19
Compact for Excellence Workout	22
Inclusion Continuum Workout	25
Optimal Performance Self-Study – Teamwork	29



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.



Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union

5000 Westown Parkway • Suite 150 • West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

Phone: (515) 288-9741

ighsau.org

Every Iowa Girl deserves the opportunity to participate in athletics and activities that positively impact her growth and development physically, mentally, and socially.

For decades, coaches across the state have worked tirelessly to provide that experience, and have shaped the lives of thousands of Iowa Girls. As part of the IGHSAU strategic plan, we want to provide additional educationally-based resources to help our coaches continue to do this important work.

The Iowa Girl's High School Athletic Union is proud to offer these culture-shaping and leadership development resources for coaches of all Iowa girls' athletics. The topics addressed in these resources were chosen by coaches across the state, and the content shaped by feedback from coaches and other stakeholders. These resources are not a program. They are tools to be adopted and adapted in support of the great work you are already doing. Use these materials to help you shape the culture of your program and enhance the experience of the Iowa Girls on your team.

Empowering the Iowa Girl today, to lead tomorrow!

Erin Gerlich
Executive Director

Taylor Anderson
Assistant Director



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

INTRODUCTION

The materials in these resources are based on 25 years of applied research and development in various educational, workplace, and sport environments by Matthew L. Davidson, Ph.D., Vladimir T. Khmelkov, Ph.D., and their colleagues at the Excellence with Integrity Institute. Over the years, we expanded our grounded theory framework, designed new assessment instruments, and developed and implemented a vast range of instructional resources that help leaders develop the strengths of culture and character needed for optimal performance.

We received feedback from many athletes and coaches who successfully implemented our work in competitive collegiate athletics and in pre-collegiate settings. We are also grateful to our talented partners at The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University. Special thanks to Scott Raecker who has contributed to our theory, practice, and assessment since the very first versions of our work. We are especially grateful to Jeff Kluever, whose extraordinary talents and abilities have helped shape these resources.

Our Approach

In 1969, the University of Nebraska hired Boyd Epley as the first intercollegiate strength coach at a time when most everyone believed that strength training would *undermine* athletic performance. Less than a decade later, the National Strength Coaches Association was formed in 1978, still fighting the prevailing opinions of the day, which believed that building strength would undermine rather than aid athletic performance. Fast forward to today, strength and conditioning programs are an essential component of every college athletic department, every professional and Olympic sport, and most high school and pre-collegiate experiences. What started with one coach in Nebraska is now the art and science of diverse strength practices that are customized to the athlete, the sport, the style, and conditions.

At the Excellence with Integrity Institute, we believe that the science and practice around the formation of character, culture, and leadership has the potential to impact pre-collegiate and intercollegiate athletics much like the physical strength field has done over the last 50 years. What was once defined by myths, half-truths, and un-truths is now becoming a critical facet of individual and team performance, with the potential to enhance or undermine physical strengths, athletic ability, and team strategy. Physical strength and conditioning is essentially the art and science of proactively designing programs to target and develop the strength, endurance, flexibility, and mobility needed to avoid injuries and achieve success. ***Avoid injuries and achieve success:*** these twin goals form the foundation of the work to intentionally shape the art and science of strength and conditioning for culture and character.



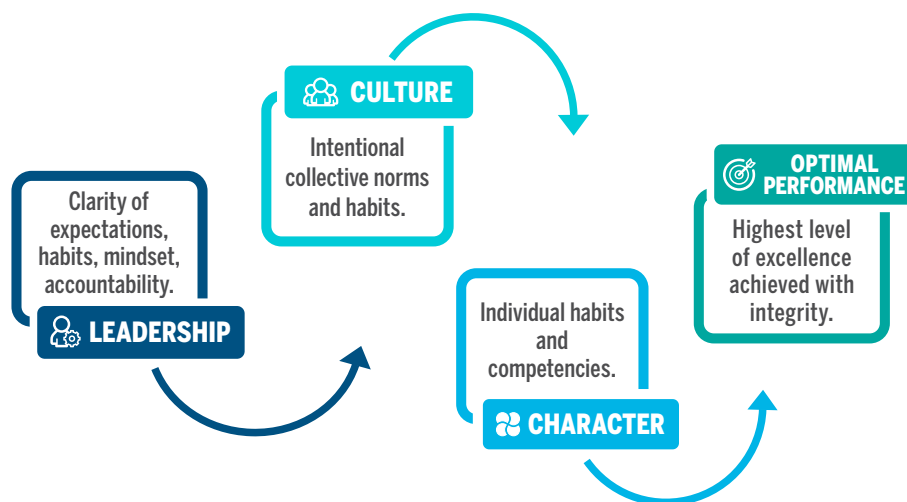
Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Coaches have always known the importance of teamwork, leadership, accountability, work ethic, and resilience. Talent obviously plays a role in the success of individuals and teams, but talent will always be strengthened or weakened by the strengths or weaknesses of culture and character on that team. We have a very good understanding about the strengths of culture and character that contribute to optimal performance, as well as an understanding of the most common culture and character weaknesses that undermine optimal performance and lead to psychological and moral injuries.

The emphasis and importance of athletics has increased. Student-athletes compete more, and the competition is intense, with more media coverage, public interest, scrutiny, and pressure. That is why coaches need to work more intentionally and deliberately to ensure that their teams and student-athletes have the culture and character needed for the pressure and intensity of today's competition to maximize the potential of their team and student-athletes to avoid injuries and achieve success.

What is culture? In simple terms, culture is your ***collective values in action, your way, your collective norms and habits***. Culture is your values in action—not simply your stated values, but your operational values, what you truly value as reflected in your actions. For example, I can say my team values accountability, but if team members are rarely or inconsistently held accountable for their actions, then our operational value (loose standards and expectations) is more real than our stated value of accountability. Knowledge of your values isn't enough to shape culture; you must practice your values every day. That's how culture is intentionally created and improved. **Leaders shape culture, culture shapes (or corrupts) character, and character drives optimal performance—the highest level of excellence we can achieve with integrity.**

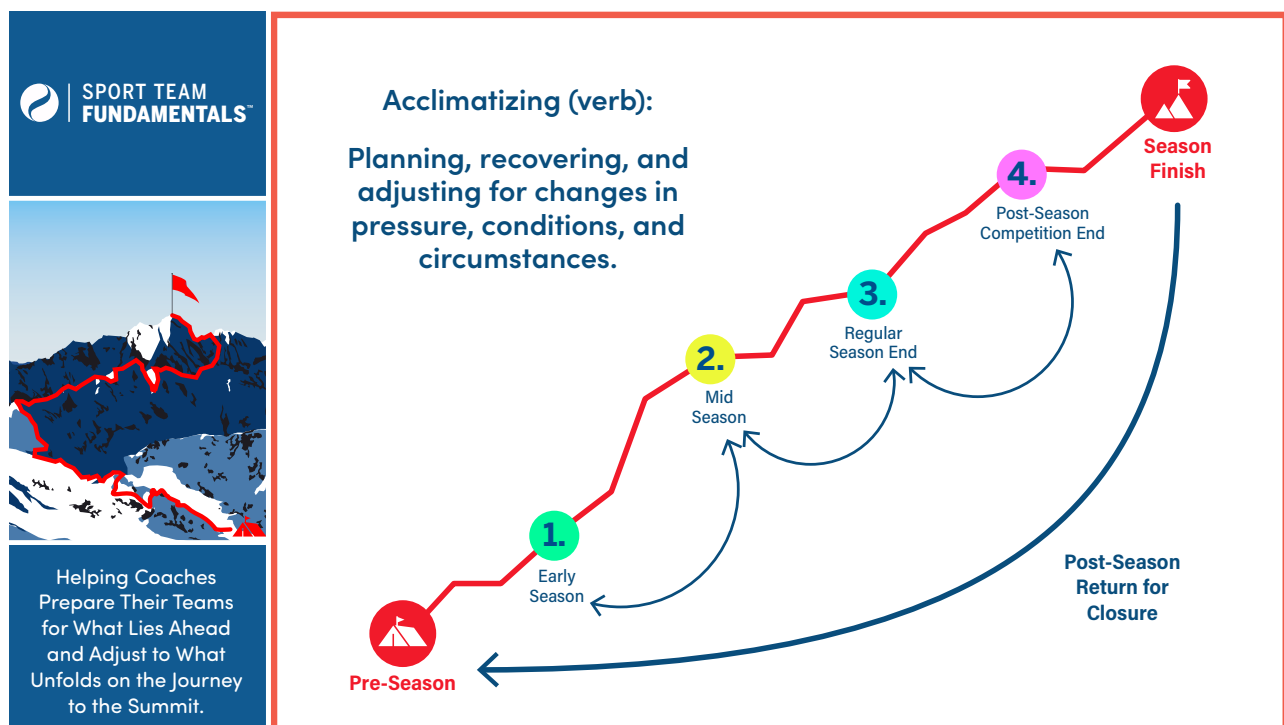




Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

This model helps to frame the *what* and *how* of shaping culture and character. But what is also essential is an understanding of *why* and *when*. Why are coaches shaping culture and character in competitive teams? So that teams and their team members have the strengths of culture and character to achieve their goals—without injuries. We think about a team journey as the process of “acclimatizing team cultures to summit.” Competitive seasons are a journey from base to summit, from the pre-season to the post-season. Pursuing summits safely is what coaches and teams are striving to accomplish. Coaches operate as expeditionary leaders guiding their teams towards new heights, new challenges, and uncharted territories, and they have a responsibility to ensure that teams can summit safely—without physical, mental, emotional, or interpersonal meltdowns or breakdowns.



The famous quote says, “It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.” Competitive teams need lofty goals and the challenge of new summits to overcome their weaknesses and forge new strengths of culture and character that simply will not be developed pursuing the “low peaks.” Competition means “striving with”—with teammates and with worthy opponents—to bring out new levels of strength and to develop our abilities fully.

So, we develop the strengths of culture and character to summit safely by using the journey of a season to continuously prepare for what teams will encounter at the summit: further elevated pressure at the end of a long journey marked by the inevitable highs and lows, victories and defeats that are part of a typical season.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

We believe that strength and conditioning for culture comes to life when coaches understand that they are building strengths that can withstand the pressure of competition needed to summit safely. Coaches aren't just doing some good, nice, important work on culture and character. They're developing the strengths of culture and character needed to summit safely. If teams don't have sufficient culture and character assets for the pressures and duration of a competitive season, then breakdowns and injuries are inevitable! It's not about developing some nice assets that could help in life in the future; it's about developing the strengths of culture and character **needed for** the journey from base to summit for this team in this season. If we don't properly target and develop assets like psychological safety, leadership, resilience, self-awareness, accountability, then we should not be surprised when we don't reach our performance goals. More importantly, we shouldn't be surprised when we see breakdowns and psychological injuries within the team and among its members.

There are many nuances to the emerging art and science of shaping culture and character strengths needed to summit safely. But the essence of the approach can be summarized quite simply as the continuous intentional process of balancing **demandingness and responsiveness**. On the journey of a season, from pre-season to post-season, coaches must apply pressure sufficient to forge the team and individual assets needed for the challenge. But they must be able to temper, adjust, and respond when the demandingness is no longer landing or working with the team. What was optimal in the pre-season may not be in the middle of the season. What was too demanding in the pre-season may be perfect as we approach the post-season (or vice versa).

**SPORT TEAM
FUNDAMENTALS™**



Helping Coaches
Prepare Their Teams
for What Lies Ahead
and Adjust to What
Unfolds on the Journey
to the Summit.

**ACCLIMATIZING TEAM CULTURE FOR
OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE**

**Coaching that is both
Demanding and Responsive**
to changes in the team,
which creates
Collective Safety and Confidence
that are needed to summit—to achieve
Excellence with Integrity!



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Optimal performance coaching, or coaching to summit safely, is the art of balancing demandingness and responsiveness, which requires an ongoing dialogue between coaches and team members. *Demandingness* reflects the coaching practices used to forge a culture of competitive excellence and drive the team towards greatness; *responsiveness* is how coaches listen, observe, and engage the team in dialogue to determine necessary adjustments to the intensity, duration, and tactical effectiveness of coaching practices and strategies. Optimal performance coaching isn't just what you do, it is *how well your demandingness lands with your team*. Coaches ensure their coaching is landing, by being demanding **and** responsive.

Resources

The “workouts” presented in this resource are activities designed to help you engage your team in the culture work *needed for* the journey of a season from base to summit, from pre-season to post-season. Culture is always a work in progress. These workouts can help you shape your team culture consistently and intentionally, and will ultimately help drive the performance of your team.

The workouts are organized into the following broad categories: leadership, teamwork, accountability, work ethic, communication, and resilience. Within each category you will find several short, focused workouts to conduct with your team. The workout categories are not scaffolded as a sequence, meaning you need not start with a certain workout, then progress to another in the order, and so on. You can start with any workout and move between categories as you see fit. Likewise, each workout can be conducted in a variety of environments: the court, the field, the locker room, a classroom, a film session, or even on the bus. If time is an issue, each workout can be divided into shorter, multiple segments.

The keys to effectively using this resource:

1. **Target where you are on the journey from base to summit.** If you're in the pre-season, you might have more time to select particular workouts, dig deeper, or return for several workouts. If you're in the middle of the season having just experienced a couple of tough losses or big wins, you might choose a different workout or focus.
2. **Be consistent.** Like strength conditioning, a heavy dump in the pre-season won't inoculate your team. To truly impact your culture, you must consistently address culture where it is most needed, targeting weak areas like you would weak muscles or weak strategy. As Pete Carroll once said, “If you're not coaching your values each day, then those aren't your values.”



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Each topic includes an activity to engage your team in active learning that incorporate research-based tools and strategies. Relationship-building questions and activities can be found throughout the workouts, so that your team can form connections with one another. Each category also includes optimal performance self-studies, so your team can reflect on how they are demonstrating the key values of your culture as individuals and as a team.

Finally, there are workouts you can use to engage parents, who are key stakeholders in the culture of your team. Some of the team workouts for student-athletes can also be extended to parents if desired. And there are two workouts to help get feedback on the culture of your team. Culture is ever-changing, so having simple, effective ways to gather information from student-athletes, other coaches, and parents regarding their perceptions of team culture is a useful tool.

In short, we've sought to include everything you need to consistently and positively shape your culture with simple, direct, and meaningful workouts. **Leaders shape culture, culture shapes character, character drives performance.** Now, the work is up to you. Your journey begins by working more intentionally to develop the strengths of culture and character needed to summit safely! Onward and upward!

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

~ Laozi

Traveler, there is no road; you make your own path as you walk.

~ Antonio Machado



CHAMP APPROACH

Building and sustaining culture requires intentional coaching. The Excellence with Integrity CHAMP approach suggests that developing skills like teamwork requires the use of four separate but connected coaching processes.

First, coaching for optimal performance with teamwork requires establishing CLARITY of expectations specifying what teamwork looks, sounds, and feels like for your team in the various times and situations it will be required. Teamwork is a big concept with many potential applications, so don't assume everyone on the team agrees with what teamwork means — get clarity, about what teamwork in action is, and is not!

Second, everyone on the team must have real opportunities to practice putting teamwork into action. As the ancient wisdom asserts: *We are what we repeatedly do*—not what we repeatedly know. “Do this, don't do this” HABITS that simulate the skills we will need under game circumstances must be created, along with mentoring feedback on the deliberate practices.

Third, there must be ACCOUNTABILITY to ensure team members hold themselves and each other accountable to the standards we have established. If we know what teamwork expectations are (clarity), and we know how to put these expectations into action (habits), then it is essential to make sure we hold self and others accountable.

Finally, the MINDSET must be continuously shaped so that student-athletes understand the deeper why behind our habits, expectations, and accountability, which helps cultivate buy-in and supports rapid recovery when mistakes are made or obstacles arise. Shaping the mindset is essential (why it matters and how we respond when it is put to the test): teamwork is important *to us, our team, and for achieving our goals*—but it won't happen easily or without some effort and persistence!

A sample CHAMP tool for teamwork is below, but you should use the blank CHAMP tool provided in each category to think about how you want to coach teamwork on your team. To coach teamwork consistently, you must be clear about what teamwork means on your team, what it looks like, why it matters, and how you will hold each other accountable to your expectations.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance

Example



CLARITY

1. Being willing and prepared to assume a different role as needed by the team.
2. Working, sacrificing, and embracing whatever it takes to be a great teammate.
3. Being responsible for one's role, but accountable to the team for overall mission success.



HABIT

1. Getting to your teammates first (when they make it, when they miss, when they're down).
2. Supporting, challenging, and pushing one's teammates to continuously push their limits and the limits of the team.

Teamwork



ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Reach out to whoever is hurting or not connecting.
2. Keep clearing the decks for battle with teammates.
3. Keep eyes up and forward—what can we do better or differently?



MINDSET

1. Keep our goals and mission the main priority.
2. Remember: the strength of the wolf is the pack.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset
→ **Performance**



CLARITY



HABIT



ACCOUNTABILITY



MINDSET





RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING ACTIVITY – BOXES

Scope: 5-15 minutes; the activity can be replicated with different questions as desired.

This relationship-building activity asks students to publicly declare their response to questions. Depending on the culture of your team, you may want to start with other relationship-building activities to increase student comfort with sharing their opinions.

1. Ask students to stand together in the middle of a room, field, court, or other space.
2. Tell students that you are going to ask them a question. Their response to the question will determine if they are going to go stand in box 1 or box 2 (or on one side of the room or the other). Remind students that we're not interested in judging anyone's response. There are no wrong answers. The activity is simply a way to learn more about individuals on the team.
3. After asking each question, have students turn to a partner in their box or on their side of the room and discuss the follow-up questions.

Note: The coaching staff should also participate.

Sample Questions

- a. Would you rather be a better athlete (left box/side) or a better student (right box/side)?
 - Why did you choose your response?
- b. Would you rather be the best player on an average team (left box/side) or a role player on a championship-level team (right box/side)?
 - Why did you choose your response?



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

- c. Are you more likely to feel joy (left box/side) or relief (right box/side) after a victory?
 - Why did you choose your response?
- d. Would you rather play home games (left box/side) or away games (left box/side)?
 - What do you like/dislike about playing home games?
 - What do you like/dislike about playing road games?
- e. Do you plan on playing this sport after high school/in college? (Left box/side = yes, right box/side = no.)
 - Why did you choose your response?
- f. Would you rather have shorter, but more physically intense practices (left box/side) or longer, less intense practices (right box/side)?
 - What are the benefits of your preference?
 - What are the downsides of your preference?
- g. Is this sport your favorite sport to play? (Left box/side = yes, right box/side = no.)
 - Why is this sport your favorite? Or, what is your favorite sport?
 - Why do you participate in this sport?
- h. Would you rather practice/workout first thing in the morning (left box/side) or in the afternoon (right box/side)?
 - Why did you choose your response?
- i. Do you enjoy being in the spotlight (left box/side) or would you prefer to be out of the spotlight (right box/side)?
 - Why did you choose your response?



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Extension

Ask each student to submit a question to ask the team. Questions can range from serious to silly. The point of the activity is to learn more about one another, and to acknowledge that we have different perspectives on and about our team.



TEAMWORK ACTIVITY WORKOUT – RIVER WALK

Scope: 15-20 minute activity done once per season.

You will need to complete the following steps to set up the activity.

1. Find an area of floor, court, field, or other space about twenty feet wide. This will serve as the river.
2. Using two lengths of rope or tape, create the banks of your river (again, about 20 feet wide).
3. You will need 8 objects large enough for students to stand on—carpet squares, paper plates, dot markers, paper, etc.

Activity Directions

1. The goal is for students to use the 8 objects to cross the river from bank to bank without falling in.
2. The 8 objects that you have are “rocks” that students must stand on to cross the river. When students would like to place a rock, they must ask in unison for a rock. You can determine what phrase they must use to ask for a rock. “May we have a rock, please?” “Oh, great Rock Queen/King, may we have a rock to cross the river?” “Please, please, please ROCK US!”
3. The rocks can be placed wherever students like, but once they are placed in the river, there must ALWAYS be a foot or hand on it. If there isn’t a foot or hand touching a rock at all times, it is swept away by the current.

As facilitator, any time you see a rock not being “held down” you should take that rock. If someone falls into the river, all rocks are removed and the group must start over. Be strict!

4. Once everyone is across safely the game is over.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Note: If you have a large team, split them into groups and have groups compete against each other to see who can get across first. You will need coaches or other facilitators to watch each group.

Processing

Ask students the following questions:

1. Was it difficult to follow all of the rules and make it across the river safely? Why or why not?
2. What was the key to getting across the river?
3. What happened if someone wasn't on board or paying attention when it was their turn to step? How does that apply to your team?
4. How did your teammates help you accomplish your goal?
5. How did you work together and communicate? Did your communication improve as the activity progressed?
6. How could teamwork be improved on our team? What could you do better or differently? What could we do better or differently?

Extension:

Ask each member of the team to fill out a commitment card stating what they commit to doing to be a better teammate. Have each person trade their commitment card with another team member. Each week, ask partners to meet and discuss how well they are fulfilling their respective commitments.



TEAMWORK ACTIVITY WORKOUT – MOST IMPORTANT THING

Scope: 15-20 minutes once per season.

Supplies:

Plastic Cups (3/4 full of water)

Object #1 (something easily caught and thrown)

Object #2 (something easily caught and thrown)

Object #3 (something easily caught and thrown)

Activity Directions

1. Divide your team into groups of 8-15 people and instruct them to form a circle. Each circle gets Object #1 and is instructed to toss the ball around the circle following these rules:
 - a. You must throw it to a person who has not touched the ball, until each person has caught the ball once and it is back to the person who had the first throw.
 - b. You cannot pass the ball to the person on either side of you unless everyone else has already touched the ball.
 - c. You must get the ball around the circle as fast as you can.
 - d. Each person must remember who they threw the ball to.
2. Once the group has completed one cycle around the circle, instruct them to do it again, but faster, and again, but faster. The facilitator may choose to put them on a stop watch and compete to see which group can get all the way around the circle the fastest.
3. Then, instruct the group to keep throwing Object #1 around the circle; once the first person catches the ball, they should just keep it moving by throwing



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

to their person again. Tell the groups to keep going around the circle with Object #1 as fast as they can. You may need to stipulate that this is not a hand-off drill; the circle should remain far enough apart that groups must toss the objects.

4. After a few revolutions, stop the groups and introduce Object #2. The groups will throw both objects around the circle at the same time, following the same order, as fast as they can.
5. After a few revolutions, stop the groups and introduce Object #3. The groups will throw all three objects around the circle at the same time, following the same order, as fast as they can.
6. After a few revolutions, stop the groups and introduce the cup of water. Tell the groups that they must continue to throw all three objects around the circle, while also passing the cup of water around the circle. The cup will be passed from person-to-person clockwise around the circle, while the other objects continue to be thrown in the same order. Tell the groups that the cup of water is **the most important thing**. Really stress that the cup is **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING**. You may find you need to stipulate that groups cannot drink the water or dump the water out, nor can they combine any of the three things to make it into one thing to throw and catch.

The groups start throwing the objects around the circle while passing the cup of water. Watch how the groups treat the most important thing. They often slow down and communicate more clearly. You will often hear group members calling each other's names as they pass items around the circle. You will often see individuals stop an object from being thrown at them while they deal with the most important thing and then continue on.

Processing

Ask groups how their behavior changed when you introduced the most important thing. *What did they do differently?* Explain how the activity relates to your team. We are often juggling a million things at once; there are constant distractions and obstacles flying at us that we have to deal with, but take focus away from our most important thing—our team culture.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Ask students: *When stress and distractions come at us, how do we take care of our most important thing?* Answers should stem from the activity: slow down, communicate more, refocus on the most important thing, etc.

The point is that, when we take care of our team culture, it is easier to handle all the other tasks and challenges that will inevitably come up. When we are focused on our culture, we communicate better, we take care of each other, we help each other, and we make sure that everyone can respond to all the challenges coming their way.

Extension:

Ask students to describe a time when they've been part of a team culture (e.g., athletic team, band, choir, family, church group, classroom, etc.) that helped them perform at their best. Then, ask students to describe a time that they've been part of a team culture that discouraged them from doing their best. *How were those two cultures different? What did the positive cultures do that the negative cultures did not? What could you do to improve your team culture so everyone can perform at their best, even when there are objects flying at them?*



COMPACT FOR EXCELLENCE WORKOUT

Scope: 10-15 minutes as a single workout, but can be replicated numerous times, often in less time.

Every team faces challenges throughout a season, from losing streaks, to injuries, to personality conflicts. Sometimes these challenges arise because individuals on the team do not have the same understanding of team expectations. What one person thinks is great work ethic, another believes is subpar. Or, what one person thinks is "senior privilege," like asking freshmen to carry equipment, another believes is hazing.

It is far better to create expectations and find agreement on how we are going to work together before problems arise, rather than wait for these issues to derail a season. Creating a Compact for Excellence can help you set expectations for how your team will work together.





TEAM COMPACT

In order for our team to achieve excellence with integrity, reaching our performance goals in a respectful, safe, and trusting team culture, we each agree to.../not to... :

List the specific actions we will need to do—and avoid doing—for this team, at this time, and for our circumstances.

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

>> _____

Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Activity

1. Tell your team that a Compact for Excellence is an agreement about how we are going to work together to do our best work and treat each other with care and respect. A Compact is needed so that everyone on the team understands how we are going to work together throughout the season.
2. You could choose to do this activity as a coaching staff and share the Compact with your team, with your captains or team leadership, or with your entire team. If you have a small team, ask them to create a list of what your team needs to do during the season in order to do your best work and treat each other with care and respect. Remember, as a coach, you can put your own suggestions on the list as well. If you have a large team, split your team into small groups, led by a captain or senior leader. Each group should create their own list. Once each small group has submitted their suggestions, compare lists and edit them into a final document.
3. At this point, you have words on a sheet of paper. The words don't mean anything until you have a commitment from each team member to turn those words into action. Ask your team:
 - a. Is there anything that needs to be added to this list in order to do our best work and treat each other well?
 - b. Is there anything on the list that requires clarification?
 - c. Is there anything on the list that you cannot or will not do this season?
4. Finally, ask each person on your team if they agree to hold themselves and others accountable to your Compact. Some teams do this verbally, while others ask each team member to sign the Compact. Some teams even print a poster of the Compact for the team to sign and then post it in the locker room.
5. Use the Compact to address problems or issues that arise on your team. It's a good idea to ask your team to reflect on your Compact periodically and discuss what they are doing well and what could be improved or done differently to better live the compact. It's also a good idea to share your Compact with parents so they understand how your team is going to work together, and what standards their son or daughter agreed to follow.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

Extension

Once student-athletes are familiar with creating a Compact for Excellence, you can use the tool in any instance when defining expectations is useful. You could create a Compact for what your team needs to do to show each other respect on the bus ride to away games, or how you will work together in the weight room or open gym, or even with two student-athletes who aren't getting along well. The Compact is an easy, but effective way to gain clarity about what must be done for everyone to get their best work done and treat each other with care and respect.

Some teams turn their Compact into a poster and display their Compact in a public place as a reminder of what everyone agreed to do to ensure everyone can do their best work and treat each other well. You can then ask student-athletes to reflect in partner discussions or as a team about what aspects of the Compact they're doing well, and what could be improved.



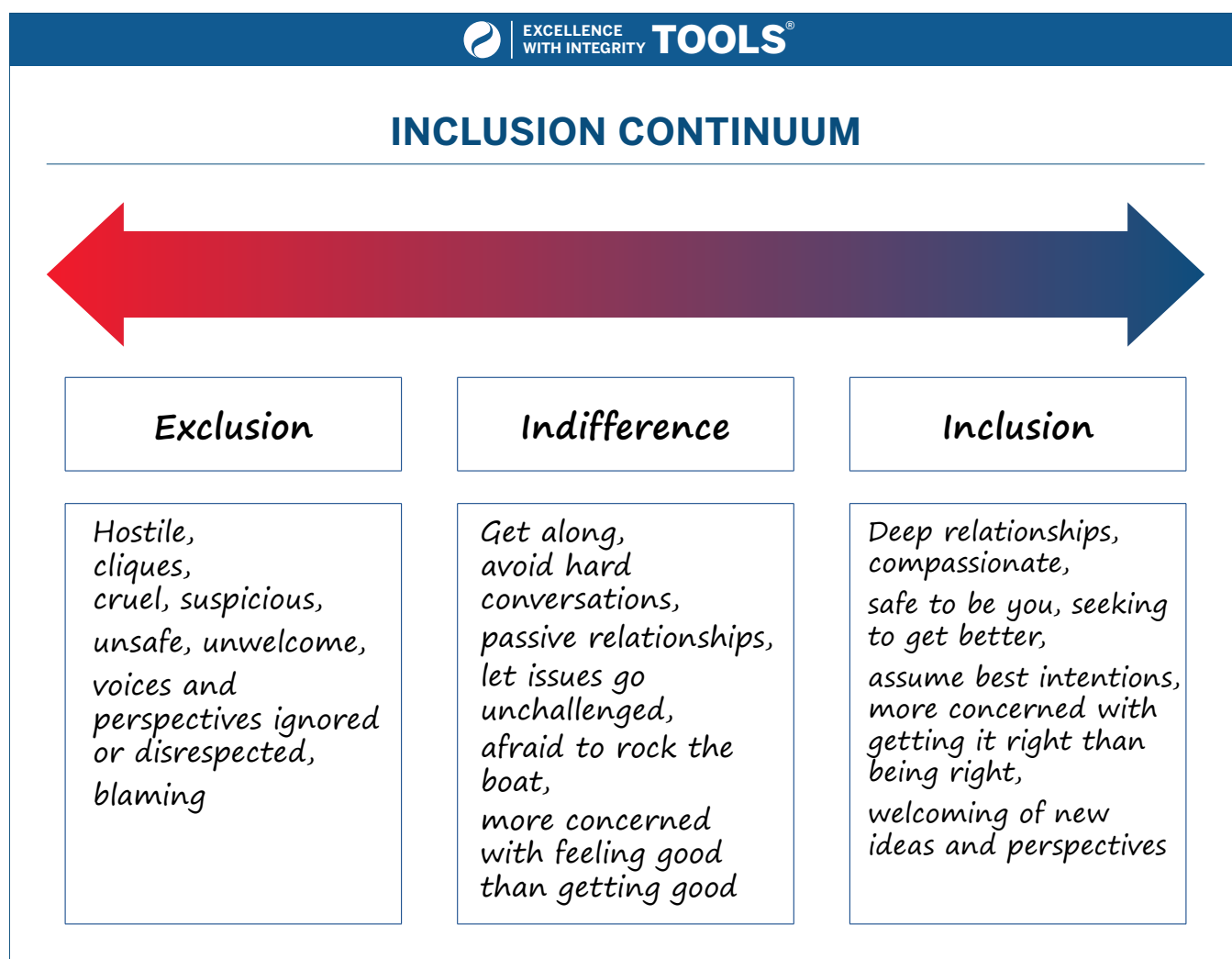
Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

INCLUSION CONTINUUM WORKOUT

Scope: 15-20 minutes, as a pre-season or off-season activity.

An inclusive culture can only be created when your team determines what an inclusive culture looks like. In this workout, your team will use an inclusion continuum to define what an inclusive, indifferent, and exclusive culture looks and sounds like on your team.





Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

The sample Inclusion Continuum is meant to give you some starting points for conversation. However, the goal of this activity is to define what inclusion, indifference, and exclusion look like on your team specifically.

Maybe exclusion looks like one team member is always forced to sit in the back of the bus, or only a small group of people get to select the music played in the locker room. Don't write down buzz words. Every word or idea should come down to what inclusion, indifference, and exclusion look like on your team. The debate and discussion is a critical part of the activity. As a team, you get to define what inclusion looks, sounds, and feels like for each and all of the team members. Active engagement of the whole team ensures ownership of and commitment to the resulting definition. The Inclusion Continuum activity outline below can help you with that process. If you have a large team, split them into small groups to do the activity, and then review what each small group created with the full team.

1. Start by asking your team to brainstorm words, concepts, and behaviors that describe some aspect of inclusion. Ask your team what inclusion will look, sound, and feel like on your team. Write down these words, concepts, and behaviors on the inclusion side of your continuum worksheet, refining ideas as needed.
2. Then, ask your team to brainstorm words, concepts, and behaviors that are the opposite of inclusive and write these words, concepts, and behaviors on the exclusion side of the continuum.
3. Finally, ask your team to do the same activity for indifference.

Note: the length of this activity can vary greatly depending on a host of factors. If you get the basics down and there isn't much debate, that's ok. However, if debate and discussion get deep, stay with it. Inclusion ensues when you engage in these conversations.

4. Once your Inclusion Continuum is complete, ask your team to consider what they can do better or differently to be more inclusive. For this reflection, student-athletes should focus on their own behavior and what changes they need to make to ensure inclusion will ensue from their actions.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

5. Building and sustaining an inclusive culture is never done. Ask your team to evaluate their behaviors periodically throughout the year so that inclusion remains a focus.

It is critical that coaches engage in the creation of the Inclusion Continuum together with the student-athletes. It is even more important that coaches lead the culture of inclusion with their words and actions each day.

Extension

As your team works to develop, sustain, and enhance an inclusive culture among student-athletes, coaches, and staff, you may also want to expand your inclusive culture to extended members of your team—parents, fans, the school community, etc. Think about:

1. How can you help your student-athletes learn about and connect to the school and greater community?
 - a. Take advantage of volunteer opportunities for your team in or outside of the school.
 - b. Engage with younger students through reading or mentorship programs.
2. How can you help your community learn about your student-athletes as people?
 - a. Newsletter.
 - b. Player profile in newspapers or in the program handed out at events.
 - c. Non-athletic achievements shared on social media.
3. What unique experiences, perspectives, and personalities in your community would be good to share with your student-athletes?



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

- a. Guest speakers—alumni, successful individuals from a variety of careers, local police, community activists, etc.
4. What experiences and perspectives do your student-athletes have that would be good to share with the community?
 - a. Ask student-athletes to speak to community organizations, like Rotary Clubs, the school board, or activity boosters.



OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE SELF-STUDY – TEAMWORK

Scope: 5 minutes.

Ask members of the team to fill out the following reflection about their teamwork. Give them a time frame to consider as they reflect (last week, month, quarter, etc.). When complete, have student-athletes share with a partner what they are doing well and what they could do better or differently to demonstrate teamwork moving forward.

This activity can be done multiple times per season to help student-athletes continually reflect on how well they are doing. Likewise, you can use this reflection in multiple ways:

- You could ask student-athletes to evaluate their own demonstration of teamwork or collective teamwork.
- Coaches could also fill out the reflection to evaluate the accountability skills of players.

The Optimal Performance Self-Studies should not be used as a weapon, rather as a way to engage in meaningful conversations about what is going well and what can be improved.



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

TEAMWORK SELF-STUDY

Select a PERIOD OF TIME that
you will focus on: _____

Part A) Rate your performance on the following:

1 = POOR

10 = OPTIMAL



1) ... finding ways in which I can best contribute to the goals of the team; being reliable and dependable.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2) ... working well with others on the team, including those with different perspectives, talents, abilities, or beliefs.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3) ... helping others on the team to work well together.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4) ... being open to ideas and suggestions from others about team tasks or goals; supporting those who do a good job leading on a task or a goal.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

5) ... finding roles or tasks that best suit other team members so everyone can do their best work and be their best self.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Part B) List what you could do **BETTER or DIFFERENTLY** in the future
for more optimal **teamwork**:



Empowering the Iowa Girl

Leadership. Culture. Character. Performance.

© 2023-2025 Excellence with Integrity Institute. In partnership with The Ray Center at Drake University.



Excellence with Integrity™
INSTITUTE

216 Fayette Street, Suite 1, Manlius, NY 13104

Phone: 315-692-8054 | email: info@ewii.org

www.ewii.org

Excellence with Integrity TOOLS® is
a registered trademark of the Excellence with Integrity Institute.



The Robert D. and
Billie Ray Center

2702 Forest Ave., Des Moines, IA 50311

Phone: 515-271-1910 | email: raycenter@drake.edu

TheRayCenter.org

For more information contact The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center
at 515-271-1910 or raycenter@drake.edu

About the Consortium

Almost two decades ago, the Excellence with Integrity Institute and The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, created a consortium partnership to advance our respective visions and missions. Together, we pursue strategic opportunities in youth leadership, employment readiness, athletics, education, and organizational development in community and workplace environments.

The Institute's main focus is on research and development of instructional and assessment tools and strategies that help leaders shape culture, build character, and achieve optimal performance.

The Ray Center's main focus is on coaching, training, and expanding our collaborative implementation projects across Iowa and around the globe.