



GAME DAY MINDS

Lesson 12: Strong Messages

Athletes learn how positive affirmations can reduce stress and help them perform at their best.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Athletes learn how to use positive messages as strategy to remain focused and confident under both day to day and competition related stress.
- Coaches and caregivers support athletes to create a routine around positive messages and acts of kindness.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Optional: [Strong Messages Activity Cards](#) (Pages 13-14)

LESSON OUTLINE

20 MINUTES TOTAL	DESCRIPTION
3 minutes	Welcome and Gather
11 minutes	Practicing Strong Messages
3 minutes	Athlete Question of the Day
3 minutes	Closing



WELCOME AND GATHER (3 minutes)

Greet athletes as they arrive. Ask athletes to share a positive message or share a positive message with them. Invite athletes to walk and talk with a partner until everyone arrives.

To begin the lesson, call everyone in with your designated signal.

Once athletes are gathered, introduce the Fitness through Sport lesson of the day. *Today's lesson is called Strong Messages! Positive and strong messages can help motivate you to work hard and try your best. An example of this is "you got this". Can anyone think of a time when they have used positive messages? We are going to come up with some examples of Strong Messages today.*



PRACTICING STRONG MESSAGES (11 minutes)

Purpose: To introduce positive messages and help athletes practice using them.

Directions:

- Ask the team to brainstorm a list of positive messages. *Who can share a word or phrase that will help us feel ready to try our best before a competition?*



- Write the phrases down as the athletes say them.
- Once the team is done brainstorming, explain that each person will choose one positive message that they will use during practice.
- Next tell the athletes that they are going to practice saying positive messages to each other. *Everyone walk around the playing area and greet each other with a handshake, fist bump, eye contact, or smile. Then, share a positive message with each other.*
- Do this for a 2-3 minutes before calling everyone back in.
- Ask the athletes, how did it feel to share a positive message? Allow different athletes to answer. *Note that sharing a positive message usually makes both people feel good. It doesn't matter who it was intended for! You can try using positive messages towards yourself or towards a teammate.*



ATHLETE QUESTION OF THE DAY (3 minutes)

When will you use the positive messages towards yourself?

- Remind athletes that they can use positive messages anytime during training sessions and competitions. This is a good reminder for you as the coach to use positive messages with your athletes as well!
- Remind athletes to add any new goals to their Weekly Habit Tracker



CLOSING (3 minutes)

Thank the athletes for their participation and effort. **Share an example of a positive affirmation that you use or a story about a previous athlete that was able to overcome performance anxiety through positive self-talk.**

Reminders:

- [Homeplay: Supporting Yourself and Others](#) — *In this week's Homeplay activity, you will take time to think about who makes you feel happy and ways you can show kindness to others.*
- Share feedback and praise for effort and healthy habits you observed.

Coach Reflection:

- What worked?
- What did not work? What can be done differently?

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Homeplay: Supporting Yourself and Others](#)
- [Strong Messages Activity Cards](#)
- [Strong Minds Tips for Stress: Coaches Playbook](#)