



THROUGH SPORTS, WE HAVE  
THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THE  
LIVES OF GIRLS AND YOUNG  
WOMEN.



COACHING  
CARDS



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For more information about  
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Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence



# INTRODUCTION

Winning games is the goal of every coach as they enter their sports season. But teaching student athletes to win games is not everything coaches do. Coaches also assist their athletes in developing their full potential. While coaches are responsible for preparing athletes by instructing them in skill building, analyzing their performances, and providing encouragement, a great coach will also take responsibility for the guidance of the athlete in life as well.

## COACHING GIRLS TO LEADERS

was compiled by Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a compliment to Coaching Boys Into Men. CBIM is a program of Futures Without Violence that has been used throughout the state to teach boys healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength. Using a collection of lessons plans from A Thin Line, Athletes as Leaders, RAINN, Girls Circle, and Adidas "She Breaks Barriers", Coaching Girls To Leaders aims to present coaches with the tools to help girls succeed in life.

# INTRODUCTION

## COACHING GIRLS TO LEADERS

Has been developed to be incorporated in your regular coaching sessions. It is comprised of 12 “mini-training” sessions, each designed to be implemented in 15 minutes or less.

1. Pre-season Speech
2. Personal Responsibility
3. Safe Supportive Culture
4. The Confidence Code
5. Communicating Boundaries
6. Aggression vs. Harmful Behavior
7. Relationships
8. Digital Disrespect
9. Consent
10. Resilience
11. Modeling Respect
12. Wrap-Up & Pledge

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# GETTING STARTED

## COACHING GIRLS TO LEADERS COACHING CARDS

Use these coaching cards to lead weekly discussions with your athletes throughout the season.

This set includes:

- Introduction cards with background information on the curriculum.
- Getting Started cards to help you get ready.
- Session cards with topics for you to discuss with your athletes each week.
- Resource and reference cards.

These cards are designed to assist you in delivering each week's subject matter. While you can read directly from the cards, it is recommended that you review the material and develop your own style for presenting the information. Feel free to be creative and tell stories when delivering your message. If at any time, you feel uncomfortable presenting the information, please reach out to your Coaching Girls To Leaders ambassador to assist you.

# GETTING STARTED

## BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

As the leader of your team, you already are aware of how important teamwork is to a victorious season. The same is true for being successful at Coaching Girls to Leaders. Coaching Girls To Leaders is more than just educating athletes about confidence, resilience, and respect, Coaching Girls to Leaders seeks to create a school environment that is healthy and safe for all students. To achieve this, partnerships are essential. By teaming up with experts, you will have their support to ensure the success of Coaching Girls to Leaders. Partnering with a Coaching Girls To Leaders ambassador provides coaches with a source of knowledge and expertise when questions or difficult situations arise. In most cases, this ambassador will be the same person that provided your initial training. They will also work with you on getting the Coaching Girls To Leaders pre and post assessments completed, and raising awareness of the work you do.





# YOUR GAME PLAN

Whatever your special skills and talents, it is always important to have a game plan for a winning season. The following steps will help you to effectively execute Coaching Girls To Leaders:

## PRE-SEASON

- Get trained on the Coaching Girls To Leaders curriculum.
- Review these card sessions.
- Have your athletes complete the pre-season assessment. This can also be completed during the first session.

## IN-SEASON

- Choose a consistent day and time to hold your sessions.
- These cards are here as a source of reference for you. You can read the cards, but it is much more effective if you create your own style to deliver the messages.
- Tell stories to maximize the message. These messages are better remembered when stories are involved. They can also be a great teaching tool.

# YOUR GAME PLAN

- It is important to have a safe and supportive environment so your athletes feel comfortable sharing.
- Team up with your Coaching Girls To Leaders ambassador if you need assistance on a particular topic. They are there for your success!



## POST-SEASON

- Complete the post-season assessment.
- Meet with Coaching Girls To Leaders ambassadors to review the season.
- Host a fan pledge day-make a home game a fan pledge day. During the pre-game you can announce your team's commitment to respecting others and have fans sign a pledge to do so as well.
- All of your players will be the stars of this game for their public promise to respect others.
- Create a leadership board where all the pledges are displayed in your school.





# SESSION 1: PRE-SEASON SPEECH

## THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Understand your expectations and ground rules for the upcoming season, such as arriving on time, respectful behavior, etc.
- ② Anticipate upcoming program sessions focusing on promoting healthy relationships, personal responsibility, leadership, and a culture of supporting each other.



## WARM UP

"Since this is the beginning of the season, I want to talk with you about your responsibilities on this team, to each other and my expectations of you.

This season we will not only be focusing on your development as athletes but also as young women. Each week, I will be talking with you about some of these things. Starting today, we will focus on how we can show respect for ourselves, our teammates, and others."

# SESSION 1: PRE-SEASON SPEECH

## ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What does respect mean to you and why is it important?
2. How do you show respect for your teammates?
3. How do you show respect for your family and friends?
4. How can you show respect to people you don't like?



## DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- I care how you act both on and off the field.
- Respectful behavior means treating others how they want to be treated. I know you are not going to get along with everyone, but that's never an excuse to physically or verbally harass someone.
- As athletes, people will watch you. Many will look up to you to see how you act and how you treat others.
- Use your visibility and leadership to promote respect.



## SESSION 2: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize the consequences of their behavior and how their language and conduct reflects on them, the team and others.
- ② Accept responsibility and hold themselves accountable for their actions.



### WARM UP

“Last week we went over some of the things I expect you to be responsible for such as getting to practice on time, working hard and respecting one another. I also want you to be accountable for your actions. You are the person responsible and accountable for everything you say and do—in sports and in your everyday life.”

# SESSION 2: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

## ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What does it mean to be responsible for your actions on the field or court?
2. How do your actions off the field or court represent your team, your school and your community?
3. How do you hold yourself accountable outside the game?
4. How might we help each other be more accountable?



## DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Be a team player. This means respecting your teammates, displaying good sportsmanship and being in control of your actions.
- Accountability means holding yourself responsible—and that is something that you and only you can do.
- One thing that we are going to focus on this season is that there are real consequences for yourself and others when you don't treat people with respect.



## SESSION 3: SAFE SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize that positive emotional support starts with a culture of safety in which they feel safe to seek help and discuss their challenges and struggles.
- ② Understand that the keys to leadership are creating a safe and supportive environment for themselves and others.



### WARM UP

“This week we are going to discuss creating a safe and supportive culture not just for you as an individual but as a team. It is important that we have an all-inclusive environment in which everyone here feels safe. And by safe, what I mean is that we value each person as diverse individuals, and everyone feels comfortable to express themselves without fear of retaliation.”

## SESSION 3: SAFE SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What does safety and support mean to you and why is it important?
2. How do you show support for your teammates?
3. What more can we do as a team to create a safe and supportive team culture?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Many of you already practice support for your friends on the team but it is just as important to provide support and safety for everyone on the team.
- Think of the things you can do on your team, like motivating a teammate at practice, team cheers, huddles and high fives.
- Part of being a student athlete is being a role model in this school. Think about how you can mentor other girls to create a safe and supportive culture throughout the school.



## SESSION 4: THE CONFIDENCE CODE

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize how to visualize themselves as they want to be.
- ② Recognize that confidence gives them the power to be themselves even when its hard or scary.



### WARM UP

“Today I want to speak with you about confidence. Confidence is what turns our thoughts into actions. Confidence is what you use to help you do anything that seems hard or impossible. It is what gives you a boost for everyday challenges as well. Imagine confidence as a tiny powerful coach inside your mind to help you do all the things you want to do.”

## SESSION 4: THE CONFIDENCE CODE

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What does confidence feel like to you?
2. How can your thoughts boost your confidence?
3. How can you boost confidence in your teammates and friends?
4. Do you have a confidence role model? What are the qualities they possess that makes them confident?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Being a part of a team can build your confidence. Supporting your teammates and friends can help them to build confidence as well.
- When working on your confidence, it's important to take smart risks. Don't do anything that feels wrong or that someone else is pressuring you to do.
- Sometimes taking risks to build your confidence means leaving your comfort zone.
- Confidence also means being okay with yourself and where you are in life.





## SESSION 5: COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Understand the importance of communicating with their partner and others about what's acceptable or not acceptable in their relationships.
- ② Start conversations about setting boundaries in relationships.



### WARM UP

“ We’ve talked a lot about respect and relationships this season. Today I want to talk about what exemplifies a healthy relationship. Whether it’s just a friendship, you’re hooking up, or in a more serious relationship with someone, there are certain things that everyone deserves. Respect, honesty, trust, and support are just a few things to are pivotal to a healthy and positive relationship. I want you to demonstrate them and to expect them in return. ”

# SESSION 5: COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES

## ASK THE PLAYERS

1. In a good relationship, what are things you think both people deserve?
2. Have you ever had a disagreement with a partner, friend or family member? How did you handle it?
3. What are respectful ways to approach disagreements?
4. What can you do if someone crosses your boundaries?



## DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Good relationships are built on mutual respect. Respecting someone means asking what they are comfortable with and listening to what they say.
- It's important that both people trust and support each other.
- Everyone deserves to have their own interests outside of their relationship.
- All relationships have disagreements, and that's okay. Talking to the other person directly and respectfully about what's bothering you can help you come to a mutual understanding.



## SESSION 6: AGGRESSION VS. HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize different degrees of aggression on and off the field or court.
- ② Identify when they are becoming aggressive.
- ③ Understand the difference between aggression and harmful behavior.



### WARM UP

“ In sports, winning not only requires physical strength and conditioning, but at times it also requires you to be aggressive.

Sometimes we even want to intimidate our opponent to get the extra edge; but even this must be done within the boundaries of the game. There is a difference between aggression and harmful behavior. ”

# SESSION 6: AGGRESSION VS. HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

## ASK THE PLAYERS

1. How does aggression help you in the game? What are the rules that maintain fairness and help players avoid injury?
2. How do you feel when someone breaks the rules during a game?
3. When can being too aggressive become harmful?
4. What are some suggestions for managing aggression so it doesn't become harmful?



## DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Sports require aggression. The goal is to win by dominating your opponent. In sports, aggression is controlled by rules.
- Assertive people state their opinions and stick up for themselves and others while being respectful. Aggressive people that are harmful attack or ignore others' opinions in favor of their own.
- Bullying is a form of aggression that is harmful. Bullying isn't just intimidating someone, it can also mean spreading gossip or rumors, body shaming someone or leaving someone out of an activity.
- You are in control and responsible for all your actions both on and off the field.



## SESSION 7: RELATIONSHIPS

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- ② Recognize how certain behaviors can be hurtful, frightening or even abusive.



### WARM UP

“ Last session we talked about aggression and how to manage your emotions. Today’s topic is relationships. When we are talking about relationships, we are talking about all types of relationships that you may have with another person whether it be dating, hanging out, hooking up or just friends. Today’s discussion will help us recognize the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. This applies to all sexual relationships and people including straight, gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual or transgender.

## SESSION 7: RELATIONSHIPS

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What are some signs of a healthy relationship? What are some signs of an unhealthy relationship?
2. What is one thing you can do to make sure you are in a healthy relationship?
3. What could you do to help a friend or teammate who is being treated badly or being abused in their relationship?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Relationships are supposed to be fun and feel good. Even when there is a disagreement, a person should always treat their partner with respect.
- In all relationships, you are responsible for your actions and behaviors towards others. You have the right to feel safe and be treated with respect.
- Often abuse happens slowly over time, Once abuse starts, it is often a cycle with good and bad times.
- As students and athletes, it is important to promote healthy relationships and to seek support if you are ever concerned about anyone who is in an unsafe situation, including yourself.



## SESSION 8: DIGITAL DISRESPECT

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Recognize that the actions they take online and on their phones have real consequences.
- ② Create safe and respectful digital spaces for themselves and others.



### WARM UP

“ We’ve talked about how the words you use and the actions you take can be disrespectful or harmful to others.

This goes for what you do online and on your phones, too. Sometimes we don’t take things seriously when we’re not face to face with someone. What happens online is real and sometimes very public for all the world to see. Friendships and dating relationships are shaped by what we do and what we say – no matter where it takes place. It’s important that we use technology safely and respectful.”

## SESSION 8: DIGITAL DISRESPECT

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What are some benefits of things like social networking, chatting, and texting? What are some not so great things?
2. How would you feel if someone posted private photos or harassing comments about you online?
3. How would you feel if someone repeatedly pressured you to do something you didn't want to do, like sending nudes or private pictures?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Texting and chatting helps us keep in touch with others, but it can sometimes make boundaries unclear.
- Be respectful of what other people are okay with over text message, and be clear about what's okay with you. Bullying someone online is never acceptable.
- It is NEVER okay to pressure someone for a nude or private picture. It's also wrong to share these pictures with other people. Sending nude pictures has serious consequences and some teens have even faced criminal charges.
- Posting information online is easy but removing a post is almost impossible to do.





## SESSION 9: UNDERSTANDING CONSENT

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Discuss and respect personal boundaries around intimate and sexual activities to create healthy, safe relationships and situations.
- ② Understand what affirmative consent means and what is a lack of consent.



### WARM UP

“Communication can be challenging in any relationship, but never is it more critical than in a physical or sexual situation. Not everyone likes to be touched so remember to ask before touching another person.

When you're engaging in sexual activity, consent is about communication and it should happen every time. Giving consent for one activity, one time, does not mean giving consent for increased or recurring sexual contact. Agreeing to kiss someone doesn't give them permission to remove your clothes. Having sex with someone in the past doesn't give that person permission to have sex with you again in the future.”

## SESSION 9: UNDERSTANDING CONSENT

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What does consent mean to you?
2. How do you determine consent? What if you're not sure what your date or partner feels comfortable with?
3. What are ways pressure and threats can be used to make someone do something they don't want to do?
4. What can you do if you notice someone in a dangerous or non-consensual situation?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Intimate and sexual situations should always be consensual, safe and respectful.
- You can withdraw consent at any point if you feel uncomfortable. It's important to clearly communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop.
- Affirmative consent can look like this:
  - F**: freely given
  - R**: reversible
  - I**: informed
  - E**: enthusiastic
  - S**: specific



## SESSION 10: RESILIENCE

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Understand that they don't always have to be perfect, that they can learn from their mistakes.
- ② How to handle challenges and overcome setbacks.
- ③ Recognize that asking for help can be a strength.



### WARM UP

“Today we’re going to talk about resilience. Resilience is the ability to bounce back during or after a difficult time. It’s also the ability to adapt to different circumstances that you can’t change. When you’re resilient, you’re more prepared to seek new ways to overcome your challenges and achieve your goals. Facing challenges in life can be useful – they help us grow as a person and give us knowledge and skills that make us better prepared the next time something challenges us.”

## SESSION 10: RESILIENCE

### ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What positive messages can you give yourself to build your resilience?
2. Have you ever had a challenge to overcome? How did you do that?
3. What internal or external resources do you have or can you use to build your resilience?



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Resilience is knowing that you have the power within you to pick yourself up.
- Resilience is more than just coping. Although this might mean taking some risks, it also creates opportunities for success and greater self-confidence.
- Empathy, respect for self and others, kindness, honesty and cooperation are also linked to resilience. This includes showing care and concern for people, accepting people's differences, not mistreating or bullying others, and taking responsibility for your actions.



# SESSION 11: MODELING RESPECT

## THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Treat others how they want to be treated.
- ② Notice and support their teammates or friends when they display respectful behavior.



## WARM UP

“ I’m proud of this team. You’ve done a great job representing us on and off the field. You’ve been willing to consider hard questions about what’s okay or not okay in all your relationships. You may not realize it, but you’re all role models at this school. You’ve really stepped up and I want you to support each other and remind each other to be respectful towards others. You are growing up to be athletes I can admire.”

# SESSION 11: MODELING RESPECT

## ASK THE PLAYERS

1. What are ways you can show respect in your relationships and friendships?
2. What can you do if you hear a friend or teammate making demeaning comments about someone because of how they act, speak, or dress?
3. As someone other players and students look up to in this school, what are ways you can share these principles of respect with others?



## DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- Showing respect means valuing and supporting everyone's individuality. This includes how someone dresses and expresses themselves.
- If you witness a situation that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you don't have to get involved directly. Ask a trusted friend or adult for help.
- You are all part of something positive at this school. Your commitment to respect is also a responsibility – defend it and share it.



## SESSION 12: WRAP UP & PLEDGE

### THIS SESSION WILL HELP ATHLETES:

- ① Serve as public examples of respect towards others.
- ② Actively affirm their and their team's collective commitment against relationship abuse and the healthy treatment of others.



### WARM UP

"Today is our last session. This season you've all been great athletes and team players. I've also been impressed with your leadership in showing respect for others. You are becoming great players of the game and the lessons you have learned will serve you well in life as well. In recognition of the commitment you've all made, I want us to read and sign this Pledge together."

## SESSION 12: WRAP UP & PLEDGE

### ASK THE PLAYERS

#### Coach and Player Pledge

"I commit to taking a stand against relationship abuse. I believe that violence is neither a solution nor a sign of strength. By taking this pledge, I understand that by treating everyone with respect, I am a role model to others. A world of respect starts today and it starts with me."



### DISCUSSION POINTS AND WRAP UP

- We will sign and post this pledge in the gym or school hallway so your commitment will be known and recognized.
- This is the beginning, not the end. You know that I share this commitment with you, and I want you know you can come to me anytime for advice, to ask questions, or to discuss any situation that might come up.





## RESOURCES

### THERE IS HELP

If you need help or just someone to talk to, please visit

[CTSafeConnect.org](https://CTSafeConnect.org) or  
call/text 888.774.2900.

Advocates are available 24/7  
or

you can connect directly to your local  
[domestic violence organization.](#)

The Alliance Against Sexual Violence

Statewide 24 hour Helpline

888.999.5545 (English)

888.568.8332 (Español)

[www.endsexualviolencect.org/](https://www.endsexualviolencect.org/)

True Colors

Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services

860. 232.0050

[www.ourtruecolors.org/](https://www.ourtruecolors.org/)

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