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## WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS AND HOW TO INTEGRATE THEM WITHIN SPORTS IN BRAZIL TO PROMOTE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

### O QUE SÃO *LIFE SKILLS* E COMO INTEGRÁ-LAS NO ESPORTE BRASILEIRO PARA PROMOVER O DESENVOLVIMENTO POSITIVO DE JOVENS?

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#### RESUMO

O esporte tem sido apontado como uma ferramenta valiosa para promover o desenvolvimento positivo de jovens (DPJ). Além disso, o desenvolvimento de *life skills* destaca-se por auxiliar jovens a ter sucesso dentro e fora do contexto esportivo. Devido as discussões limitadas no Brasil acerca do DPJ e das *life skills* tanto no âmbito científico quanto na estruturação de programas esportivos, este ensaio teórico tem como objetivo fornecer entendimentos iniciais a acadêmicos, treinadores e gestores esportivos sobre as concepções que sustentam estas temáticas e como integrá-las no esporte brasileiro. Assim, após explorar as concepções e definições acerca do DPJ e das *life skills* e as abordagens para o desenvolvimento no esporte, os autores apresentam uma proposta baseada em três princípios e cinco procedimentos. Os princípios incluem: (a) reflita e desenvolva sua filosofia; (b) cultive um clima positivo e (c) desenvolva relações significativas com seus atletas. Já os procedimentos são: (1) selecione e discuta a *life skill* do dia; (2) pratique a *life skill* selecionada; (3) integre a *life skill* com as atividades do treino; (4) discuta e reflita a aplicação e transferência da *life skill* para outros contextos e (5) crie oportunidades para facilitar a transferência da *life skill*. Exemplos práticos são fornecidos ao longo da proposta para auxiliar treinadores na aplicação ao esporte.

**Palavras-chave:** Pedagogia do esporte. Habilidades para a vida. Métodos de ensino. Esporte educacional.

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#### ABSTRACT

Sport has been identified as a favourable tool for promoting positive youth development (PYD). Moreover, the development of life skills is highlighted for supporting youth to thrive in and beyond sport. Due to the limited discussions in Brazil regarding PYD and life skills both in research and in the structuring of sport programs, this paper aims to provide understanding to scholars, coaches, and sport stakeholders on the foundations of PYD and life skills and on how to integrate them within Brazilian sport contexts. Thus, after exploring the foundations and definitions related to PYD and life skills and the approaches to their facilitation in sport, the authors present a proposal based on three principles and five procedures. The principles include: (a) reflect and develop your philosophy, (b) cultivate a positive climate, and (c) develop meaningful relationships with your athletes. Further, the five procedures are: (1) select and discuss the life skill of the day; (2) practice the selected life skill, (3) integrate the life skill during the practice, (4) discuss and reflect on the life skill application and transfer to other contexts, and (5) create opportunities to facilitate life skills transfer. Practical examples are provided throughout the proposal to support coaches in applying these concepts in sport.

**Keywords:** Sport pedagogy. Life skills. Coaching methods. Education.

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#### Introduction

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, youth was perceived as a “period fraught with hazards”<sup>1,14</sup> with researchers focusing on how to minimize risk-behaviours, such as drug abuse, alcohol intake, engagement in crime, and involvement in violence<sup>2</sup>. However, with the formation of the positive psychology movement in the 1980s, a paradigm shift occurred from a deficit-reductionist approach to a strength-based approach that highlighted one’s qualities and virtues<sup>1,2</sup>. In this scenario, the positive youth development (PYD) framework was created with the understanding that every youth has talents, qualities, and interests that offer the potential for a successful future<sup>1</sup>. Amongst the possibilities of applying this framework in youth-related activities, organized sports programs have been highlighted<sup>3,4</sup> and structured<sup>5,6</sup> to promote PYD. Moreover, it is believed that when youth are involved in a positive sport environment, they are able to sustain outcomes beyond physical development, including

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social, emotional, and psychological improvements<sup>4</sup>. When these actionable psychosocial assets are learned and/or refined in sport and transferred to other life contexts they are called life skills<sup>7</sup>.

According to Danish et al.<sup>3</sup>, life skills developed or refined through sport can be interpersonal (working as a team, communicating effectively) or intrapersonal (concentrating during an activity, making assertive decisions). PYD and life skills processes are highly influenced by the program's goals; although, sport coaches' actions and behaviours are highly influential for youth's developmental experiences<sup>8</sup>. In this sense, coaches may be either explicit in their practices and intentionally discuss and organize activities oriented to the teaching of life skills; or implicit and not intervene for this purpose due to considering life skills an automatic and natural consequence of youth involvement in sports<sup>9</sup>. Thus, over the last two decades, several investigations were conducted to shed light on the factors that influence PYD and the development of life skills<sup>10</sup>.

The body of knowledge published in the English language related to PYD and life skills development within sport is widespread mainly within North America, the United Kingdom, and Oceania<sup>10</sup>. In these places, structuring PYD-based sport programs and integrating explicit life skills coaching strategies within coaches' practices are consolidated discussions and operationalized in the practical field<sup>5,6,11</sup>. Researchers within these countries continue to report participants' transferring life skills, such as persevering in difficult situations, respecting others, being a leader, communicating well, and acquiring the ability to make assertive decisions, solve problems, maintain self-control, set goals, among others<sup>10</sup>.

Within Portuguese-speaking countries, research on the field of PYD and life skills in sport is limited<sup>12,13</sup> as the application of such concepts in the youth sport context is still scarce<sup>14</sup>. However, the conception of sports programs as a means to promote youth education and development has been discussed for decades in Brazil<sup>15,16</sup>. Indeed, "educational sport" is one of the four avenues recognized by the Brazilian government for sports practice, alongside participation, performance, and development<sup>17,18</sup>. Educational sport is defined as:

"practice in educational systems and in unsystematic forms of education, avoiding the selectivity and hyper competitiveness of its practitioners, in order to achieve the whole development of the individual and their training for the exercise of citizenship and the practice of leisure"<sup>17</sup>.

Programs such as the "*Programa Segundo Tempo*" (Second Half Program) offered by the national government<sup>19</sup> and the "*Campeões da Vida*" (Life Champions) offered by a private organization<sup>20</sup> are examples of educational sports programs in Brazil. The main goal of both programs is to offer sporting activities for socially vulnerable youth (i.e., low conditions in infrastructure, human development, and income) as a means to promote their positive development<sup>19,20</sup>. Even though these initiatives are important to attend to this population, which includes a substantial percentage of Brazil<sup>21</sup>, they do not seem to include populations that are not in socially vulnerable conditions. Indeed, Brazil is identified as a country with major social inequalities, whereby underprivileged and wealthy youth often live side by side<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, the structuring of educational sports programs with nationwide access based on a strength-based approach (i.e., supported by PYD) is fundamental in Brazil for the inclusion of all individuals, regardless of identified social conditions, gender, ethnicity, culture, and behaviour<sup>4</sup>. This is a latent need in the country especially when considering that 58.1% of youth (10 to 19 years old) participate in organized sport and/or physical activity programs<sup>23</sup>. Although Brazilian researchers have suggested the need for discussing and reflecting with youth about values and positive behaviours (i.e., life skills) in educational sports programs<sup>15</sup>, contextualizing the teaching of these aspects with the existing technical-tactical components seems to be an important next step within the Brazilian sport literature.

So, this paper aims to provide initial understandings to scholars, coaches, and sport stakeholders on the foundations of PYD and life skills, and how to intentionally integrate them within Brazilian sport programs.

### *PYD and Life Skills: Foundations and Definitions*

As mentioned by Weiss<sup>24</sup>, research on youth development through sport and the inclusion of PYD-based sports programs is considered “old wine in a new bottle” given that the discussions surrounding youth development occurring nearly a century ago were “redesigned” for originating the PYD framework and contemporary insights on this topic. For example, prior discussions on positive psychology support the current focus on “what works, what is right, and what is improving”<sup>25:216</sup> rather than the issues, problems, and pathologies related to youth (i.e., the negative aspects)<sup>2</sup>. For positive psychologists, the “best way” to prevent and reduce negative behaviours was through nurturing one’s strength and virtues<sup>2,26</sup>. Although the practical application of positive psychology is often related (inaccurately) to a self-help format through individual and group strategies<sup>27</sup>, some tenants that remain consistent with the PYD framework include: (a) providing participants with a positive environment to develop quality relationships (e.g., peers, parents, teachers, coaches, community members); (b) supporting the development of positive behaviours as an alternative to preventative measures in remediating risk-behaviours; and (c) focusing on what is working and improving, rather than being concerned with what is insufficient<sup>1,2,28</sup>.

Moreover, due to the foundations of PYD being a strength-based approach, initial research has been conducted in order to provide directions to programs and coaches in terms of what “strengths” are the desired outcomes for youth development<sup>11</sup>. The work of Professor Richard Lerner on the development of five “Cs” (i.e., competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and compassion) is one of the most popular conceptualizations of PYD<sup>11</sup> and has since been supported in theoretical<sup>4</sup> and empirical research<sup>29</sup>. In addition, a sixth C (i.e., contribution) was suggested as an outcome of the successful development of the five “Cs” across the course of their lives, which would facilitate youth’s positive contributions to self, family, community, and society<sup>30</sup>. Among the several contexts for the application of PYD in youth programs (e.g., music, drama, dance), within the past two decades, youth sport programs have been considered as a promising context for PYD due to the opportunities for physical and psychosocial development as well as the inherent intrinsic motivation normally reported by youth athletes<sup>4,28</sup>.

In the expansion of theoretical investigations and practical applications based on the PYD framework, previous literature on the development of social and emotional competencies using the concept of life skills<sup>31,32</sup> was integrated within the PYD umbrella<sup>3,33</sup> and provided new directions for the research agenda. With the notion of life skills development acknowledged, researchers have since stressed the importance of developing life skills as a manner to foster positive behaviours and support youth towards the challenges of everyday life<sup>34</sup>.

Later, Danish et al.<sup>3</sup> and Gould et al.<sup>33</sup> provided definitions for life skills development in the context of sports. Initially, Danish et al.<sup>3:40</sup> provided a broader definition: “those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods”. Later, Gould et al.<sup>33:60</sup> moved the definition further by including the aspect of life skills transfer: “those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings.” In other words, when a new skill is learned in sports and only used within this context (e.g., cooperating with teammates), it is defined as a sport skill<sup>35</sup>. However, if the

individual starts to cooperate in other settings (e.g., cooperating with peers in school and with parents in household chores) the sport skill becomes a life skill<sup>35</sup>.

Considering the importance of transferring sport skills to daily situations, a definition of transfer was created to better set this process<sup>7:194</sup>. According to Pierce et al.<sup>7</sup>, life skills transfer is:

The ongoing process by which an individual further develops or learns and internalises a personal asset (i.e., psychosocial skill, knowledge, disposition, identity construction, or transformation) in sport and then experiences personal change through the application of the asset in one or more life domains beyond the context where it was originally learned.

When analyzing the definition proposed, it is possible to understand how broad the conceptualisation of what counts as a life skill (i.e., skill, personal asset, characteristic, psychosocial skill, knowledge, and character). As this paper aims to provide directions to the implementation of life skills development in Brazilian sports programs, it is important to first reflect on the translation of the terms PYD and life skills to Brazilian Portuguese.

Although the Portuguese translation of the term ‘positive youth development’ has been established (*desenvolvimento positivo de jovens*) and used within recent studies<sup>12-14</sup>, the translation of the term ‘life skills’ is not as straightforward, especially for the word ‘skill’. In the English language, ‘skills’ translate to Brazilian Portuguese as *habilidade*, *prática*, or *destreza*<sup>36</sup>. In addition to the terms presented in the definitions above, other terms that could be considered in relation to the concept of life skills are *competências* (competences), *valores* (values), *atitudes* (attitudes), *comportamentos* (behaviours), *lições* (lessons) or *aprendizagem* (learning). Notably, the same difficulty is found for the translation of the term ‘coaching’, which is still used (even in English) in research from Brazil<sup>37</sup> and Portugal<sup>38</sup>. Although studies in Portugal have adopted the term ‘*competências para a vida*’ (life competences) to refer to life skills<sup>13,39</sup>, we believe that the use of the term ‘*habilidade*’, at least in Brazilian Portuguese, is more aligned with the translation of the term ‘skill’. Therefore, after in-depth discussions by the authors on the epistemological and theoretical foundations of life skills and the aforementioned terms, we currently suggest the use of the actual term in English (life skills) or its translation into ‘*habilidades para a vida*’ in research and practice conducted in Brazil (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Terms in Brazilian Portuguese embraced by the concept of life skills or *habilidades para a vida*

Source: The authors

#### *Approaches for Life Skills Development in Sports*

When it comes to how life skills can be developed and taught through sports, two approaches have been identified: the implicit and the explicit approach<sup>9</sup>. The implicit approach is considered a non-intentional approach to life skills development as there are no

deliberate efforts made by coaches to teach life skills or to provide opportunities for youth to practice life skills or to transfer beyond sport<sup>9</sup>. Thus, due to the coaches’ focus only on the development of physical and sport-specific skills, life skills development may occur but it is left to chance<sup>40</sup>. Importantly, it is worth mentioning youth may implicitly develop life skills<sup>41,42</sup> due to exposure to the inherent demands (e.g., opportunities for competition and skill-building) and social endeavours (e.g., interactions with coaches) within sport<sup>43</sup>. Within the implicit approach, the manner in which coaches structure the sport program and establish their relationships with youth (e.g., being a role model) may also play an important role in implicitly learning life skills<sup>5,43</sup>.

Conversely, the explicit approach refers to programs and coaches that employ an intentional focus on the development of sport-specific skills and life skills in an integrative and concurrent manner<sup>9</sup>, rather than perceiving it as an isolated activity or automatic process<sup>44</sup>. In sum, the explicit approach recognizes that life skills should be intentionally taught, rather than accidentally “caught”<sup>45</sup>. Furthermore, recent theoretical<sup>10</sup> and empirical research<sup>5</sup> acknowledge that intentionally and explicitly structured programs to foster PYD and life skills development and transfer are better suited to enhance youth’s development than non-intentionally and implicitly structured programs.

With the advancement of research on approaches and strategies for developing life skills through sport, it is currently believed that this process may not be as dichotomous as previously acknowledged. Bean et al.<sup>46</sup> created a continuum of intentionality that is distributed across six levels “to guide researchers and practitioners in understanding and framing life skills development and transfer” (p. 3). According to the authors, the first two levels are implicit in nature, and include: (a) structuring the sport context and (b) facilitating a positive climate<sup>46</sup>. The subsequent four levels are explicit in nature and include (c) discussing life skills, (d) practicing life skills, (e) discussing transfer, and (f) practicing transfer (see Bean et al.<sup>46</sup> for a more detailed explanation of the continuum). The continuum is built in a foundational manner so that as a coach progresses towards more explicit coaching behaviours, he or she consistently sustain the necessities of the previous levels<sup>46</sup>. In addition to the contributions of Bean et al.<sup>46</sup> theoretical continuum, the studies of Camiré et al.<sup>47</sup>, Kendellen et al.<sup>6</sup>, and Pierce et al.<sup>44</sup> have contributed to the scientific and applied fields by indicating evidence-based strategies to guide coaches to explicitly teach life skills. Details of the strategies can be found in Chart 1.

Camiré et al. <sup>47</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carefully develop your coaching philosophy.</li> <li>2. Develop meaningful relationships with your athletes.</li> <li>3. Intentionally plan developmental strategies in your coaching practice.</li> <li>4. Do not just talk about life skills, make your athletes practice life skills.</li> <li>5. Teach your athletes how life skills transfer to non-sport settings.</li> </ol>
Kendellen et al. <sup>6</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on one life skill per lesson.</li> <li>2. Introduce the life skill at the beginning of the lesson.</li> <li>3. Implement strategies to teach the life skill throughout the lesson.</li> <li>4. Debrief the life skill at the end of the lesson.</li> </ol>
Pierce et al. <sup>44</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritize coaching life skills and recognize the need to intentionally foster transfer.</li> <li>2. Foster life skills mastery and reinforce life skills transfer beyond sport.</li> <li>3. Maintain positive coach-athlete relationships.</li> <li>4. Create opportunities for athletes to apply life skills outside of sport.</li> <li>5. Develop partnerships with key social agents.</li> <li>6. Provide life skills boosters.</li> <li>7. Facilitate athlete reflection.</li> </ol>

**Chart 1.** Compilation of explicit strategies for the development of life skills

**Note:** \* See the full studies for further details on how to operate these strategies in the practical field.

**Source:** Authors

### *Proposal for Integrating Life Skills Development in Sports in Brazil*

In order to assist Brazilian scholars, coaches, and sports stakeholders in the explicit teaching of life skills through sport, the authors thoroughly reflected and discussed the strategies mentioned above<sup>6,44,47</sup>, the life skills continuum<sup>46</sup>, and their applicability to the Brazilian context. A proposal is presented based on such previous scholarship and from the authors' academic experiences of contributing theoretical and empirical work<sup>48-50</sup> for the fields of sports pedagogy and psychology and applied experiences of coaching youth sport programs and training and developing Brazilian coaches. The proposal is based on two main components: principles and procedures. Considering the foundational levels of the life skills continuum<sup>46</sup>, the principles underpin the structuring of the sports environment and are equivalent to the implicit components to assist coaches in employing positive behaviours and facilitating constructive interactions with athletes in their practices. The procedures represent the subsequent explicit levels of the continuum<sup>46</sup> and present a step-by-step to guide coaches in explicitly structuring life skills practices that are commonly contextualized to sport-specific skills development<sup>8</sup>. It is important to highlight that the principles and procedures should be viewed more as guidance, rather than a pre-structured and unchangeable practice plan guideline. Hence, coaches should experience autonomy and feel free to adapt the principles and procedures to include strategies they feel comfortable with to better suit their philosophies, contexts, competencies, and characteristics.

#### *Principles*

##### *Principle #1: Reflect and develop your philosophy<sup>47</sup>*

A coaching philosophy is the integration of one's principles, beliefs, and values that guides behaviours and practices on the ground<sup>51</sup>. In order to effectively facilitate PYD through sport, one needs to have a clear understanding of their own philosophy and to which extent it is aligned with the PYD framework<sup>47</sup>. Moreover, the development of a sound coaching philosophy that prioritizes the intentional teaching of life skills has been outlined by Bean et al.<sup>46</sup> as imperative to moving up the continuum levels. Examples of questions that can support coaches to recognize and develop their philosophies include: "What is my biggest goal as a coach?"; "What do I want my athletes to gain from their interactions with me?"; "What would I do to win?"; and "How am I promoting the physical and psychosocial development of my athletes?". Critical and reflective thinking around such questions can support coaches to better understand how they behave in the sport environment and what they can do to optimize the positive development of youth.

##### *Principle #2: Cultivate a positive climate<sup>46</sup>*

A positive climate is the outcome of a number of small actions that result in youths' perception of a safe environment in terms of physical (i.e., the facilities are not dangerous nor provide any harm) and social experiences (i.e., free of judgements, mocking, hazing, and prejudice)<sup>52</sup>. Coaches can attempt to facilitate a positive climate through the following strategies: interact in a positive manner (i.e., offering positive and motivational feedback rather than criticism); instigate youth participation in group discussions; and promote positive behaviours with peers, family, and coaches, etc. Moreover, at this level, positive relationships and behaviours can support the development of friendships as well as a "code of conduct" accepted by the group. Therefore, the key to this principle is to start paying more attention to the behaviours and relationships in practice (i.e., coach-athlete and athlete-athlete), rather than only putting effort into the sport-related drills and exercises.

*Principle #3: Develop meaningful relationships with your athletes*<sup>44,46,47</sup>

The relationship created between coaches and athletes is a combination of three out of the five C's indicated by Lerner et al.<sup>11</sup>, namely: Caring and Compassion, Connection, and Confidence. In this sense, one aspect of this principle is for coaches to facilitate meaningful relationships with their athletes to develop rapport and a trusting bond. A few strategies can support developing this relationship, such as caring about their personal lives at home, school, and other contexts through individual conversations; showcasing happiness for their presence in practice; providing individual attention in practice (e.g., giving individualized feedback) and outside of practice (e.g., sending individual messages to motivate their active participation); and telling their parents positive aspects of their participation. Organizing activities beyond the sport context can also optimize these relationships, such as organizing team field trips, tournaments, festivals with parent participation, and team meetings (e.g., watching games together, fundraising events, charity events).

*Procedures*

Below, steps are presented to guide coaches through the integration of explicit strategies for life skills development into their existing coaching practices. It is important to highlight that these procedures were organized considering a conventional structure of a practice, namely: beginning, main section, and conclusion. Taking into account that the procedures presented will support coaches' explicit intervention for youth's life skills development, one cannot wait only for "teachable moments" to happen (i.e., opportune situations to intervene and to teach life skills) or for the participants to develop life skills implicitly. Remember: life skills should be intentionally taught rather than accidentally "caught"<sup>45</sup>.

*Step 1: Select and discuss the life skill of the day*<sup>6</sup>

Step one includes selecting one "life skill of the day"<sup>6</sup> for each practice. The same life skill can and should be repeated in other practices. The life skill of the day should be introduced at the beginning of the practice through questioning in a group discussion: "The life skill of the day is teamwork. What does working as a team mean to you?". As the athletes provide definitions and examples of how to apply the skill within sports, the coach can also ask for previous experiences and hypothetical situations they could apply the life skill in sports. To facilitate athletes' understanding of the importance of life skill development for their own benefit in sports practice, coaches should select the life skill considering the sport-specific goal of the practice. For example, the skill of focusing can be taught in conjunction with completing a free kick, free throw, or serving practices; can be discussed for its importance when cooperating as a team defensively; and is important to acquire alongside managing one's time and regulating one's emotion during stressful game situations.

*Step 2: Practice the selected life skill*<sup>6,44,46,47</sup>

After athletes understood what the life skill is and how to apply it within sports, the coach should intentionally organize an activity for the participants to practice it within the sport program. To do so, coaches can implement engaging and fun games with adapted rules. For example, to provide opportunities to practice working as a team, athletes can play a tag game in which the person tagged needs to hold hands with the "tagger" to run after the other participants. Activities can also be contextualized to specific sports based on their underlying culture and skill requirements. For example, to provide opportunities to practice persevering in soccer, athletes can engage in a small-sided game with numerical superiority for the offensive team (e.g., 3v2, 3v1, 4v2, etc.) so the defensive athletes can experience challenging situations that may be common within their sport. Even simple tasks can assist in this process

(e.g., to practice focusing, have athletes balance a ball at the top of a cone before throwing/kicking/shooting a second ball). In order to increase enjoyment and youth involvement in the process of teaching life skills, it is essential that coaches create or adapt activities that are pleasurable, challenging, and stimulating. Depending on the activity selected, it can also serve as a warm-up option for the practice.

*Step 3: Integrate the life skill during practice*<sup>6,44,46,47</sup>

At the end of this first activity, the main part of the practice containing the drills and exercises for physical, technical, tactical, and psychological improvement should take place while also contextualizing the life skill of the day. If coaches have difficulty structuring training sessions in which all activities refer to life skills, we suggest including feedback that refers to the life skill selected for the day. For example, in soccer, if the team is working on passing, activities that require ball movement and working as a team may be a good fit for allowing better conditions for the team to score a goal. Thus, the coach can remind the athletes about the life skill of the day: “Remember, we are working on teamwork today!”, or provide positive feedbacks related to the life skill: “That is great teamwork! That is how it is done! Great job!”. As this concept is not yet common within Brazilian youth sports culture, it may take time and practice for coaches to become more confident in their abilities to teach life skills alongside physical skills, and we encourage coaches to be patient in their life skills teaching efforts.

*Step 4: Discuss and reflect on the life skill application and transfer to other contexts*<sup>6,44,46,47</sup>

After the main section of the practice is finished, it is important to discuss with the participants how the life skill was applied during the practice and what were their perceptions; for example: “How did you use teamwork in this practice?” or “What did you feel when you were able to perform a good teamwork with your peers?” Afterward, the challenge is to facilitate participants’ understanding of transferring it to non-sporting contexts, in other words, transforming a sport skill into a life skill. The suggestion here is to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on its application in other settings, for example: “How can we use teamwork in our lives?”; “Can you tell a story on how you acted as a team player on a daily basis situation?”. Such discussions provide valuable insights into how the athletes are understanding the life skills integration and if adjustments need to be made on the coaches’ behalf. For example, if athletes do not understand the associations between developing life skills within sport and applying them beyond sport, coaches may need to clarify the associative links and facilitate discussion differently.

*Step 5: Create opportunities to facilitate life skills transfer*<sup>44,46</sup>

In order to facilitate transfer to other contexts, one strategy is to give athletes tasks to do after practice, such as: “In the following days you will have to try to be a team player at home or in school and next practice you will tell us how you did”. Also, contact can be made with parents to give them opportunities to support their child’s development of teamwork at home (e.g., make their own bed, do the dishes, clean up their room, etc.) or with teachers to give them opportunities for development in school (e.g., organize group activities, ask for their help during physical education classes). Indeed, another component of successful life skills transfer is to facilitate athletes’ understanding of the benefits of transferring it to their daily lives. That is, the transfer must be meaningful for the athlete. For example, developing time management skills can help athletes to better organize and prioritize their daily tasks in order to be productive (e.g., not miss classes, practices, and events); developing resilience can help athletes to overcome difficult situations; and developing focus can help athletes perform



better at school tests. Overall, implementing this step into practice may help support the development of Lerner's<sup>30</sup> sixth C of contribution.

## Final Considerations

In order to assist Brazilian coaches in promoting PYD and integrating explicit strategies into their coaching practice, this paper proposed the use of the term 'life skills' or its translation into '*habilidades para a vida*' in Brazilian Portuguese research and practice. However, this is an initial proposal and we highlight the importance of the etymological debate of this term in future empirical investigations related to this topic as well as through discussions with coaches, sport stakeholders, and youth athletes. Afterward, we presented a proposal based on three principles and five procedures. The strategies discussed in this study aim to facilitate operating the explicit teaching life skills in an integrative manner with sport-specific skills within youth sport programs offered in Brazil. However, it is noteworthy that the process of implementing these strategies into coaches' practice should not be considered an "all or nothing" approach. In other words, the inclusion of new actions should be made progressively according to coaches' competence, autonomy, and confidence. In addition, it is important to mention that coaches do not necessarily remain on just one level of the continuum in their program<sup>46</sup>; coaches can move to more implicit and explicit levels depending on the goal of the practice, the participants, and the environment of which they are embedded.

Indeed, besides the coach itself, together with his/her goals, philosophy, and previous experiences as an athlete and coach, other agents play an important role in the level of explicitness coaches will adopt in their practices, namely: parents, athletes, superiors at work, peers, community members, and sport managers. For example, if a coach decides to adapt his/her own philosophy and goals to become more explicit in developing life skills, but the youths' parents want to win at all costs, they are less likely to approve of the adapted coaching practice and may be more likely to perceive the life skills development as a loss of time. However, we emphasize that a coach or program oriented to developing life skills through an explicit approach does not entail putting the physical components aside, but integrating them with a human development perspective to promote youth success, both in and out of sports. Therefore, the principles and procedures presented in this study may be easier to integrate within (but should not be restricted to) educational sports programs in Brazil. Lastly, the key is to understand that sports in Brazil can become more than an activity to develop physical skills, but a social tool for change since the grassroots level, being coaches the central tenet to developing better citizens.

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