



Consulting with Young People

Irish Sports Council Information Day
3rd November 2012

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Workshop covers:

- Study on consulting YP to seek their views
- What we know about consulting with YP
- Findings from study
- The why's and how's of consulting with YP

- Research title:
An exploratory study of young people's views regarding their welfare in an Irish swimming club context (Hills, 2012)
- Formal work with YP to obtain their views

- Study based on what we know so....

What do we know about the welfare of YP in sport?



Studies show...

- Sport is important!
- Increasing involvement by YP (Woods, 2010)
- Positive benefits (Light, 2010)
- Too much emphasis on competition (MacPhail et al, 2003)
- Family influences YP's participation (Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Wheeler, 2012)
- Reasons to stay involved – CP course!
- Progression into competition (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997)
- Participation choices for YP (Fraser-Thomas et al, 2008)
- Learning from sport (Light, 2010)

- Benefits of relationships (Brackenridge, 2001; Coakley, 2011)
- Coach – athlete relationship (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009)
- Peer relationships (UNICEF, 2010; Light, 2010; Fraser-Thomas et al, 2008)
- Little credence given to YP voices (MacPhail et al, 2003)

- *“The language of sport is replete with references to power – as sheer physical strength (‘powerful’), as contest (‘power struggle’), as a tactical ploy (‘power play’) and as an organisational status (‘seat of power’).”* (Brackenridge, 2001)

- History influenced present policy
- Adult views of children's involvement
- Awareness and positive approach to abuse prevention (Parent & Demers, 2011)
- Need for YP to contribute (Hartill & Prescott, 2007)
- Athlete centred approach (Stirling & Kerr, 2009)

- What we know centres on:
 - benefits of sport
 - how views are obtained
 - facilitation of YP's participation
 - importance of recognising voice
- Few studies on listening to their views in the development of policy
- Implication for policy makers to listen

The study



- **Set criteria for study**
 - Area: one region
 - Cluster unit: each club
 - Age / gender: 14-16 / mixed
 - Skill level: competitive status
 - Experience level: in club 2 years or more
- **Methodology**
 - Use of groups: Focus Groups

Questions asked



- How became involved
- Benefits / Costs of being competitive swimmer
- Who is involved in your swimming
 - Helpful
 - Not helpful
- Activities / changes in charge
- Tell your best friend / advice

Participants



- Thirty-one participants from five clubs (accessed through parents)
- Focus groups
- Discussions were taped and transcribed
- Feedback form

Findings



Focus groups:

- Size 3 to 9 participants
- Aged 14 – 17 (had birthday)
- Mixed gender except one group all F

Difficulties:

- Training between 3 and 14 hours per week
- Experience 3 to 11 years in club
- Range from club only to international swimmer

- Involvement – how did YP get involved

What is your view?

Getting involved



- Based on family connection (sibling or parent)
- Impact of family connection:

Abbey: *“I’ve never been disqualified”*

Alex: *“people are scared to disqualify you, they know who your mother is”*

- Impact of steep learning curve

- Club is central reason
- Part of life / keep fit / good at it

“I used to play hurling and football an’ everything, I kept on swimming because I was really bad at football and swimming was the one I was least bad at” (Alan)

- Competitive environment
- Habit (like school)
- Lifestyle choice

- Significant people

Who are significant for young people in their clubs?

- **Peer friendships**

- important for being and remaining in club

“Your friends keep you going – it’s not about beating the next guy, he’s my friend – it’s about your own PB, beating yourself” (Paul)

- creation of separate social networks

- **Coach** – unanimous from all groups
 - formal (10+ hours)

Peter: “the coach just coaches us, makes us faster”

Paul: “he pushes us harder, really co-operative”

Polly: “he’s sound”

(FG5, training 10+ hours per week)

- informal (3 hours)

“our coach [name] – there’s nothing more to say, ... always there encouraging you...” (Diana: FG2, training 3 hours per week)

- **The Club**

- intensity to their views
- this is 'OUR club'
- wherever the group is, that is the Club

- Support network

Who provides a support network
for young people?

Who do young people think
provides a support network?

- **Coach**
 - see more than any other single adult
 - central figure even with range of training
 - emphasis on athlete should like the coach
 - person to go to for help
- **Parent**
 - go to for help
- **Peers**
 - featured highest in order of priority

- *“talk to friends”* (Mary)
- *“parents – depends on the trouble”* (Andrea)
- *“talk to coach for some things”* (Michael)
- *“if I was upset I would talk to friends”*
(Samantha)
- *“if it was serious I would tell my parents”* (Peter)

- **Club Children's Officer**

- 30/31 are not certain of role

Delia: "I am sure she would be helpful if we had to use her"

Darci: "we don't know her though, so never had to see"

Mary: "pretty sure we were told who the CCO were, but don't know"

Maddie: "it is up on the club noticeboard, but it's in really small writing"

- **Club Committee**

- not helpful

“we don’t really care who the committee is, too busy in the water” (Alex)

“I didn’t even know there was a committee” (Morgan)

- Feedback form asked how would you prefer to give your views

What do you think was the response?

- Preference for talking to someone (21)
- Web survey / questionnaire (10)

Other comments:

- Good part of the group was opportunity to express views (25)
- Felt safe (3)

- Getting involved – not a choice / parental involvement significant
- Important people for athletes – peers / coach / club: not parents!
- Little familiarity of provided support networks (coach, peers, parents) p62
- CCO not linked to providing explicit support for athlete

Think about the last time you sought views of young person (non-family member!):

- What did you consider beforehand?
- How did you 'consult'?
- What did you do with the information?

Considerations



- Identify objective – what information are you looking for?
Clear rationale for asking!
- Needs to be appropriate to purpose
- YP need to be informed
- Personal / general views
- Geared to children's wellbeing and feelings
- Way of asking questions – desire to please or desire to be truthful
- Power balance – adults v children; view of adult position
- Time – snapshot / resources available
- Boundaries – rules and confidentiality

How?



- Observation – relies on inference of observation
- Interviews – single or group: power / questions or discussion / safe / need to answer / good for views & perspectives / recording issues
- Creative writing / telling stories / drawing / painting - captures imaginations
- Self reports – blogs / diaries / scenarios / vignettes

(Greene & Hogan, 2005)

What happens

- Decide what happens with information
- Check with YP?
- Feedback to YP?
- Pass on information to whom
- Implications of information
- Care with generalisations – study

- Discussions evoked ideas for questions/ topics to ask – what do you need to know
- Seen findings from recent research
- Considerations and methods for consultation
- Resources and reference sheet attached
- Thank you for your participation

- *“Don’t get disencouraged because other people are faster than you because, like, there’s no possible way you can be the fastest in the world, unless you are the fastest in the world” (Morgan, FG3)*
- *“So when you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not part of it.” (Jiddu Krishnamurti, Indian Philosopher)*