SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH OF GROUP PROBLEMS SOLVING
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Solution Focused Approach of Group Problems Solving
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The aim of this study was to describe and understand, through one case, the use of solution focused coaching approach at a group level. Focusing on what is wrong usually drains people's energy, and makes them feel guilty. Focusing on situations in which the problem does not take place forms the key to solving the problem. The focus is on positive exceptions. The solution focused approach proved to be a useful tool for effecting successful change and learning in team coaching. Only few studies have examined the characteristics of the solution focused approach in sports.

The participants in the case were 16–18-year-old members of a junior league ice hockey team, consisting of 24 players and four coaches. The head coach was the principal researcher in this qualitative case and action study. The data were derived from observations made by the principal researcher, and from a diary based on these observations. Abductive analysis, which was used to extract themes from the data, and leaning on theory produced five themes, and one of them – solution focused group problem solving – is reported here.

The team performance varied widely. The threat of being relegated to the second division led the group to a conflict. The group members turned towards four players, and began to blame them for poor interaction and co-operation. After several non-successful attempts, the coaches focused on finding solutions to the conflict and empowering the group instead of spending time on discussions on the causes of the problem. First, they asked players to describe the problem. The group was asked to create a list of the issues that disturbed co-operation within the team. Next, the coaches asked the group to develop positive wishes and set goals instead of finding explanations to the listed problems. The coaches asked the players to rename opposite and positive goals which would reduce or dispose of the problems. Then the coaches focused on exploring the goals and expectations through positive visualization. Finally, the players told each other what concrete measures they were going to take.

The effect was positive, and the group learnt to solve problems independently. The solution focused coaching approach freed the players from negative thought systems. They started to generate positive solutions to their underachievement.

The main result was the finding that the solution focused coaching approach offered a useful tool for increasing the ability of solving conflicts at the level of group processes. In this research, the approach helped the group attain better results as a group. It formed a simple but effective coaching strategy: away from problems to better group communication, and at the same time, to a more positive feeling of security within the group.

Keywords: Team Sport, Group Dynamics, Sport Psychology