

# Promoting Emotional Regulation Using The 4Cs

In a broad review of approaches to helping people with their emotional regulation, we've identified four factors that consistently show up. They are: Competency, Contribution, Connection, and Control.

The 4C's is a framework that can be used to help program staff to plan conversations and activities that help players work on their ability to self-regulate. It organizes these four factors of emotional regulation and presents them in language that is accessible for players and staff.

Competency	Contribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting attention and effort towards developing a skill</li> <li>• Increasing competency creates a sense of agency, hope, future focus, etc.</li> <li>• The skill can be directly related to trauma healing (awareness, regulation) but also indirectly (kicking a ball)</li> <li>• Working on it long enough for a person to to use less energy in that skill and shift that energy to other things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions a person takes to do something meaningful and/or useful for individuals, a group or a community</li> <li>• Contributions at the group level help people reintegrate, experience agency and purpose</li> <li>• Contribution is particularly critical for people who have disrupted social responsibility or have hurt others</li> </ul>
Connection	Control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing secure and protective attachments with peers and adults</li> <li>• Gaining the many benefits of group and community affiliation</li> <li>• Developing skills in attunement, likeability, coachability, perspective-taking, navigating conflict, making amends, loving, asking for help, collaboration, etc.</li> <li>• Activating support mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being aware of triggers and impulse reactions</li> <li>• Providing experiences that present choices for participation and engagement</li> <li>• Understanding limits and when a situation becomes "too much"</li> <li>• Being able to make the best (thoughtful) choice possible in context</li> </ul>

The following page define each emotional regulation factor and provides examples of coaching questions that can be used in one-on-one and team settings to foster reflection, learning, and skill building in emotional regulation.

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## Competency

Competency is making progress in or achieving mastery at a skill. Sport provides young people many opportunities to develop competency: specific sports skills (passing, scoring, shooting, defending, body movement and physical capability, etc.) and life skills (sharing, supporting each other, resilience, character, loyalty, etc.) To be competent at something increases one's self-efficacy, which means a person's belief in themselves that they can do something. Building self-efficacy builds confidence and self-esteem. The more that young people feel capable, the more likely they are to take risks, to take on new challenges, and experience growth. In this way, competency can help foster resilience.

### Some of the Actions that Show Competency

- Showing improvement in a skill over time
- Willingness to take on a new challenge or new skill
- Demonstrating an ability to connect individual skills together and further impact the game
- Achieving something that was previously believed to be impossible
- Willingness to demonstrate a skill in front of others
- Sticking with something that is hard and persevering until it is mastered
- When offers are made to try something new or take a calculated risk, stepping up and going for it

### Coaching Questions About Competency

#### Competency and Sports Skills

1. Can you demonstrate a skill you learned today?
2. Would you be willing to teach a teammate a skill you have?
3. What is a sport skill you are working on right now? Where have you seen improvement? How do you know?
4. How do you feel when you can do something in sport you couldn't do before?

#### Competency and Resilience

1. What is something you can do today that you didn't know how to do (or weren't able to do well) a few weeks ago? (This can be a sports skill or a life skill or a team/teammate skill)
2. How did you get better? How did you do that?
3. How do you measure 'getting better,' what is your evidence of improvement?

#### Competency and Life Skills

1. What is something you are able to do this year that you were not able to do last year?
2. What is a skill you are working on in school (it could be learning math, spelling, writing, etc.) that you want to improve? How will you work on improving that skill?

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3. Being able to share (the ball, different positions, playing time, etc.) is important here in our program. What are some examples of sharing that you must do at home or at school? How can you do a better job of sharing at home or at school?

## Competency and Taking Good Risks

1. Do you find it hard to try new things? Why or why not?
2. Is it important to try new things or take new challenges? If you take on a new challenge or try to do something new what could happen?
3. Challenging ourselves is a great way to continue to improve and develop skills we need. Sometimes we avoid taking risks or challenging ourselves more because we might fail. But we know failure is part of getting better. We've been practicing our skills a lot in our sport, and sometimes we haven't succeeded (at winning or at scoring, etc.) Sometimes we have succeeded. The more we practice those things we are not good at doing, the more likely we can get better. Can anyone give me an example of taking on a new challenge or new skill that they were afraid of doing? What happened?

## Competence and Effort

1. What does it take to get better at something? How hard must you work sometimes?
2. Do you have any examples of something you worked hard at?
3. How do you feel when you work hard and see yourself getting better?

## Competence and Peers

1. Who is someone on this team you admire because they are skilled at something? Have you noticed anything about how they do what they do?
2. Interview: Choose one player and have the team interview them, sports commentator style, about things they are skilled at and how they became skilled.

## Contribution

Contribution is the ability to add value to something or someone else. Contributions can be many things, including time, resources, praise, ideas, etc. In our program, we believe every person has many vital contributions they can make. We want our players to feel like they can contribute to the league and the team, and we want them to give others an opportunity to contribute as well. Contribution reinforces support, friendship, belonging and culture to its members. To be part of a team, teammates must learn how to contribute to the game, to follow the rules, to help others perform better, to understand the activities or the game better, and to give of their time, energy, and effort.

### Some Of The Actions That Show Contribution

- Knowing what your strengths are and how you can use them in this team, at school, and in the community

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- Asking for feedback on your contribution
- Offering to help anywhere you can
- Giving feedback and praise to people about what they do well
- Going “above and beyond” what is expected in your actions
- Asking questions to get to know your teammates and learn more about their unique strengths

## Coaching Questions About Contribution

### Contribution and Helping

1. How can we help our peers during our games and activities?
2. Why is it important that we are willing to help each other?
3. What should we do if we need help, but nobody is offering?

### Contribution and Leadership

1. Let’s pretend we need to choose a captain to represent our team in a sports tournament. How could we decide who would be the captain? What would be a fair way to do it?
2. Is there any reason not to give equal chance to a boy or a girl, or someone younger or older, or someone who is better at the sport or someone who is not as good, to be captain?

### Contribution and Strengths

1. What does it mean to have a “strength?” (Strengths are things we are good at and enjoy doing)
2. Invite the team to name one strength that each person has.

### Contribution and Helping The Game Run Smoothly

1. What does it mean to help our team/league community?
2. What are some ways that every player could contribute or help our program?
3. Why is it important that we all look for ways to contribute in the program?

### Contribution and Skills

1. Can a player who is very unskilled in a sport still contribute to the team?
2. How could they still contribute?
3. Why is it important that we recognize all the contributions that our peers can make, even if it’s not about the sport?

### Contribution and Emotional Support

1. What does it feel like when you have supporters cheering for you in a competition? What kind of contribution do supporters provide?
2. How can we contribute to supporting each other within our team? Outside of our team?

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## Contribution and Passing

1. Why is it so important to look up to pass while you have the ball (for soccer, bucket ball, etc.)?
2. When we pass to a teammate what kind of opportunity does that create for us to score?
3. How can we help each other to pass the ball more and create more opportunities when we play?

## Contribution and Scoring

1. What does it feel like to score a goal or make a point in a game?
2. What does it feel like to make the assist? (passing to the person who scores)
3. Why is it so important that we remember to celebrate the person who made the assist- the person who created the opportunity for someone else to score?

## Contribution and Playing Time

1. Let's pretend you are playing a very skilled team. We believe that every player should have an equal opportunity to play and improve their skills. What do we do when the other team is much more skilled than we are?
2. Why is it so important for us to always give everyone on our team an equal chance to play?

## Connection

Connection is the ability to form and maintain positive relationships. We have teammates, coaches, and our community of other players and teams in our league or program. In addition, we have our family and friends. Connecting to others is critical for our success in life. We want to create a positive network of peers and adults who support us and who we support.

### Some Of The Actions That Show Connection

- Willingness to work with different teammates in activities or be on different teams regardless if you know someone well or not
- Having a welcoming attitude to others coming into our league/team
- Valuing and praising others for their strengths and contributions
- Trusting your teammates and coaches
- Willingness to engage socially and in communication with others
- Showing an ability to join and participate in team time with your teammates and coaches
- Making new friends

### Coaching Questions About Contribution

#### Connection and Trust

1. What does it mean to trust someone else? Can it be shown in other things besides just confiding or sharing a secret?

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2. Do you show trust to others when you pass the ball? How is this an example of trust?
3. Why is trusting other people hard? How, or in what ways, can you make it easier for others to trust you (as a teammate/as a friend?)

## Connection and Friendships

1. What does it mean to have strong teammates? What does it mean to be a 'teammate'?
2. What does it mean to be a teammate to your friends? How do you show it?
3. Is it easier or harder to be friends here in our team/league compared to school?
4. How do you make a new friend?
5. Who is a good friend to you? What do they do?

## Connection and Listening

1. What does it mean to be a good listener? Who are the people in our lives we should listen to?
2. Why is it so important that we are good listeners?
3. What are some things we can do to show someone we are a good listener?
4. What can we do to keep our friendships outside of the league?

## Connection and Peer Pressure

1. What is "peer pressure?"
2. What are some of the negative things that happen when we pressure a peer to do things they don't want to do?
3. How can we help our friends resist peer pressure?

## Connection and Communication

1. Communicating, especially communicating in a positive way, helps us interact with one another, and it helps us in sport. How does communicating help us be better/more successful as a team?
2. How does communicating well with each other help us to work with one another better in life/at school/at home?
3. When someone communicates specific, positive feedback to you (about what you're doing well, or how great a person you are) how does that make you feel? If it makes you feel good, could you say something positive to someone here to make them feel good? What would that be? (Pick a teammate to say something to.)

## Connection and Inclusion

1. What does inclusion mean to you?
2. Do you feel you are in an inclusive community? How do you know?
3. What can we do to make sure that everyone feels included in our games and activities?

## Connection and Role Models

1. Who is someone (coach or player) that you admire?
2. Why do you admire them?

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3. What could you do to practice some of the things that they do?
4. Who is someone in your life that you admire? And why?

## Control

Control is all about the young person's ability to make their own choices and decisions. We want our players to feel like they have ownership over their participation in activities and in the game. This is about their ability to self-regulate physically and emotionally, and to determine what is too much or too little when it comes to playing in our league. In our league, competition is a key component. We want our young people to experience more good stress and recognize bad stress in their lives. In competition, there are real stakes and real there is real stress. The more our young people successfully navigate competition, the more practice they will have at self-regulating.

### Some Of The Actions That Show Control

- Showing up to practice and competition consistently and participating
- Deciding to take a timeout to manage physical needs (breathing too hard, getting overheated, starting to fatigue, etc.) or emotional needs (anger, disappointment, sadness, hurt, etc.)
- Managing anger, annoyance, or irritation in more positive, non-violent (physical or verbal) way
- Understanding and feeling the rate of heartbeat, how to get it up and how to bring it down
- Understanding the difference between good stress and bad stress
- Feeling safe, knowing it is predictable and knowing what to expect each workout, having a scheduled plan

### Coaching Questions About Contribution

#### Control and Feeling Safe in our League/Team

1. What is the difference between physical and emotional safety?
2. What are some of the things that we do to help everyone feel physically and emotionally safe?
3. Does anyone have any examples of a time when they did not feel safe?
4. What could we do to make this experience even safer?

#### Control and Winning/Competition

1. We compete a lot here, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. What does it feel like to win? What does it feel like to lose?
2. When you are losing a game, how do you feel? If you feel angry or frustrated, what can you do to change that? When you are winning, how do you feel? How do you know you feel that way?

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3. What does it mean to “win with respect”?
4. Why is it so important that we find a way to win/score without putting the other team down?
5. What could we do to “win with respect” in our sport and in life?

## Control and Emotional Regulation

1. Can anyone describe what happy feels like? How does your body feel when you are happy? (Coaches can prompt if needed: Smiling? Frowning? Crying? Laughing? Excited? Angry?)
2. Sometimes we get emotional when we play, because we love playing and we care about how we do. Can anyone describe a time when they got emotional in sport (excited and happy or angry and frustrated), did you notice anything about your heartrate? Did you notice anything about your breathing? If so, what?
3. Sometimes in sport it’s important to keep rhythm. The team must work together, that’s a sort of rhythm. What happens when one person is playing much faster than the rest of the team? Or, what happens when one person is playing much slower than the rest of the team? Why is it important to get synched up? How can you get everyone together during a game? Are there any rest periods or normal breaks that happen?

## Control and Delayed Gratification (or Discipline)

1. Do you ever feel like you can’t wait for something you want? (recess, dessert, your birthday, etc.)?
2. How do you keep your attention when you want to be somewhere else? How do you keep yourself from being distracted? How do you keep your patience?

## Control and Time Outs

1. What is a time out? When and why do you call a time out?
2. What do they do for you? For the team?
3. Are there places in our life when we could call a time out? What would you do?