



## LEADING AS GIANTS

### SESSION 9 | When Aggression Crosses the Line: Recognizing Boundaries & Consequences

By the end of this session, players will be able to:

- Recognize the different degrees of aggression, on and off the field.
- Identify when they're becoming aggressive.
- Adjust their behavior when they feel themselves becoming too aggressive.

#### Talking Points for the Session:

- Always remember that violence does not equal strength, and that there are always more constructive ways to handle tense or upsetting situations. Using violence is never an option.
- In sports, aggression is controlled by rules. If you break them, you could be penalized or even ejected. The same is true off the field. We all have moments when we become frustrated or angry but this should never lead anyone to be violent or abusive against others. Doing so may well have devastating career and social consequences, as well as serious legal consequences.
- Assertiveness and aggression are different. You can be *aggressive* on the field, but not off the field. You can be *assertive* off the field in a respectful way when you need to communicate boundaries with someone.
- Learn to recognize when you're becoming overly aggressive and think about what you need to do to cool down. Think about how those around you are going to respond. You might choose to take a walk, do some deep breathing, call a friend, visit with a family member, health professional, or coach, or do something that relaxes you so that you can take your mind off the situation.

#### Discussion Questions: *(you can use a ball to toss to different players to answer the questions)*

- What is aggression?
- Why do you use aggression?
- Are there levels of aggression that are appropriate? Where?
- What is the difference between aggressive and assertive? How do you use assertiveness?
- How do you manage your aggression on the field? How do you manage it off the field?
- How do you cool down when you're feeling too aggressive

#### Group Scenario Activity:

*Break-up players into 4 groups. Provide them with the scenarios and the group activity questions below. Ask them to read and discuss the scenario and questions for about 5-7 minutes. Bring the group back together and ask at least one person from each group to report back their thoughts on the scenario and how they would handle the situation.*

- You have been under a lot of pressure in the new season. Your wife/girlfriend gave birth three months ago but the baby doesn't sleep through the night, and you are really tired. There's an important game tomorrow and you're trying to sleep but the baby is crying. You yell at your wife/girlfriend, *"Why are you so damn lazy?!, Hurry up and take care of this. You know I have a big game tomorrow and I'm the only one that works here. All you have to do is shut the baby up."*
- You're at the movies with some friends and a new woman that you're dating, as well as her 8 year old daughter. You're running late to the movie, so you are already stressed by the time you get there. You get upset with the concessions clerk when he gets your order wrong. You curse at the clerk, and you demean him for getting your order wrong. When the woman you're dating speaks up and asks that you not curse in front of her daughter, you tell her to "shut up - that you're not even talking to her". When your friends speak up in her defense, you become more upset, and ultimately storm out of the theatre, insulting the woman you're dating, by lashing out at her for turning your friends against you.
- Your cousin is visiting you and although you've had a good time for the last week, now you are hoping for some space. Your cousin is asking for money, tickets to the game, to join you for all your social events and you aren't sure how to set boundaries. One day you come home to a party after a difficult game. You are so tired and upset you get into an argument with your cousin in front of everyone in your house. Your cousin is inebriated and becoming physically aggressive.
- You just finished a game, and as you exit the stadium a group of people approach you for your autograph, some of them are physically pushy and getting too aggressive. You sign some things for people but as you try to walk away one person keeps following you and you try to just keep moving to your hotel. Later this person knocks on your door at the hotel room and when you open the door to ask them to stop, they try to get into your room. You're tired, and afraid this might escalate.

**Group Activity Questions:** *(you can use a ball to toss to different players to answer the questions)*

- Where do you see aggression in this scenario?
- Who is the first person to become aggressive?
- Is the level of aggression appropriate?
- How would you handle this situation?
- How would you keep yourself from becoming too aggressive?

### **Wrap Up and Takeaways**

- Only you are in control and responsible for all of your actions and emotions.
- Find ways to cool down when you are feeling overly aggressive, especially off the field.
- Aggressive on the field. Assertive off the field.