

OMONIA YOUTH FC

WELFARE, SAFEGUARDING AND MENTAL WELLBEING

HOW CAN WE HELP WHEN FOOTBALL RETURNS?



WEBSITE: WWW.OMONIAYOUTHFC.COM

TWITTER: [@OMONIAYOUTHFC](https://twitter.com/OMONIAYOUTHFC)

INSTAGRAM: [@OMONIAYOUTHFC1994](https://www.instagram.com/OMONIAYOUTHFC1994)

PROF. BARRY CARPENTER – *'THE RECOVERY CURRICULUM'*



- Children and adults have had a 'lived experience', each will have experienced it differently. **Kindness** and **positivity** will be key.
- Children have lived (are living) through a pandemic and this can have **consequences**.
- **Compassionate** coaching and **kind** coaching will be key.
- Coaching (like teaching) is a **relationship based activity** and those relationships are the starting point for a *'recovery curriculum'*.

THINGS TO CONSIDER



Lockdown since January may have led to up to FIVE losses:

- Loss of *Routine*
- Loss of *Structure*
- Loss of *Friendship*
- Loss of *Opportunity*
- Loss of *Freedom*

LOSS OF ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE



- **Loss of routine and structure** can involve simple things like getting ready for school, sleep patterns having been disrupted, school structure and routine has gone.
- This structure will also include their extra-curricular activities like playing football – no more training, no more matches, can't see team mates!
- This can lead to some children appearing **quieter** / easily **alarmed**. This may not show immediately. New Zealand, as an example, had an increase in panic attacks!

LOSS OF FRIENDSHIPS



- Relationships may have been severed for some or changed.
- Those with attachment issues may need careful rebuilding of relationships – as they may not go *“back to normal”* straight away.

LOSS OF OPPORTUNITY



- Missing important school dates
- Missing football events
- This “wasn’t how it was *‘meant’* to be”
- The result (because of lockdown) is not what children have focused on and worked for during the school year and the football season.
- This needs **acknowledgement** and for them to be allowed to **talk through it and be listened to.**

LOSS OF FREEDOM



- Physical freedom during lockdown was vastly reduced but there will also be young carers that may have been very isolated (mentally as well as physically) as other support was not available or present
- Those with limited ICT / internet will have felt isolated too.

THE ADULTS



- Coaches, parents / carers (the adults) may also have experienced the lockdown situation as **traumatic**
- Each person's experience will have been **different** – some have enjoyed lockdown for others it may have been very difficult. Some may have moved between enjoyment, frustration and anxiety.
- **Reconnection** is important for our young people – acknowledge anxieties around football, whether things are transitory, fear around Covid-19, change in routine and so on.

ATTACHMENT



This is linked to attachment theory

- For some children, their school is already an uncomfortable place so a return may destabilise them.
- We can't assume the bonds pre-lockdown are still there – they may need to be rebuilt and children may need help with this.
- This is also true of relationships within their football team
- What can be done to ease the transition?

'LOCKDOWN ANXIETY'



The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP):

- Identified 'lockdown anxiety' as a condition
- Anxiety can **block learning** due to cortisol levels. It can prevent imprint on the brain
- Children appear meek / attentive but actually nothing is being remembered.
- Usual procedures (at school and during football) will have changed and this can also raise anxiety levels

THE RECOVERY CURRICULUM



There are FIVE Levers

- **Lever 1 – Relationships:** reach out to greet – plan to restore relationship
- **Lever 2 – Community:** engage, listen, transition back, opportunity to build relationships.
- **Lever 3 – Metacognitions:** explicitly scaffold coaching to allow confidence to grow – may need to re-skill yourself!
- **Lever 4 – Transparent Curriculum:** could be an opportunity to co-construct how you address gaps in skills but also enjoyment in being coached!
- **Lever 5 – Space:** self -image, self-esteem, safe spaces, time, exercise

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR



- **Mood-swings** – excitement at being back with others and then sad or frustrated or anxious.
- **Have you noticed a change in personality?**

A REMINDER...



For some of our young people (and adults – coaches, parents, carers) the following may apply:

- Anxiety about returning to school and football
- Anxiety about Covid-19 testing
- Health anxiety (either for themselves or a family member)
- Separation anxiety (after spending a lot of time at home with family)
- Bereavement
- Some pupils may also experience general trauma from the lockdown.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...



- During Training – **listen** to your players, give opportunities for them to **express themselves**.
- Look out for players who may be **struggling** – not just with the football but with social interactions. These may be players who have never caused concern previously.
- Be **creative** during training – think of activities that can bring players together and reform friendships – is it fun and engaging?
- Be aware of **yourself** too – acknowledge if your **own anxiety** levels are higher. It can impact upon our own responses and that of your players during training / match day.
- During Training - **Happiness** can be used as intervention – opportunities to be creative – fun activities – not about the result is it!
- Show **Empathy**. Show **Kindness**. **Communicate**.

OMONIA WELFARE LIST (OWL)



- The club's **Lead Welfare and Safeguarding Officer**, Myri Demetriou, has set up OWL: **O**monia **W**elfare **L**ist
- Any concerns you do have surrounding welfare, safeguarding and wellbeing, please contact Myri.
- **Useful links:**



OMONIA WELFARE LIST (OWL)



Overriding message:

**SAFEGUARDING, WELFARE AND
WELLBEING IS THE
RESPONSIBILITY of ALL**

(Communication, Empathy and Kindness are key.)