SPORT AS A TOOL FOR INTEGRATION AND BELONGING



WHY SPORT MATTERS?

- Builds connection and community
- Creates trust
- Reduces isolation
- Strengthens belonging
- Encourages inclusion

MAIN BARRIERS

- Language
- Cost
- Transport
- Fear of exclusion

"Barriers affect confidence, participation and long-term engagement."

PARTICIPATION VS BELONGING

Attending a session

Feeling:

Welcomed
Respected
Safe
Included
Valued





WHAT HELPS BELONGING HAPPEN

- ✔ Warm welcome
- ✔ Clear communication
- ✔ Mixed-group interaction
- ✔ Equal treatment
- ✔ Supportive coaching

KEY MESSAGE

**"INCLUSION IS NOT AUTOMATIC.
BELONGING GROWS THROUGH INTENTIONAL PRACTICE."**

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use this worksheet individually or as part of a group discussion after reviewing the training pill. The aim is to reflect on current practices and identify practical actions that can strengthen inclusion, participation and belonging within your club or organisation.

How are newcomers welcomed in your club or session?

What might stop someone from feeling that they belong?

How do coaches check that everyone understands the activity?

Are participants encouraged to interact with different people?

What signs might show that someone feels excluded or uncomfortable?

What small change could improve belonging in your sessions?

What practical actions already work well in your club or organisation?

What improvements could be introduced in the next month?"



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PRACTICAL GUIDE

1. INTRODUCTION

Sport can play an important role in helping migrants and refugees feel part of a new community. It creates opportunities for people to meet, interact, cooperate and build trust in a natural and positive way. For many participants, sport can become one of the first spaces where they feel welcomed, included and connected to others.

However, sport is not automatically inclusive. A person may attend a session without truly feeling that they belong. Belonging depends on how coaches, clubs and organisations create the environment around the activity. This is why inclusive practice matters.
This training pill explores how sport can support integration and belonging and what clubs and facilitators can do to strengthen this process in everyday practice.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand why sport can be a powerful tool for integration.
- Explain what belonging means in a sport context.
- Identify simple actions that help participants feel welcomed, respected and included.
- Reflect on how their own club or organisation can strengthen belonging through sport.

3. WHY SPORT MATTERS

Sport matters because it brings people together around a shared activity. It creates common ground between people from different backgrounds and gives participants the chance to interact through teamwork, effort, enjoyment and routine.

- Builds friendships and social connections.
- Creates trust and reduces isolation.
- Improves confidence and wellbeing.
- Reduces prejudice through personal contact.
- Connects participants to local community life.



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PRACTICAL GUIDE

4. WHAT BELONGING MEANS

Belonging in sport means more than simply being allowed to join an activity. It means feeling welcomed from the start, respected by coaches and peers, safe to participate, included in the group, and valued as a person.

5. WHAT HELPS BELONGING HAPPEN

Belonging grows when coaches and clubs take small but intentional actions. These actions can strongly influence whether participants feel confident enough to continue.

- Greeting newcomers warmly.
- Explaining activities clearly and simply.
- Encouraging interaction between participants.
- Avoiding cliques or exclusion.
- Treating everyone fairly.
- Checking whether someone feels comfortable.
- Responding quickly to disrespectful behaviour.
- Creating a positive and supportive group atmosphere.

6. KEY MESSAGE

Sport has strong potential to support integration, but inclusion is not automatic. It must be created through practice.

7. REFLECTION

- How does your club currently help new participants feel welcomed?
- What barriers might stop someone from feeling that they belong?
- What one change could you make to strengthen belonging in your sessions?

8. FINAL TAKEAWAY

Sport can bring people together, but belonging grows when clubs and coaches act intentionally.

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