



A Coach's Regrets

Overview: In this activity, participants read an excerpt from a prominent Ohio sports coach who shares his experiences working with youth affected by opioid addiction. In particular, this activity explores the intersection of athletics and pain.

Tags: sports, coach, youth, mentoring

Theme: Processing Loss

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: pens, paper, participant handouts

Participants: 3-25

Room Configuration: Flexible

Activity

Introduction: Word Cloud Guessing (5-10 Minutes)

1. Present the audience with the word cloud generated from the excerpt *A Coach's Regrets*.
2. Ask the audience to construct 3-4 sentences to summarize the word cloud or to construct a narrative based on the major themes presented in the word cloud.

Engagement: Active Discussion (30-40 Minutes)

1. Ask the participants if anyone would be willing to share their description. If there are no willing participants, use the following to prompt a discussion:
 - a. What are some of the big ideas you included in your summary? What stood out to you most about the word cloud?
 - b. Did the larger words in the cloud influence your response? If so, why?
 - c. What were some of the smaller words in the word cloud? Did you include them in your summary?
2. After this discussion, present the audience with the original text: *A Coach's Regrets*. Read it aloud or allow the audience ample time to read it individually before resuming the discussion.
3. Once the audience has finished reading, resume the conversation with the following:
 - a. In comparing your summaries to the excerpt, was it similar or different?
 - b. What was significant about some of the larger words in the word cloud? How did those larger concepts / themes apply to both your summary and the excerpt from the text?

these situations which are more prevalent than people know. We coaches are with kids more often than regular teachers and we develop closer relationships. When I don't know a young man's parents by the time they are a varsity player, it sends up a red flag and we monitor that kid a little more than the others.

All coaches realize that the games and sports they coach are just vehicles to help kids grow into successful adults. The call to build successful adults becomes even more crucial with young people that deal with addiction in their lives. From our kids that jump from couch to couch at their friends' houses, to our kids that play football because we feed them dinners for three months of the year, to the kids we spend our personal money on to get them the necessities they need for life... high school coaches in today's society have a daunting job. Too many kids suffer from neglect that becomes our responsibility.

I would venture to say that a large portion of our community doesn't even realize that the problem of opioids is on our doorstep. Though we may not admit it, we are not immune to the challenges that we face as a country. We battle addiction and its results in our community every day. Our police carry and use Narcan on a daily basis. And we are a strong and tight-knit community. This is a problem that transcends race, religion, and socioeconomic status. We are in this fight no matter where you live. Because we are proud, our community will work to keep and grow what makes us great.

These Community Conversations are funded by the Ohio Humanities Council. For further information, as well as information on rules for use, please see OpioidsOhio.org.