

Using the Doing Sport Differently Principles to

‘Restoring confidence in Grassroots Sport’

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Jump to (hyperlinks to contents)

[Page 3:](#) The Six Doing Sport Differently Principles

[Page 4-5:](#) General advice for clubs returning to sport

[Page 6:](#) Links to all the webinar videos and audio panels

[Page 7:](#) For more support contacts

Theme 1: Engaging people back to the club

[Page 9:](#) How to use the Principle one video on co-design

[Page 10:](#) Principle one: summary of using co-design

[Page 11:](#) Clubs and co-design

- How to do it
- What are the benefits,
- What role do SSAs have in supporting clubs

[Page 12:](#) The role of stakeholders to support clubs

- SSAs, LGAs, RSAs, in doing sport differently
- Associations, Leagues and facilities in returning after COVID

[Page 13:](#) Volunteers

- How to recruit
- Mental health training

[Page 14:](#) Examples of clubs using co-design

Theme 2: Providing a quality participant experience

[Page 16:](#) How to use the Principle two video on experience

[Page 17:](#) Principle two: summary of touchpoints and the participant experience

[Page 18:](#) Engaging people to the club and delivering a quality experience

- Should clubs accept new members now
- Attracting diverse participants
- How to audit and deliver a quality experience

[Page 19:](#) Social connection during lockdown

- Connection to sponsors
- Connection using online platforms for activity
- Connection using online social activities
- Some resources to support club activities

[Page 20:](#) Online resources to keep people engaged during lockdown

Theme 3: Building confidence back in activity

[Page 22:](#) How to use the Principle three video on confidence

[Page 23:](#) Principle three: summary of fear of judgement and building confidence

[Page 24:](#) Engaging people in activity

- Engaging people in activity at home
- Supporting people to build confidence as they return to activity at the club

[Page 25:](#) Managing new regulations and keeping activities interesting

- Communicating new regulations to members
- Ways to keep activities interesting
- Tips to cope with distancing

Six principles

that can help sport organisations attract larger and more diverse audiences



1 Engage with the target market throughout the design process to reduce barriers and fulfil motivations.



4 The deliverer is the most vital person to participants' experience and retention.



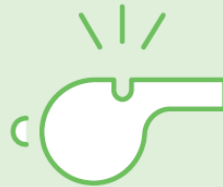
2 Think about participants as customers and consider their total experience.



5 Participants need a clear pathway for retention or transition as their skill, fitness or interest changes.



3 Participation should cater to different levels of skill, ability and fitness.



6 Best-practice project management and delivery will enable scale and sustainability.

General advice for clubs

We understand clubs and volunteers are under extreme pressure. The following tips do not seek to add to that, rather help clubs consider the 'social' element.

Do what you can and what is relevant to your club.

There will be people keen to get back, but there will be others who may not be.

This could be an opportune time however to engage with members in a different way to better understand what their needs and wants are, and how they can contribute.

1. Keep it simple
2. Communicate (keep talking and listening)
3. Work together
4. Just try one thing to start

Gerry from Masters Swimming Australia

"What doesn't matter at the moment is competition. It's about getting those people who used to swim in a club to come back. We have to build the confidence that it is safe to come back.

Our clubs, more than ever, need to make participants both welcome and safe. All the good vibes with minimal risks."

General advice for clubs

ONE

Take stock and engage members

- Think of the club values and what is important to uphold.
- Consider realistically what can (and can't) be done
- Talk and engage members and find out what is important for them, what is challenging them. Use Facebook, Survey Monkey surveys, door knock, call, email.
- Work together as a club (members, players, and committees) to solve issues and consider what options and activities can realistically be delivered – collaborate. Look to SSAs, RSAs, LGAs, NSOs, for ideas and tips.

TWO

Think social and keep connected

- Most members will be missing the social connection of the club, try to keep connected as lockdown continues.
- This could be an opportunity to reach out to new members and welcome them into the club, people are looking for connection.

THREE

Consider social sport options

- Social sport are those that are modified in some way or more flexible (Hockey 6's, AFL 9s, Soccer Mums, Rock Up Netball).
- People may not be wanting to commit to full competition due to lack of fitness, funds, time, or uncertainty.
- A round robin style competition or social sport session each week may be more doable for clubs administratively.
- Social sport options can be good entry points for new members.
- Social sport options could be easily modified to reduce contact and be more flexible to adapt to new regulations.
- Look at what other states are doing, get ideas from other clubs.

Links to the webinar video and panel audio recordings

Theme 1 Engaging people back to the club (using co-design)	Theme 2 Providing a quality participant experience	Theme 3 Building confidence back in activity
Webinar one video: DSD Principle One video 1. Why people may not be engaging in sport 2. How to engage members in a meaningful way 3. What is co-design and how it works 4. How to co-design solutions with your members	Webinar two video: DSD Principle Two video 1. What is customer experience and how to create a great one 2. The five key touchpoints to a quality club experience: i. The marketing ii. The registration iii. The welcome iv. The mistake v. The invitation to return	Webinar three video: DSD Principle Three video 1. Why confidence is important in sport 2. The fear of judgement, what it is, why it matters, and how to manage it 3. How to build confidence in those returning to sport
Panel one audio recording featuring: Tamantha Harding Inclusion Lead, Tennis Victoria Tamara Mason Female Sport Participation Officer, Moreland City Council Matt Cameron Senior Project Officer Physical Activity, VicHealth	Panel two audio recording featuring: Jonathan Coyne Coordinator Recreation Services, City of Stonnington Rob Ward Club & Programs Manager, Triathlon Victoria Vanessa Phillips Senior Project Officer Physical Activity, VicHealth	Panel three audio recording featuring: Jill Taylor National Coaching Development Manager, Athletics Australia Victoria Edmondson Head of Customer Experience, Netball Australia Cassandra Hadson General Manager, Regional Sport Victoria Shelley White Senior Project Officer Physical Activity, VicHealth





Doing Sport Differently website:

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/doing sport differently>



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All kinds of clever

THEME ONE: Engaging people back to the club

How to use Principle One video on co-design

Step one: Play the video

What this video covers:

1. Why people may not be engaging in sport
2. How to engage members in a meaningful way
3. What is co-design and how it works
4. How to co-design solutions with your members

Watch the video here: [DSD Principle One video](#)

Step two: Ask questions

Questions to ask clubs:

1. Can you think about a time when you had stopped playing sport, what made you stop? And what was your experience coming back?
2. Who are the people that do not engage with the club, but the club would like them to?
3. What are the ways the club could reach some of these people (through friends, networks, community groups)
4. Who can support the club to reach out to people? (LGA, SSA, RSA?)

Step three: Make one change

COVID context

1. Reach out (email, phone, Facebook) to your members and ask them about what is (or could) make it hard for them to come back to sport, what sort of sport are they looking for now, and how the club could work with them to solve issues or support new ideas.
2. Think if there are any people in the community that the club could reach out to that may be looking for a new sport activity? For example, the club might have been wanting to put on a women's team, or build up youth participation. Now could be a good opportunity to talk to them about doing something different at the club.

Principle One: summary

Using co-design to engage new members or welcome back existing

1. Talk to members of the club who want to return (especially those having trouble coming back), ask them:
 - What is stopping them?
 - What is important, what do they want?
2. Then work together to 'co-solve' the challenges and implement strategies to deliver activities.
3. Talk to NEW people and relevant organisations to identify what is stopping others (new members) from coming to your club. Talk to them to get new ideas and solutions.
4. Leverage existing resources and support – Ask for help.
5. Embrace uncertainty – and experiment.

Watch the video on Principle One presented by Centre for Sport and Social Impact Research Fellows Kiera Staley and Lauren Thorn: [DSD Principle One video](#)



1 Engage with the target market throughout the design process to reduce barriers and fulfil motivations.

Clubs and co-design

How does a club co-design?

1. Determine the group you want to engage (e.g. youth, women, less active, parents)
2. Use existing evidence first to get an idea about this group and then contextualise it to the club (contact SSA, LGA, RSA, Sport Australia website or VicHealth)
3. Find some representatives of the target group (reach out through club networks – these can just be friends of your current networks, or use community groups that already engage this group). Talk to the target group about the club and the sport, find out what stops them from participating, what they would like to get out of participating and what they would like an opportunity to look like (think about existing social sport or other types of activities the sport has, and what the club could realistically offer)
4. Talk to other stakeholders such as community groups, coaches, parents, teachers, or anyone else that could give insight and get their ideas.
5. Work through the ideas and implement some (start small), test them out, get feedback, refine and keep building

Club capacity to co-design during COVID

The principle is about making sure that we are reaching out, engaging, and listening to people and not making assumptions or trying to solve problems that we don't fully understand. This could be as simple as reaching out and asking members what they are having trouble with or afraid of about returning to sport, and then working together to work out the solutions. Or, it could be about empowering members to stay connected (e.g. Sailing club supporting groups to do online yoga classes).

Incentivising co-design and the role of SSAs in supporting clubs through co-design

Larger new format projects:

The process of developing whole new programs or sport formats can be resource intensive. If attempted at club level, then it would help if you sought some support, as most volunteer club committees would not have resources or time to spend on large co-design processes.

An ideal scenario when developing new formats or larger projects is that the SSA or NSO co-design with the target audience to build a framework or key principles for the new opportunity. The SSA or NSO would then support clubs to implement the new format in their club and to co-design with their target audiences to modify the offering to their club context and participant needs.

These larger programs usually also have the benefit of providing clubs guidance and resources on how to develop a program through co-design.

Club based projects:

For smaller projects, such as if a club were trying to engage a new group of people to the club to participate in an existing format, then there are funding opportunities (e.g. VicHealth Active Club Grants). The outcome from working within the club means that the solutions are club specific.

Benefits of co-design

Co-design can reduce and share the workload, and can result in more successful and sustainable solutions that better target the participants needs and motivations.

SSAs, LGAs, RSAs, Associations/Leagues and facilities

Coming back to sport, what can Associations, Leagues and facilities do?

- Injury prevention (such as timing and scheduling of games and activities so that members can ease back into activity, and they have adequate time to warm-up and cool-down)
- Communication to clubs is kept up to date and clubs have a contact to ask questions

Regulatory compliance:

- Ensure safe distances around events and activities including:
 - Equipment access
 - Change rooms (when open)
 - Other services such as coffee carts
 - Registration tables or offices (it may be that there needs to be staggered times to register)
- There may be no communal equipment allowed, so consider how to support clubs or players to access (new) equipment for each person or how adequate cleaning and sanitising can be put in place and make sure this is communicated
- Support clubs to upskill volunteers in the cleaning and sanitising required and where to access the supplies necessary
- Facilities will need clear signage around where people can and can't go (i.e. one-way traffic)

What is the role of LGAs and SSAs in supporting clubs to do sport differently?

It is important to recognise who the key stakeholders are and engage in genuine conversations with those stakeholders to develop partnerships.

Local Government Authorities

LGAs can support clubs to connect to community organisations to engage new members and support clubs as they plan and implement new strategies or. At this time, as SSAs have lost many of their support team, LGAs can fill this gap. Reach out to your Recreation and Sport team. They want to support clubs to keep facilities active and accessible for the whole community.

State Sport Associations

SSAs can provide evidence and research they have conducted, and solutions and ideas they have developed. They can provide support as the club goes through changes or implements new strategies. Some SSAs have conducted surveys of members during COVID to get information on how to support participants and clubs back into sport.

Regional Sport Assemblies

RSAs can also support clubs (Find yours here: <http://www.regionalsportvictoria.org.au/>)

Volunteers (recruiting and mental health training)

Volunteers are the backbone of all community sport. What is one piece of advice on how to “attract a volunteer” and retain them.

Club could first consider:

1. The value proposition the club can give to volunteers
2. The club environment (Is it welcoming? Will volunteers be provided the support and information they need? Will they have a sense of value and belonging?)
3. What potential volunteers ‘see’ about the club (i.e. social media pages, walking past the pavilion, partners). What is the impression people have of the club?
4. Take a ‘task’ approach rather than asking for ‘positions’ to be filled

Next:

1. Be clear about what the club wants volunteers to do
2. Match people up to tasks based on their skill and interest
3. Engage potential volunteers and ask them about what they want, and work together

Mental health training for volunteers

More and more volunteers are the front line of the community and are in positions where people in need may reach out. The following links are to organisations who deliver mental health training that could support your volunteers in these situations.

SALT

<https://sportandlifetraining.com.au/courses/senior/>

Love me Love you

<https://www.lovemeloveyou.org.au/education/>

Mental Health Victoria

<https://www.mhvic.org.au/professional-development/training-calendar>

Mental Health Fist Aid Victoria

<https://mhfa.com.au/>

Listen to Leisure Networks podcast on mental health:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1123505/4569611>

Examples of co-design

DURING COVID:

Mordialloc Sailing club (*listen here:* [panel audio one](#))

Had a group of women who they had worked to engage in Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP), and wanted to keep them engaged through lock-down.

The manager reached out to the women and asked them what they would like. They said they would like to do online yoga.

The women organised some online activities and have remained engaged through the crisis and will now be easier for the club to re-engage back to the club.

Top tips: reach out and empower members to drive activities

Triathlon clubs (*listen here:* [panel audio two](#))

Triathlon clubs have been to use Strava to organise group cycling events and challenges where they can engage the whole club in an activity. They can set up a challenge at a certain time and date and members can log on and ride together.

Top tips: organise group activities using existing tools

OTHERS

Leisure Networks and Geelong Cycling Club (*watch here:* [Power to Pedal video](#))

Using the Doing Sport Differently principles, Leisure Networks created 'Power to Pedal', a learn to bike program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The video shows how an RSA and club can work together to develop new programs by reaching out to parents and listening to their child's needs.

Top tips: Get support and reach out and engage parents

Tennis Victoria – Tennis for Teens (*listen here:* [panel audio one](#))

Tennis Victoria with funding from VicHealth, developed the Tennis for Teens program by co-designing with clubs and teens. The program aims to open up tennis clubs to teenagers, and allow them to 'take over' for a set time each week. (More info on website: <https://tennis4teens.com.au/about/>)

Top tips: Get support and reach out and engage parents

THEME TWO: Providing a quality participant experience

How to use Principle Two video on experience

Step one: Play the video

What this video covers:

1. What is customer experience and how to create a great one
2. The five key touchpoints to a quality club experience:
 1. The marketing
 2. The registration
 3. The welcome
 4. The mistake
 5. The invitation to return

Watch the video here: [DSD Principle Two video](#)

Step two: Ask questions

Questions or activities to ask clubs:

1. Map out the touchpoints of the clubs participant experience:
 - What are the key moments at your club that are doing well?
 - Are there areas that could be improved?
2. Think about your first experience at the club – reflect on what was welcoming and what supported you to connect within the club (or didn't).
3. Are there people in the club that don't engage as much as others? Could there be ways the club could reach out to them?

Step three: Make one change

COVID context

1. During lockdown, try to stay connected and engage club members. There are a list of possibilities on page 17.
2. As members return, look at the information being sent out to them, is it enough? Is it accessible? Does it 'paint the picture' and allow them to 'see' what they need to do when they get to the club?
3. Is the signage at the club clear about where people can go, what direction, what behaviour is required (e.g. when and how to sanitise equipment)?

Principle Two: summary

Delivering a quality and total experience for participants (use empathy)

1. Start with social – I will come or go to your club based on how I feel (welcome, like I belong)
2. Identify the touchpoints, engage with members and get feedback on their experience (key touchpoints to consider: marketing, registration, the welcome, making mistakes, invitation to return)
3. Let me 'see' what is going to happen – give me all the information I need before I get there to reduce my 'fear of the unknown'
4. Have a designated 'welcome' club representative – and meet me in the car park (that is where my fear sets in)
5. Let me make mistakes

Watch the video on Principle Two here presented by Dr. Erica Randle from the Centre for Sport and Social Impact: [DSD Principle Two video](#)



2 Think about participants as customers and consider their total experience.

Engaging people to the club (new and existing)

Should clubs accept new members at this time?

Now could be a good time to welcome new members and think about new activities:

- Modified training and activities could actually support new members to the club and to the sport
- People may be looking for opportunities for community and social connection – they could just join in to your online activities now as we are in lock down
- People may have taken up new activity during lockdown and now want to continue

Things to consider:

- Does the club have the capacity (in terms of space, numbers, and accessible forms of activity) for new members and the capacity of volunteers to accept them?
- Is the club a genuinely welcome place and what needs to be done to ensure people feel welcome?

How to attract a diversity of people (cultural, gender, ages, less active people)?

- Look at the marketing and material the club has going out to the community, reflect on the images and messaging
- Show that the club is welcoming, reach out to people and welcome them in (don't rely on them taking the initiative to come to the club)
- Consider the opportunities the club provides, are there entry-level opportunities, can people just come and train or test it out
- Engage people from community organisations, contact the LGA for connections or advice on how to engage different groups, reach out and engage (maybe in a co-design process)
- Ask them about what their motivations would be to engage, and what is stopping them

How do we make sure it's a positive experience for new and existing members to come back to the club?

- People may have fears and will want to be reassured both in terms of COVID and in terms of feeling supported as they return back to the sport (if they feel they have reduced fitness or skills)
- Focus on making sure people feel socially supported and welcome, that we are all in this together. Use these types of messages in communication, and as people return into the club, focus on the social and positive aspects as well as the regulation
- Make sure people understand its not just the coaches or committee members who need to contribute to the new normal, that everyone feels a part
- Look at the strengths of the club volunteers (and those members who may not have a task or role yet), find someone to be a good 'welcomer' as people come to the club, someone available who won't be focused on other tasks
- Keep communication lines open and checking in, getting feedback on how everyone is going
- Use the touchpoints to work out what are the key points to the experience of coming back
- Use online platforms to do inductions online if new members or returning ones can't come into the club

Social connection during lock-down

Key points:

- Connect and communicate in any way the club can with members
- Ask members what they would like and if they have any ideas on what could be done
- Activities could be club wide, or delivered for specific groups (e.g. based on each team, or level of activity)

Connection with sponsors

- Keep providing value by promoting local sponsors, using their logo on social media posts or as backdrops to webinars
- Post stories about how sponsors are coping during lockdown and how members could support them
- Use sponsors to develop some online content (e.g. equipment information, leadership talks, or any 'how to' – may not be sport related, could be about nutrition or cooking)

Connection with other activities

- Use this time for professional development of your volunteers, coaches, or players
- Use online webinars already in existence, or have guest people talk to the club (such as physios, other coaches, leadership courses, equipment providers. These could be sponsors, clubs contacts or ask your LGA, SSA, RSA for contacts who could talk)

Active online connection with players

1. Activities specific to your sport

- Coaches can put together online skill or training sessions and provide feedback (could be done in groups or individual)
- Email out activities and get players to send in photos or comments on how they went)

2. Activities around being active

- Performance (i.e. distance walked, number of exercises completed)
- Engaging (photo of the most inventive workout equipment, orienteering challenges)
- Group (could use Apps like Strava or Zwift for group activities)

3. Social meet-ups

- Quizzes or games such as Bingo (use Zoom or other video programs)
- Sharing meals together (i.e. online coffee-chat, Thursday night dinner)

4. Online activities

- Yoga classes online

5. Kid specific

- Give kids activities such as word finds or spot the difference and have them feedback to each other, or scavenger hunts and have them post photos

Resources to engage people during lock-down

VicSport examples from all different sports on how to engage members is a great resource	https://vicsport.com.au/blog/3530/how-sports-are-handling-covid-19
This Girl Can online exercise and activity classes to do at home	https://thisgirlcan.com.au/active-at-home/
Netball Australia online activities for children and adults	https://netfitnetball.com/netfit-clinic/ https://netball.com.au/suncorp-netsetgo-playground
Sport Australia has online activities for school students	https://www.sportaus.gov.au/schools/schools/resources
Science for kids that includes sport based activities	https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sports.html
Sport England have information on getting active at home	https://www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement
Surfing Victoria have activities you can do in your home to get ready to stand-up paddleboard	https://www.coastingsup.com/blog/2020/4/23/coasting-sup-at-home
Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership from Ireland have a great website full of resources for all different ages and abilities	https://www.sligosportandrecreation.ie/stay-home-stay-active/
The panel discussed some great examples on the webinar audio	Panel one audio recording Panel two audio recording Panel three audio recording

THEME THREE: Building confidence back in activity

How to use Principle Three video on confidence

Step one: Play the video

What this video covers:

1. Why confidence is important in sport
2. The fear of judgement, what it is, why it matters, and how to manage it
3. How to build confidence in those returning to sport

Watch the video here: [DSD Principle Three video](#)

Step two: Ask questions

Questions or activities to ask clubs:

1. Individually think about a time when you lost confidence or were away from sport for some time. What were the steps that supported your return to confidence and could these be implemented at the club?
2. How can we support coaches to implement some of these ideas on how to manage people's confidence?
3. Who can support the club to implement these ideas? (LGA, SSA, RSA?)

Step three: Make one change

COVID context

1. Send a message out to members on social media (or email) to acknowledge that some may not be feeling as fit or confident as they were, but that the club would be easing everyone back to activity
2. Put up some online activities that could build fitness and confidence.
3. Make sure the signage at the club clear about where people can go, what direction, what behaviour is required (e.g. when and how to sanitise equipment)

Principle Three: summary

1. Be aware of the fear of judgement and how it operates as a barrier to people's participation in sport or physical activity
2. People want to feel as though they belong so it is important that we tailor our opportunities and ensure that everyone feels included both physically and socially
3. To build confidence as people return into activities:
 1. Normalise mistakes
 2. Give positive feedback specific to each person
 3. Make others visible
 4. Normalise nervousness
 5. Focus on past success to remind people that they can do it
 6. Gradually increase tasks
 7. Give permission to start slowly
 8. Highlight personal abilities

Watch the video on Principle Three here presented by Dr Emma Seal and Dr Paul O'Halloran from the Centre for Sport and Social Impact: [DSD Principle Three video](#)



3 Participation should cater to different levels of skill, ability and fitness.

Engaging people in activity

Engaging people at home:

- Think how members could replicate club training at home and provide tips
- Think how members can keep fit or get back to fitness and build confidence back through activities
- Think about the pressures that people might be feeling, ask them and engage them in conversation, what are people struggling with, what could support them, what experience do they want right now
- Potential options to provide to members:
 - Online activities or sessions (designed by the club or use SSA, NSO or other activity classes that are already online, or provide links that participants can log onto themselves)
 - Provide outlines of activities that they can do at home (e.g. here are the activities of a training session you can do at home)
 - Team activities or challenges
 - Ask players to contribute (e.g. each one leads an activity or provides an activity)

To support people to build up their confidence or maintain their fitness as they return to activity

- Talk to players and find out where they are at, what activity they have been doing at home, and where potential gaps might be (make sure this is a supportive conversation)
- Acknowledge that it will be normal for people to have lost some fitness and skill and they should ease back in to avoid injury
- Provide support and acknowledge that coaches will be building up activity to accommodate and reduce risk of injury

To prevent injury, make sure that:

- sessions are planned properly (so there are adequate warm-ups and cool-downs)
- Games or activities are well timed (not back-to-back)

Managing new regulations and keeping activities interesting

People are most worried about how to behave at the club with new regulations, especially around distancing (layout of activities and contact) and the sanitisation and cleaning.

- Look to your SSA for guidelines and, if need be, work with your LGA, SSA or RSA on how to interpret and implement them
- Remember clubs can only do what they can in areas that they control, they can't control all human behaviour, so communication will be critical
 - Send people guidelines before they get to the club
 - Allow people to 'see' what is going to happen, how they will need to behave
 - At the club have clear signing
 - Have someone available to ask questions (at the club, and also on email/phone) that isn't busy doing other things
 - Have a dedicated COVID page of information on the club website so it's easy for members to keep up to date. Promote this through social media channels, newsletters, etc.
- Try to reduce people's fear of doing something wrong, and have a plan in place about how the club will handle situations when people break the rules (guidelines for the coach, and committee), try to make this supportive and not persecution. It may be as simple as restating the rules or having key phrases to remind people (e.g. 'remember your distance')
- Make sure this is a whole of club approach, it doesn't just fall to a few volunteers

How do we make activities interesting and engaging with the new regulations around distancing and contact?

- Being innovative each week could be exhausting, consider seeking out resources from the SSA, RSA, NSO, or any other resources or examples of what other clubs or even other sports are doing
- This could be an opportunity to stop focusing on the technical aspects during training and instead focus on engagement and enjoyment
- Initial sessions could be based on fun activities to build up confidence and fitness and enjoy the social aspects of the sport
- Work in small groups and provide more individual feedback to make players feel valued

Consider with spacing and contact

- Staggered starts
- More space around equipment (for participants to access safely)
- Reducing spectators and reducing participants allowed at each time (e.g. more smaller groups)
- Modifying contact or rules
- Using cones to outline space and distance

Tools to use

- Team App to record people who attend (instead of relying on pen and paper)