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Chapter Number & Title – Chapter 13, Community sport coaching and impression management

Abstract

This chapter positions community sport coaching work as a social, interactive performance. It begins by introducing the concept of dramaturgy and Goffman's (1959) ground-breaking work addressing *The presentation of the self in everyday life*. This background information is then followed by an exposition of some of Goffman's central dramaturgical concepts and the ways in which they connect with, and could be used to inform, everyday community sport coaching practice. Here, Callum, the last author, provides detailed examples of how he has utilised these dramaturgical concepts to inform the ways in which he performs his community sport coaching role. Finally, the conclusion summarises the central arguments and issues raised in this chapter and provides some critical questions to stimulate your reflection on the dramaturgical dimensions of everyday practice.

Introduction

Using Goffman's (1959) classic dramaturgical insights as the primary heuristic device, this chapter positions community sport coaching work as being somewhat similar to a theatrical performance (Cassidy et al., 2016). In particular, we invite you to critically consider the various ways in which community sport coaches perform individually and/or collectively to scrutinising audiences (e.g., participants, parents, colleagues, managers, and others), who evaluate coaches' actions in relation to the attributes and qualities that coaches both claim to have and are expected to demonstrate (Jones et al., 2011; Cassidy et al., 2016). We also encourage you to reflect on the outcomes of these performances, especially the ways in which audience evaluations may shape a) the ways in which significant others engage with, and responsively treat, you in your community coaching role, and b) the individual and collective influence that you can, as community sport coaches, have on others. We, of course, recognise that some of the concepts and challenges covered in this chapter may prove initially challenging to engage with. As outlined above, this may, in part, reflect the lack of coverage given to the ways in which people may engage in mutual influence in coach education curricula, courses, and pathways. However, we strongly encourage you to grapple with these ideas, as they have the potential to help you recognise the ways in which community sport coaching work is a 'continuous series of staged negotiations or exchanges,' where your influence and success largely depends on being able to offer others (i.e., participants, parents, colleagues, managers, and others) 'something that they will appreciate or reward' (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, p. 72).

In terms of its structure, the chapter begins by introducing the concept of dramaturgy and Goffman's (1959) ground-breaking work addressing the presentation of the self in everyday

life. This brief background information is then followed by an exposition of some of Goffman's central dramaturgical concepts and the ways in which they connect with, and could be used to inform, everyday community sport coaching practice. Here, Callum, the last author, shares detailed examples of how he has utilised these dramaturgical concepts to inform the ways in which he performs his community sport coaching role, especially in terms of how he engages with the significant others that comprise his working environment. Finally, the conclusion summarises the central arguments and issues raised in this chapter and provides some critical questions to stimulate your reflection on the dramaturgical dimensions of everyday practice.

Adopting a dramaturgical perspective to community sport coaching work

The term dramaturgy has its roots in theatre and the performing arts (Shulman, 2017). It originally referred to ways in which actors (and other theatrical performers) variously stage and adapt their performances to best communicate the meaning of a work or script to an audience (Shulman, 2017). For sociologists, this term has since been adopted to characterise their study of the non-fictional performances and interactions that comprise our social worlds (Shulman, 2017). That is, dramaturgy is concerned with how, individually and collectively, 'people stage performances in real life' (Shulman, 2017, p. 5). Here, the primary focus of attention is on the ways in which individuals and groups respectively seek to control their *appearances* (i.e., dress and other features that identify their role, status, and condition) and *manner* (i.e., the way in which individuals and groups perform a role – being haughty, meek, enthusiastic, or angry), as well as skilfully use *props* (i.e., objects that are used to support a performance) and manage the *staging* of an activity (i.e., the physical layout and background items) (Scott, 2015; Potrac et al., 2021), to achieve desired ends in their interactions with others.

For Shulman (2017), the dramaturgical perspective has much to offer us in terms of how we theoretically understand and practically navigate our social worlds. These include, among other benefits, helping us to a) understand 'how' and 'why' we might judge other people based on their appearances and performances and b) appreciate the many social influences that inform how we and others act towards and responsively treat one another (Shulman, 2017). Perhaps most crucially for community sport coaches, dramaturgical theorising can help us to critically consider how we might use various impression management tactics to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those whom we engage with, be they participants, parents, administrators, or other relevant stakeholders (Shulman, 2017; Potrac et al., 2021). Indeed, as recently argued elsewhere (i.e., Potrac, 2019; Potrac et al., 2021), dramaturgical concepts a provide a useful vocabulary for helping coaches to understand and develop the 'hard' (e.g., dealing with pressure, dissent, or resistance from others) and the 'soft' (i.e., being seen to be trustworthy, being able to make people feel valued) interpersonal skills that have been increasingly recognised as being essential ingredients of quality coaching practice (see Cassidy et al., 2016; Ives et al., 2016; 2021; Gale et al., 2019; Potrac, 2019).

In this chapter, we specifically draw upon the dramaturgical ideas developed by Erving Goffman (1959) in his seminal treatise addressing *The presentation of the self in everyday life*. In this acclaimed text, Goffman (1959) critically examined how, in the quest to fulfil societal expectations and influence other people, individuals frequently 'play roles, negotiate situations, and to a larger extent are forced to be actors' (Marsh et al., 1996, p. 73). For him, individual conduct can be 'conceptualised as "performances," often done or "staged" collaboratively in "teams" whose members must master the "arts of impression management"' (Jacobsen, 2019,

p. 63). Indeed, in this book, Goffman provided rich empirical and conceptual insights into how individuals and groups seek to present themselves to others, the tactics they utilise in an attempt to manage the impressions they give off, and, relatedly, protect or advance the version of the self that is exhibited to others (Jones et al., 2011; Cassidy et al., 2016). It is important to note such performances are not designed purely to deliberately hoodwink or cynically mislead others (although this can sometimes be the case), rather they are also used to functionally support social interaction, achieve mutually desired outcomes, and, as a consequence, maintain social order (Jacobsen, 2019).

Applied to community sport coaching, Goffman's (1959, 1964, 1969) work suggests that our individual and collective enactments of this coaching role entail strategically presenting aspects of our personalities (or character), ideas, suggestions, and choices in our interactions, or encounters, with others. The intention of such performances is to maximise our influence or positive impact on the specific audiences (e.g., participants in a community sport scheme) who observe, evaluate, and responsively act towards us. While Goffman (1959) recognised that we are not entirely free to choose the version of the self that we wish to have others accept (i.e., there are often situational expectations that both we and our audiences expect us to live up to), he argued that we do have varying degrees of leeway to strategically manipulate social encounters and situations (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). For example, while the participants in a community coaching programme may expect us to demonstrate particular attributes (e.g., being caring, confident, and knowledgeable) as coaches, we often have agency in the ways that we choose to stage and enact performances that live up to, and exceed, their expectations. Ultimately, then, Goffman (1959) reminds us that our individual and collective performances really matter, as they are pivotal in influencing how we connect, bond, generally get along (or not) with others, and, indeed, achieve things with them (Scott, 2015; Potrac et al., 2021).

Ideally, we wish to avoid what Goffman (1964) labelled as *spoiled performances*. These are occasions where the audience (e.g., participants in our coaching sessions, parents, and others) judging our performances considers us to have failed to fulfil situationally appropriate expectations. For example, parents witnessing, and subsequently complaining about, what they consider to be poorly structured coaching sessions or inappropriate approaches to interaction with the participants. This can lead to our being viewed by others as a 'tainted' and 'discredited' individual (Goffman, 1964, p. 3). In this example, this dissatisfaction may not only exist in the eyes of the parents or participants, but also in those of our colleagues and employers. Importantly, such negative audience evaluations can not only seriously negate, or limit, our efforts to positively influence others, but it can also problematically impact upon our employment opportunities (Ives et al., 2021). Escaping this social stigma is not easy. Indeed, it requires considerably well thought out future impression management to do so (Jones et al., 2011; Huggan et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2015; Prasad, 2018).

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theorising consists of a number of inter-related concepts which, taken collectively, 'provide a framework for understanding the micro-sociological mechanisms underlying the mundane,' everyday features of social life (Jacobsen, 2019, p. 63). At the core of his perspective are the notions of *performances*, *fronts*, *regions*, *impression management*, and *teams*. In the remainder of this chapter, we will introduce and explain these dramaturgical concepts. This coverage will also include Callum's 'real world' descriptions of, as well as reflections on, using these dramaturgical principles to guide and influence his everyday practice as a community sport coach.

Performances, fronts, and regions

For Goffman (1959), performance incorporates 'all the activity of an individual that occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a set of observers and which has some influence on the observers' (p. 32). Essentially, performances are about asserting, maintaining, and controlling how other people view us, especially in terms of the qualities and attributes that we are deemed to possess. In Goffman's (1959) terms, we strive to create *idealised* (or the best possible) and situationally appropriate images of our self in the eyes of others. Our performances come with no guarantees in terms of their outcomes or influence on others, however. Here, Goffman (1959) distinguished between *calculated impressions* and *secondary impressions*. While the former refers to an impression of the self that an individual purposefully seeks to convey to others, the latter is concerned with the impression that the individual leaves in the mind of these others (Shulman, 2017). This may or may not include the calculated impression that an individual sought to create (Leary, 1995; Shulman, 2017). The continued consideration of, and reflection on, performance and the provision of situationally appropriate and desirable impressions of the self is very much at the heart of Callum's approach to his work as a community sport coach. The need to avoid socially discrediting or stigmatising performances lie at the core of his efforts to achieve the desired outcomes of his community sport coaching work. In his own words:

> Engaging with Goffman's work has helped me to move beyond the over-simplistic, dare I say naïve, perspective that I had previously held towards my coaching practice. This is especially so as it concerned my interactions with participants, parents, colleagues, co-coaches, managers, teachers, and administrators. Looking back, I had unproblematically subscribed to a 'one size fits all approach' and a sense of 'taken for granted-ness' to my working interactions with these others. These issues certainly didn't occupy much of my time or critical thought. However, I also found working with people to not always be easy or unproblematic. The reactions from, and relationships

with, others could change from one day to the next or from one situation to another. Over time, this became something that I didn't want to just shrug off or try and ignore. I wanted to better understand and navigate this issue.

Being introduced to Goffman's ideas, and seeing them applied in coaching research, has made me think entirely differently about how I 'perform' as a community sport coach. I now recognise more than ever how the achievement of various workplace goals, be they developing constructive relationships with schools and community centres, hitting participation targets, and, hopefully, having a positive impact on those who participate in the community programmes, are tied to others' impressions of me. It's hard to have an impact if others do not think you are credible, knowledgeable, organised, and caring. As such, I now try to be more purposeful and strategic in the planning, enactment of, and reflection on, my interactions. I try to orient my 'performance' to meet and, ideally, exceed other peoples' expectations of me, be it in providing PPA cover, greeting a parent for the first time, collaborating with colleagues, or having a discussion with my line manager. As well as helping me to help others, I also benefit from performing my work in this way. If I'm looked upon favourably and 'seen' to be doing a 'good job,' it'll open up opportunities for me. These can include more coaching hours, increased job security, greater influence in the planning process with co-coaches, and a better reputation in the local community and the organisation that I work for. On the flip side, if I'm not mindful of these things, I could lose others' support and positive regard, as well as receive negative feedback and evaluations from them. This would likely mean a lot less work coming my way, if, indeed, I would still have a job! I've certainly seen this happen to others, and it is something that I want to avoid.

Inextricably connected to p*erformance* is Goffman's concept of *front*. The *front* refers to 'that part of an individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe performance' (Goffman, 1959, p, 22). For Goffman (1959), the front is comprised of the *appearance*, *manner*, *props*, and *setting* that were introduced in our introduction to dramaturgy above. In constructing and managing a particular front, an individual may be required to consistently exhibit and instantaneously demonstrate the attributes that he or she claims for the front during interaction with others in order maintain it (Cassidy et al., 2016). In illustrating the front in action, Goffman (1959, p. 30) gave the example of a baseball umpire:

> [i]f a baseball umpire is to give the impression that he [sic] is sure of his judgement, he must forgo the moment of thought which might make him sure of his judgement. He must give an instantaneous decision so that the audience will be sure of his judgement.

These ideas have provided considerable 'food for thought' for Callum, who carefully considers how he manages his appearance, manner, props, and staging to create an idealised image of himself in the eyes of those whom he comes into contact with during his coaching work. In his own words:

> When I was at school, I attended a number of different community coaching events and programmes. I have very fond memories of one of these coaches. His name was Derek, and, for me, he epitomised how a coach should be. He always looked immaculate in his branded coaching apparel. Whenever I stepped onto the pitch, he made me feel 'a million dollars.' He remembered all of our names, always greeted us with a huge, wide smile, and asked how our week had been going. I also recall the excitement I felt when

I saw the pop-up goals, balls, bibs, and cones all neatly laid out and colour coordinated. It made me think that he really cared about the experience he was providing us with. His sessions were great, and he was enthusiastically engaged with us until we left to go home. He made us feel special. I never missed one of his sessions. I hadn't thought like that about many of my coaches. My Mum and Dad were also impressed by him. They'd remark about how organised, committed, enthusiastic, and consistent he was in terms of the experience he provided and, relatedly, his individual and collective treatment of the participants.

Combining these good memories with Goffman's consideration of 'appearance,' 'manner,' 'props,' and 'staging,' has been transformative for my coaching practice. Now, I always I try to put myself in the shoes of others and consider how they might think about me and my performance as a community sport coach. This includes giving considerable thought to my appearance, my organisation of the coaching environment, and my manner with those whom I interact with. Among other things, I make sure my kit is clean, that I look smart, and that the equipment is all set out in advance of the participants arriving. I put a smile on my face and engage with every participant and their respective parents. Ultimately, I want the participants and parents to think about me in the same way that my parents and I thought about, and responded to, Derek. I want them to attend all the sessions and recommend the programmes to their friends. Having a good reputation in their eyes is essential if this is to happen though.

Goffman's dramaturgical framework also considers the regions in which our social performances occur. He labelled these the front and back regions (or stages). The front region

is the label given to the place where our performances before a scrutinising audience occur (Goffman, 1959). In community sport coaching, for example, this could be whenever we are face-to-face with those who are the recipients of our performances. Such locations may include being in a sports hall, a classroom, a meeting room, or, indeed, on a playing field. In the front region, actors seek to present an idealised image of themselves to an audience whilst simultaneously seeking to conceal aspects that might discredit the impression they are seeking to give off. The back region, in contrast, refers to the place or places where an individual can step out of character and, to some degree, relax or drop the front that is presented in the front region. As Goffman (1959, p. 113) noted, it is the 'place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude.' It is also the setting where actors can plan, rehearse, and critically reflect upon their performances, as well as 'recharge one's batteries before going back on [front] stage' (Scott, 2015, p. 17). For these reasons, the audience is normally not granted access to the back region. Indeed, witnessing an actor or actors 'out of character,' as well as seeing the behind-the-scenes preparations that occur before and after performances, may make the audience members regard actors' subsequent front stage performances with greater scepticism. Here, the actors front stage performances may be viewed as less believable and credible in the audiences' eyes and, consequently, have less influence on them (Scott, 2015). Below, Callum shares his understanding of the differences between regional performances (i.e., what he does in the front versus the back region), and the important functions the back region plays in supporting his performances in the front region. In his own words:

> When I'm not actively delivering coaching sessions, I'm travelling between venues, attending staff meetings, quickly grabbing lunch, or providing cover for colleagues. This means that when I'm delivering by myself, or with another coach, it is important to carve out some 'back region' time. Having this 'private space' is beneficial because

if you've had a really stressful, frustrating morning with a year three class or a not so good meeting with a line manager, you can take a few moments to get in the right emotional headspace and summon up the positive energy needed for the session to come. Indeed, one thing I like to do is try to get to a venue as early as I practically can, get the session set-up, and then take a couple breaths and close my eyes for a few minutes in the privacy of my car or an empty changing room. I do this so that I'm 'psyched up' and ready to perform to my best when the time comes. I also try and run through my session plan and rehearse the key points I want to make at different points of the session. I don't want the participants or parents to witness me engaging in these activities, as it may lead them to question the authenticity or naturalness of my front stage performances.

If we're delivering a session as a group of coaches, we'll all gather in one car to run through a plan of how the session is to run and rehearse the key interactions we're likely to have. The content of these discussions mainly includes logistics, role allocation and transitions, activity design, timings, group numbers, progressions, and coaching positions. This is usually based on some personal reflections that we've shared on the drive over to the venue and includes what has or hasn't worked in the past with the same or similar groups. We also talk about problematic individuals in the session, how we might handle them, aspects of the performance we can improve upon, and enjoy a well-meaning laugh at some of the predicaments we have variously found ourselves in both inside and outside of work. Of course, these are all conversations that, for obvious reasons of credibility, we wouldn't have in front of the players, parents, teachers, and our managers. Most of the time, we are, individually and collectively sincere in the 'front region,' but there are times in the 'back region' when we can be more cynical in

how we discuss our approaches to certain events and activities. We want to keep that hidden from our 'audience' because if they knew about the different mechanical aspects of the 'show,' we might not be evaluated quite so positively.

Impression management and team performance

In addition to performing as an individual, Goffman's (1959) work also recognised how performances may be staged by groups or teams. For Goffman (1959, p. 85), a *performance team* refers to 'any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine' that seeks to create a desired and unified team impression (Scott, 2015). This concept has considerable utility for community sport coaching, especially as many coaches are required to create and sustain performances with other collaborators (e.g., other community sport coaches, teachers, youth workers, among others) (cf. Shulman, 2017). According to Goffman (1959), actors engaged in team performances strive to avoid incidents, which are 'unexpected events that disrupt the version of reality fostered by the participants and make the performance grind to an embarrassing halt' (Scott, 2015, p. 88). These can include unmeant gestures (i.e., an actor gives off a contradictory impression), inopportune intrusions (i.e., when an audience member catches a performer out of character in the back region), faux pas (i.e., when a performer unthinkingly endangers the image that the group wishes to project), and causing a scene (i.e., a performer explicitly challenges the consensus projected by the team) (Scott, 2015). Avoiding these incidents as much as possible is important for Callum. In his own words:

> Disruptions like 'unmeant gestures,' 'faux pas,' 'inopportune intrusions,' and 'scenes' are harmful to the individual and collective images we try to present as community sport coaches. If I 'drop someone in it,' or if I'm dropped in it by someone else, it can be hugely problematic for my credibility and reputation with those that I'm

collaborating with, as well as the audience that is appraising our efforts. On a personal level, if I commit a brief 'slip of the tongue,' I find it hard to conceal the embarrassment of making a mistake. The redness in my face makes this very clear! I also appreciate that the mistakes I make can impact upon others. Indeed, I can create ambiguity for the rest of the people in the interaction and provide myself and my fellow coaches with an up-hill battle to maintain the coordinated image we're trying to present. In community sport coaching, there's always excessive competition on a local level for securing provision contracts, so once relationships are damaged with bodies like youth sport trusts, charities, schools, and community centres, it's difficult to re-establish them. So, you don't want to be making too many mistakes or too big a mistake. To 'carry off' a coordinated performance, we need to have everyone pulling in the same direction and willing to personally invest in achieving positive outcomes. This means that 'scenes' can damage working relationships with colleagues and 'give off' a contradictory impression to audiences. For example, if I witnessed coaches bickering, I'm going to question their professionalism and wonder whether they're credible and competent. Similarly, if I fail to control my emotions and decide to 'let rip' on someone, I'll be doubted for my ability to work productively with others and manage my emotions in situationally appropriate ways. These are all not good outcomes!

To prevent these incidents from happening (as much as is possible), Goffman (1959) developed three defensive attributes and strategies that individuals and groups could utilise to support their efforts. These are *dramaturgical loyalty*, *dramaturgical discipline*, and *dramaturgical circumspection*. *Dramaturgical loyalty* refers to the moral obligation that a performer has to not betray the shared secrets of the team (e.g., the planning of their show, the backstage realities, and their off-stage identities) (Scott, 2015). For example, a community sport coach

not sharing the private and confidential discussions between coaches with the participants. *Dramaturgical discipline*, meanwhile, concerns 'an actor's careful management of their personal front so as to appear nonchalant, while concealing the extensive work that they are doing to create this very impression' (Scott, 2015, p. 88). Dramaturgical discipline, then, entails community sport coaches remembering and positively executing their role in the group's performance, managing their own verbal and non-verbal communication, carefully monitoring the team's performance as a whole, and having the presence of mind to prevent any incidents from occurring (Scott, 2015). Finally, *dramaturgical circumspection* refers to the 'exercise of prudence, care, and honesty' in the staging of a team performance (Goffman, 1959, p. 212). This includes putting measures in place to avoid or minimise any anticipated incidents and preparing for likely contingencies (Scott, 2015). Dramaturgical circumspection can be exercised in a variety of ways. This can, for example, include a group of community sport coaches ensuring that they work to the strengths of the individuals who comprise the respective performance team or limiting working engagements with colleagues whom they distrust (Gale et al., 2019). Arguably, such strategic actions could help to 'minimise the risk of any [team] member acting improperly, embarrassingly, or treacherously (Scott, 2015, p. 89). Another strategy may be using of straightforward and well-rehearsed scripts that minimise the possibility of a performer 'fluffing their lines and blowing the team's cover' (Scott, 2015, p. 213). For example, a fellow community sport coach contradicting or appearing confused when relaying agreed messages, which were prepared in the back region with the other performance team members, to participants and parents in a meeting. The concepts of dramaturgical loyalty, discipline, and circumspection feature prominently in Callum's coaching practice. In terms of dramaturgical loyalty, he notes:

> Dramaturgical loyalty definitely features in my practice. A recent example includes my experience of planning a holiday camp with other coaches. Colin, our manager, selected

five of us to prepare a plan for a holiday camp and to present the plan to him. The programme, which aimed at supporting positive youth development through football, wouldn't go ahead without his approval. During our planning meetings, a few of my colleagues suggested that I take charge of the youngest group for the duration of the camp. I didn't want to do it. In fact, I felt insulted and angry at this suggestion. I voiced my reservations and concerns and that, while I'd prefer to go with the older participants, I'd 'take one for the team' on this occasion. In the subsequent meeting with Colin, he probed each of us to gage our commitment to the plan and how we felt about our particular roles. That was an opportunity for me to say what I really felt and draw Colin's attention to the prior disagreement, but I chose not to do so. Ultimately, I said I would spend the week with the younger age-group of participants, and I stuck with that decision. To raise objections in the meeting with Colin may be seen as a duplicitous and opportunistic act by my colleagues. Indeed, I wanted to show them that I could be trusted to 'play my part well' when it mattered most. I felt this would help me in my working relationships with them. And it did! When planning for another holiday camp with the same coaches, they recognised that I had taken the youngest group previously and decided that it would be now be someone else's turn to do so.

Callum also affords considerable importance to ensuring he maintains a strong sense of dramaturgical discipline throughout his public or face-to-face performances as a community sport coach. In his own words:

For me, dramaturgical discipline is practically enacted in a number of ways. On one level, it's about trying my best to perform my role in the way it was planned, be that when I coach alone or with other coaches. This entails continuously thinking about

what and how I'm performing while I am actually coaching or interacting with a particular audience. That is, I try to avoid getting so caught up in my coaching that I lose the ability to reflect on what I am doing in action. On another level, it also entails monitoring the direction of collective performances with other coaches. More often than not, this means attempting to 'fix' mistakes in a face-saving manner. This can include occasions when I (or they) may give the wrong information to a parent, provide incorrect instructions to participants, or miss out important content or messages. One recent example that I can share happened when I was working with a new community sport coach called Olly. Probably due to understandable first day nerves, he forgot to engage the participants in a discussion of 'behaviour management' rules prior to engaging in an activity. Seeing a natural opportunity to intervene, I calmly said to the group, 'Before we get started on the activity that Olly will be leading, who can tell him about the rules we have developed for how we approach and behave towards each other?' I carefully managed my tone and body language, to make the intervention seem a natural extension of what Olly had been talking to the group about. Several arms enthusiastically shot up in the air from the children, who wanted to explain the rules they had previously been developed. For me, this intervention helped get our performance 'back on track' and was done in a way that avoided causing Olly any unnecessary embarrassment. Olly and I discussed this after the session. He was apologetic for forgetting to attend to the rules but welcomed the positive way we engaged with the issue in front of the participants. I told him that it had happened to me many times and that helping each other out in this way would be good for everyone.

Finally, Callum attaches considerable importance to managing any disruptions to individual and collective community sport coaching performances in a positive and face-saving manner whenever possible. In his own words:

> The concept of dramaturgical circumspection has made me carefully think about how to avoid (or minimise) any disruptions to individual and collective coaching performances. This can include ensuring (as much as possible) that particular roles and duties are assigned to those who can perform them best. For example, who might be best to lead the parts of the session around developing the social skills of the participants or facilitating the development of group rules and expectations. We then think about how the other coaches can support the person leading these types of activities. Other simple examples include checking the quantity and quality of the equipment needed for sessions (e.g., do we have enough? does it work?), the space available for coaching sessions (e.g., how might we best use the space to work through our planned activities?), the appropriate allocation of time for different activities (e.g., how long for each activity? how will we manage the transition between each activity?), and how the session could be adjusted if the number of participants at a session is at, below, or above expected. We also consider from who, where, and when we might experience some difficulties. For example, we know that some participants do not get on with each other or can be disruptive when they engage in certain activities. So, we also think about how we might best handle these events should they arise. For me, this means my planning entails much more than thinking about the content of a session. It's also about carefully considering who does what, when, and how, as well identifying what issues could arise and how we might individually and collectively respond to such situations and scenarios. Thinking through things in this way obviously takes more time, but it has

made me feel more secure and confident about my individual and collective community sport coaching performances.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce you to the core principles of Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theorising, and to consider the ways in which you could use this knowledge to critically reflect upon and inform your personal coaching practice. We believe his theorising provides an insightful means of uncovering and better appreciating the hidden, and often underappreciated, social dynamics of community sport coaching work (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015; Prasad, 2018). Indeed, we hope this chapter encourages you to consider the importance of your everyday, face-to-face interactions as a community sport coach, especially in terms of how you (individually and collectively) present your self and your ideas, views, decisions, and actions to those others who comprise your coaching environments. This encouragement also extends to the way that you seek to responsively treat and respond to others in your everyday practice. Of course, developing and maintaining an idealised image of yourself in the eyes of an evaluating audience is not an easy or unproblematic task. Nor is it something that we only need to do once. Instead, it is an embodied, continuous, and dynamic challenge that requires us to consider how we might make others think, feel, and act (Jones et al., 2004; Cassidy et al., 2016). This is a topic we explore in further detail in the next chapter (14), which examines the emotional dimensions of community sport coaching work. Ultimately, we believe the benefits of developing your impression management and social tact clearly outweigh the costs involved. For Callum, at least, this has certainly been the case. In his own words:

I think Goffman's insights are extremely relevant for understanding and informing the everyday interactions of community sport coaches. I know that his work has been maligned for being too cynical and Machiavellian in nature. But I don't think that's the case, at all. Goffman's ideas about the presentation of the self in everyday life have made me more thoughtful and reflective about how I present myself to others and the ways that I might live up to, and exceed, their expectations. I sincerely want them to consider me to be a 'collaborative' colleague, a 'quality' coach, and a 'good' employee. I feel more positive about myself and my work when they do. Goffman's work has also helped me become better equipped to productively engage in discussions, present ideas, and provide feedback to participants and their parents, as well as my colleagues and managers. Ultimately, it has made me think about how I might have a constructive influence on others – which is ultimately the core facet of my work. I certainly believe that the dramaturgical perspective ought to comprise at least a part of the coach education delivered by National Governing Bodies. Of course, it won't provide you with guaranteed solutions to the challenges, problems, and dilemmas that are part and parcel of engaging with others. However, it can help you to think deeply and productively about your practice, especially the when, how, and why of developing, sustaining, and improving your working relationships.

Critical questions

Reflect on the dramaturgical dimensions of your current (or future) community sport coaching work:

1. Who are the situational stakeholders that you engage with in your coaching role? What expectations might they have of you? What attributes and qualities might they expect you to demonstrate?

2. What impression of the self would you like to create in the eyes of these respective individuals and groups? Why?

3. What might be the impacts or consequences of one or more of these individuals and groups considering your community sport coaching performances to be spoiled (i.e., to not live up to their expectations)?

4. Describe how you might manage your manner, appearance, props, and staging in your encounters with those participating in your coaching programmes and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers and youth workers). What would you do, when, how, and why? What would you avoid doing? When, how, and why?

5. Describe three ways in which you might demonstrate dramaturgical loyalty in your coaching practice? What could you do? When, how, and why? What would you avoid doing? When, how, and why?

6. Describe three ways in which you might demonstrate dramaturgical discipline in your coaching practice? What could you do? When, how, and why? What would you avoid doing? When, how, and why?

7. Describe three ways in which you might demonstrate dramaturgical circumspection in your coaching practice? What could you do? When, how, and why? What would you avoid doing? When, how, and why?

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