

YOUR CLUB'S GAME PLAN TO BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESPECT

KIND | SAFE | FAIR | SUCCESSFUL

CLUB RESPECT: THE GAME PLAN

Healthy Sports Clubs

30 May 2022

CLUB RESPECT

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S TRUST

What is Club Respect?

vwt.org.au

Victorian Women's Trust has held an independent voice for over 30 years, elevating the voice of women with novel and cutting-edge social programs and breaking new ground with important grassroots projects.

clubrespect.org.au

Club Respect is a national harm-prevention initiative by the Dugdale Trust for Women & Girls of which the Victorian Women's Trust is Trustee. Club Respect helps grassroots sports clubs build and maintain a deep culture of respect.

Respect is the best defence against abuse, violent attitudes and behaviours. Get this right at club level and people thrive, feel safe, and are able to enjoy the pleasures and opportunities that sport provides.

Whether you're a coach, committee member, team manager, president, volunteer, parent, supporter or player, Club Respect gives you simple and effective strategies to make a positive impact in and around your club.

When people are empowered to positively influence those around them, they become change makers in their clubs and in the wider community.

This is a winning formula. Pass it on!

Club Respect has a circle for its logo, but not simply because of an immediate sports connection. In acknowledging our First Nations' Peoples, Club Respect appreciates that the circle has been a powerful Indigenous symbol for thousands of years and represents the wisdom of people coming together in peaceful exchange.



"The local club is constantly being asked to be more than just a sports organisation. It is expected to be the guardian, the keeper, the teacher, the values/attitudes setter, the disciplinarian and another form of family for many of its members.

What each and every sports club in the land needs right now is the tools and the support to meet the ever-increasing demands placed upon them, in a world where time, money and patience is often short in supply.

Clubs need simple, practical advice and help that is time-efficient, useful and sensible allowing them to do what they're there for and to do what they do best and that is to provide opportunities for every member of the community to play and enjoy their sport of choice."

– Margot Foster AM, Olympian

How to use this workbook

This workbook is designed to introduce you to the Club Respect framework.

We will discuss where your club stands with each of the 7 A.W.E.S.O.M.E. elements and how the club can improve.

You will need to do some hard thinking. Reflect on your own beliefs. Anticipate the challenges ahead.

You will use this workbook as a guide in the months and years ahead – how far have you come? Have you noticed a difference?



Part A: The challenges

What are the common issues we face?

Part B: The building blocks

We go through the 7 A.W.E.S.O.M.E. elements

Part C: How it looks

You've set up your club for respect, now use Club Respect in real-time.

Part D: Where to from here?

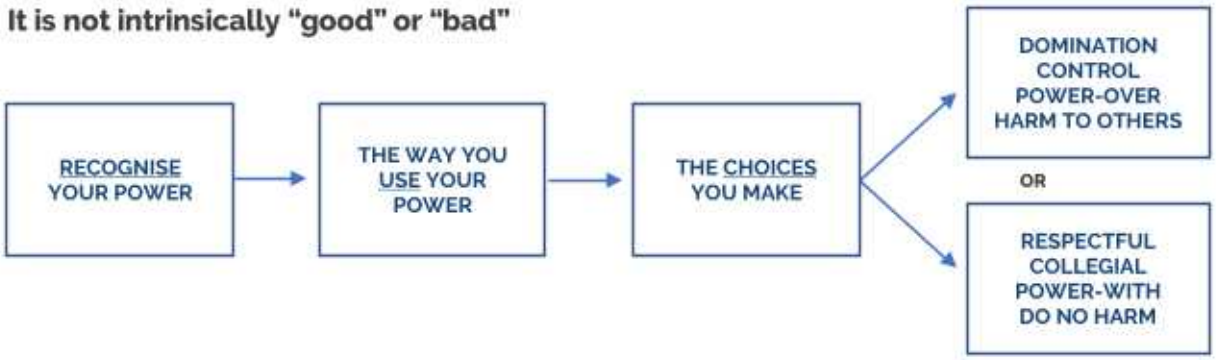
Next steps and how to keep the momentum going.

PART A: THE CHALLENGES

No matter how well your club's travelling, issues will surface. That's normal. Some may be difficult to handle and take time and energy to properly resolve. That's normal too.

Power... and respect

Power is the ability to do things.
It is not intrinsically "good" or "bad"



Common Club Issues

Bad Behaviour

EXAMPLE 1: YELLING COACH	EXAMPLE 2: INTIMIDATING PARENT	EXAMPLE 3: ARROGANT PLAYER	EXAMPLE 4: REFEREE ABUSE

Discrimination

EXAMPLE 1: PLAYERS MAKING HOMOPHOBIC SLURS	EXAMPLE 2: CLUBS GIVING PREFERENCE TO CERTAIN TEAMS	EXAMPLE 3: IT IS DIFFICULT TO ENTER A COMMITTEE	EXAMPLE 4: A PARENT IS SUSPICIOUS OF AN ETHNIC GROUP

PART B: THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Club people will drive culture change when they are empowered to do so.

You want to belong to a club that's safe, fair, fun, successful and is all about growth opportunities.

The A.W.E.S.O.M.E. Game Plan

- Alignment of values
- Working well with others
- Effective Communication
- Success judged (the right way!)
- Ownership
- Modelling Respect
- Equality and Fairness





Alignment of values

Your values are the ideas and behaviours that you want to live your life by

Transforming a club's culture is rewarding, well worth the effort. But first we need to understand that nothing magical occurs here.

Tinkering at the edges is no answer. Changing words here and there in some club documents just won't cut it. Strong foundations are the key. We're talking real intent, real purpose, real coverage, real change. Everyone has to be involved in this journey, from canteen volunteer to the president.

> **'It is a mistake to dismiss such work around establishing the values of an organisation as insignificant and merely symbolic. The process involves reflection, conversation, debate and further reflection. The result assists in shaping the culture, identity and priorities for the Club. Those values can, when properly articulated, guide everyone within the Club in relation to their behaviour and the standards expected.'**
>
> **- Collingwood FC Do Better Report, p. 18**

How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆	**Club values are the most important thing at the club. These values are at the core of everything that happens at the club.**
☆☆	**Club values are important. The club has considered values but most of the club won't know what they are.**
☆	**Club values haven't really ever been considered, although the leaders are great role models.**
✕	**Club values are not important. Individual leaders have their own direction and clash with others.**

Working well with others

A powerful code of conduct is a critical ingredient in a club's drive to become a place of respect, fun, fairness, safety and success.

There are often Codes of Conduct that are detailed, well-developed statements which emphasise good behaviour, accountabilities and an expectation of playing and operating in the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship.

But these aren't necessarily front and centre of club operations. They might be sitting in a folder somewhere, often not communicated effectively to new players, supporters and parents.

Even if a Code of Conduct is upfront and visible in a club, there can be a sense around the club that they are just nice words, really.



How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆ **A code of conduct has been fully adopted and the process of handing out sanctions is understood.**

☆☆ **The club updates the code of conduct regularly including essential conduct and sanctions. Club members believe it lacks the power to protect them.**

☆ **A code of conduct is updated every year and signed by all club members, but most of the club won't remember what it contained.**

✕ **A code of conduct only exists because the league/council requires it. There's a belief that any major issues will just be sorted by the league.**

Effective Communication

Upfront, clear, honest and respectful - club attitudes ripple through the members and into their non-club lives

There are manuals galore about how to establish good communicationss. But wise heads know that there's a lot more to it than meets the eye.

The hallmark of clubs with a recognisable culture of respect is their capacity to put their values into action and explicitly demonstrate the actions that align with their values.

VERBAL	WRITTEN	VISUAL
CHATTING TO PEOPLE, CHEERING IN A MATCH, COMMITTEE MEETING	NEWSLETTERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, REGO FORM, WEBSITE	DISPLAYED IN CLUB ROOMS, CANTEEEN AND ONLINE

How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆	**All club communications are consistent around respect and club values. Club has a process that assists members to recognise and practice the club values.**
☆☆	**Club communications are coordinated well with a focus on connecting with players or acknowledging sponsors.**
☆	**Club communications are only focussed on registrations and organising matches.**
✕	**Club communications aren't coordinated in any way.**

Success judged (the right way!)

Winning at ANY cost. We all want to win. But we have to ask ourselves if winning is more important than the values we say we believe in.

Clubs which prioritise creating respectful culture become a 'destination club'; a place well known for connection, belonging, collaboration, safety, enjoyment and respect.

This results in increased membership, fewer breaches of club's Code of Conduct, volunteer retention, regular supporter attendance, positive community-wide regard for the club. These outcomes, *and winning*, are not mutually exclusive.

Where does the club stand with:

- ❑ playing kids out of their age level
- ❑ club attention focussed primarily on flag winners
- ❑ a focus on outcomes above individual development
- ❑ abuse of referees/referee decisions
- ❑ cheering opposition mistakes
- ❑ teams that ignore and don't include
- ❑ the weakest player



How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆ **Our club has documented club-wide success standards which are discussed and agreed by the members.**

☆☆ **Our club believes in winning the right way but has not documented the success standards. Teams may have their own success standards initiated by the coach.**

☆ **Our club believes in winning the right way but it's tough when other clubs and teams aren't doing the right thing.**

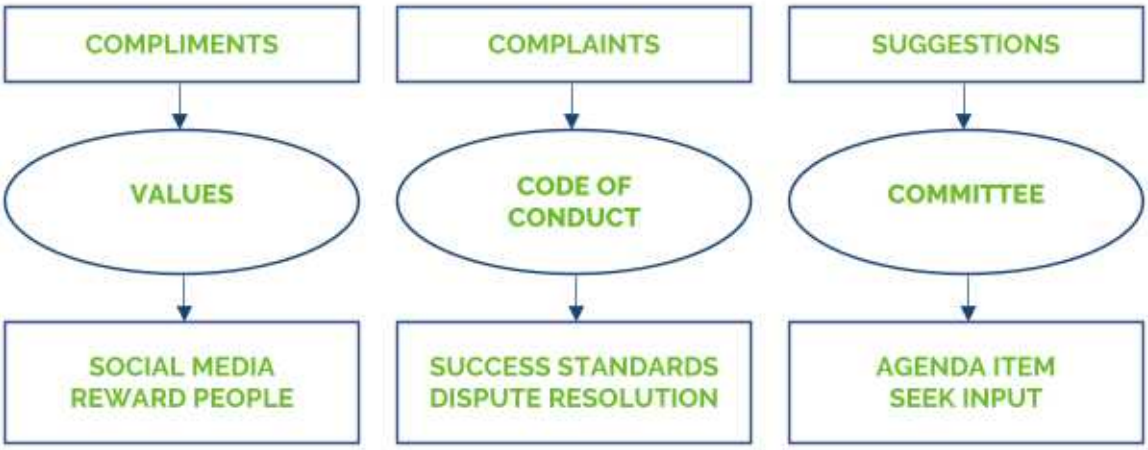
✕ **It's a dog-eat-dog world, our club will do anything to get the win.**

Ownership

Feedback is important - handling it properly helps creates ownership

People in clubs need to feel confident that they can have their say and know that they're being heard and respected. A club aspiring to be a place of respect, safety, fun, fairness and success will make sure that it has good processes for hearing what it's supporters and members have to say.

These clubs act on feedback in ways which are transparent and meaningful. They see listening to their members as opportunities for growth.



How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆ **Club members trust the process at the club and know that the club appreciates feedback. In fact, giving any type of feedback is encouraged.**

☆☆ **Club members have access to raise an issue and provide feedback; however, it's not well communicated to all members.**

☆ **Club members won't know who to contact about an issue, but if the club knows about it, they will try to resolve it.**

✕ **Club members don't feel a connection to the club and don't trust issues will be resolved.**

Modelling Respect

It's one thing to have ideas about positive culture. Club leadership has to show commitment. There will be conversational challenges. This will test your resolve

A community atmosphere doesn't just happen, the club must create an environment where players and parents do more around their club than just the matches. Club leaders can start by knowing who's who at the club. Learn about your members and introduce people to one another. Make it very obvious that the club and committee are interested in the members and your club will naturally find these opportunities.

This needs to comes from a genuine interest from the club to connect with members, including the coaches and captains, seniors and juniors.

> **"My dream is to have existing role models realise the power they have in moulding good behaviour and attitudes. Imagine it; we could have a whole generation of young people consciously modelled by members of their local sports club, so that they have a deep understanding of appropriate ways of interacting."**
>
> **- Mary Crooks AO, Co-founder, Club Respect**

How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆	Club leaders believe in the club values and their behaviour matches it. The leaders can handle tough conversations and always respond respectfully.
☆☆	Club leaders show great commitment to the club. They have strong personalities that gets stuff done. Their behaviour is based on their own values (not club values).
☆	Club leaders are loyal to the club and members appreciate them for it, but often they don't behave in the way they tell others to.
×	Club leaders do not have much influence. Their behaviour and opinions do not reflect club values.

Equality & Fairness

Equality and fairness doesn't come magically – it is something we create

Being "fair" is a strong value in Australian society, but like other important values, there can be a gap between the idea and the reality. Being "fair" doesn't come about through hope and intent. People have to do things to ensure it works in practice. Clubs don't always get it right when it comes to being fair to everyone.

Clubs can say that they can value excellence, respect, diversity, united and caring... but there can still be a gap between what the club says and what the club does.



Photo: Michael Klein

How would you rate your club right now?

☆☆☆	**The club has a system in place that actively promotes equality and fair treatment for all people, across all of the club's operations.**
☆☆	**The club speaks about fairness and equality, holds information sessions and runs special matches to highlight important causes.**
☆	**The club has players from marginalised groups and believes that being fair just happens.**
✕	**The club doesn't believe it's important.**

PART C: IN REAL-TIME

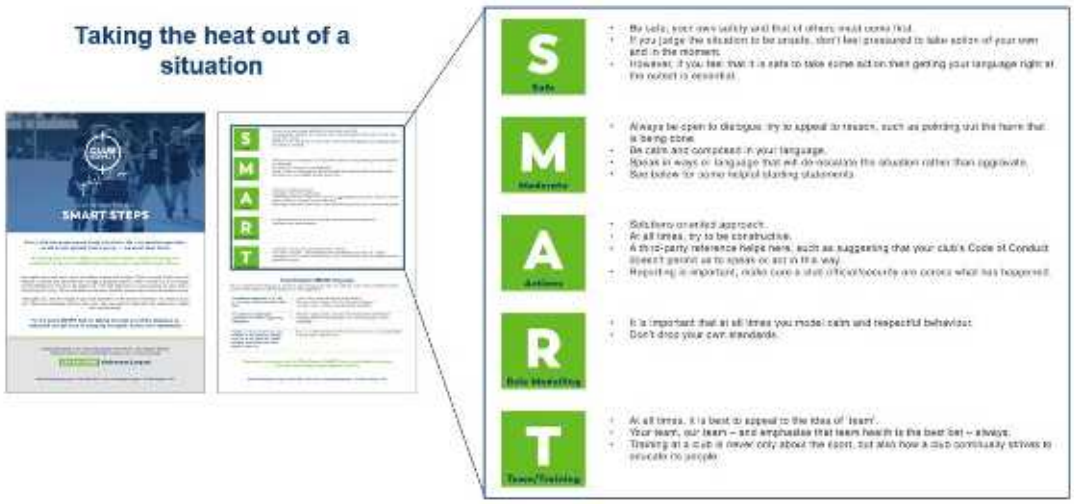
As you develop the 7 A.W.E.S.O.M.E. elements (and beyond) you will continue to have heated moments in the club that require immediate attention.

The real power of having strong values and a Code of conduct adopted by the entire club means people must refer to them in heated issues. "I don't want you swearing around my kids" becomes "we don't swear around the kids at this club."

> "We're trying to create a culture in our clubs that will actually call people out and say, 'Hey, that's not acceptable.' Not only say that, but you actually tell them, 'This is what we would like you to do, and if you do all of this, that's fine, you're welcome to stay.'"
>
> - Brent Silva, General Manager, NRL Victoria

Members should be able to *safely* call out bad behaviour and discrimination either 'in the moment' or by connecting with a trusted club leader afterwards. Safety here means that their anonymity is respected and that the club will do what it can to resolve the issue.

S.M.A.R.T. Steps (on the Club Respect website)



PART D: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

"The club culture is the fabric that underpins everything – the core values and principles the club stands for, and our core value is respect"

- Peter Robinson, Player Well-being, Melbourne Storm

A.W.E.S.O.M.E. Game Plan

- What's the feeling after the workshop. Respect trumps harmony... so ask the tough questions to achieve consensus.
- What can your club do to increase the rating on each of the elements?

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Include 'club culture' to your committee meeting agenda.
- Identify a leader to be responsible for monitoring progress.

CLUB RESPECT RESOURCES

- Explore our website: clubrespect.org.au
- Follow on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn).
- Subscribe to our eNnewsletter.

PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE YOUR CLUB COMMITMENT

- For committed clubs, we provide Club Respect signage (at no cost).
- Put the signs up in the clubroom, above the canteen, on outdoor fencing.





www.clubrespect.org.au

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