



UNITED STATES FIGHT LEAGUE

**Redefining a Champion: Respect,
Responsibility, Resilience**

Kravis Leadership Institute

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Redefining a “Champion” Respect – Responsibility – Resilience



Licensed coaches may nominate a youth athlete at the end of the year for a personalized USFL Champion Ring. Athletes must be 13 years old or older with a minimum of 10 USFL fights but also meet these character traits. Bouts where athletes receive poor conduct disciplinary actions or miss weight or licensing timelines will not count towards the 10.

Respect in a martial arts context is largely aimed at conditioning for loyalty, better group cohesion, and control of the abilities when learning a martial art. Students are often expected to bow to the coach, drill with classmates with a healthy attitude in the interest of preparing for competition, and exhibit good sportsmanship in the hopes that they will carry that attitude outside of class. While martial arts are often framed as self-defense techniques, it is stressed that students should never use techniques learned in class as aggressors. It is difficult to quantify respect, especially since it is mostly treated as a moral virtue; to be considered respectful, the practice of respect must be repeated as a habit of life.

Responsibility is a core principle of what defines character. Particularly in the context of martial arts, responsibility helps foster leadership, discipline, and obedience. The Army regards character development as an individual responsibility, which is a key ideal we want to stress in the curriculum. The youth participating in the USFL need to understand that ultimately the decision to have “good character” is an individual task that they need to take control over. Responsibility includes owning up to the mistake one makes and learning to grow from this. Under the umbrella of responsibility falls the notion of consequences, which is an important life lesson to teach the youth early on. In application of the sport context, it includes regularly attending practices, maintaining punctuality, paying attention to instructions given by coaches, and upholding high academics.

Resilience, the ability to bounce back after failure, is another characteristic that is crucial for developing character. Resilience may also be defined as “achieving positive outcomes despite risk,” in the context of students from a high-risk background. By preparing students for the aftermath of failure, children no longer fear failure, which enables them to take risks that challenge themselves in their goals and actions. Within a Pankration context, resilience allows students to learn from mistakes after losing a competition, rather than giving up or sulking. It is common for children, especially at this age range of 8-15 years, to use unhealthy coping mechanisms.

The United States Fight League (USFL) Character Development Program is under development by the Kravis Leadership Institute. Participation in this program will be free and implemented as part of the USFL Belt Ranking and Ring award system in the future.

Overview: How It Work

This is a character-building curriculum for the national organization United States Fight League. We, research analysts at Kravis Leadership Institute, have developed this curriculum to build the three pillars of character: Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience.

The suggested activities in this curriculum can be implemented up to the coach's discretion

Curriculum for Fight League LLC.

Sports ideally teach discipline and commitment. They challenge you and build character for everything you do in life.

- Howie Long

3 Pillars of Character IIII

RESPECT

builds loyalty, group cohesion, and good sportsmanship

RESPONSIBILITY

leadership, discipline, obedience

RESILLIENCE

achieving positive outcomes despite risk

GOAL - design a curriculum to develop character and leadership in USFL athletes

How it Works - Drills and Discussion

DRILLS

physical aspect; drills before, during, after practice that facilitate and foster the 3 R's

DISCUSSION

social and mental aspect; reflection and verbalization of the values further instills the 3 R's

Why This Matters

The proposed character-building curriculum for the United States Fight League separates the idea of character into three main components: respect, responsibility, and resilience. Within mixed martial arts, these three R's are crucial, especially in the context of leadership development for young students within the age range of 8-16 years old. The U.S. Army defines character as “the sum total of an individual's moral and ethical qualities, the essence of who a person is, what a person believes, and how a person acts” (Michelson, 2013, p.3). Similarly, a prominent all boys' boarding high school describes character as “how a boy conducts himself when no one is there to judge him and how he holds himself accountable for his own decisions” (School, 2018). Thus, in an effort to instill this sense of character for the youth of the United States Fight League, we propose that the qualities of respect, responsibility, and resilience capture as a whole the ideal of “good character” that we pursue.

Respect in a martial arts context is largely aimed at conditioning for loyalty, better group cohesion, and control of the abilities when learning a martial art. Students are often expected to bow to the coach, drill with classmates with a healthy attitude in the interest of preparing for competition, and exhibit good sportsmanship in the hopes that they will carry that attitude outside of class. While martial arts are often framed as self-defense techniques, it is stressed that students should never use techniques learned in class as aggressors. It is difficult to quantify respect, especially since it can mostly be treated as a moral virtue; respect in the context of martial arts should then be qualified by a historical analysis from previously established programs.

Responsibility is a core principle of what defines character. Particularly in a context of martial arts, responsibility helps foster leadership, discipline, and obedience. The Army regards character development as an individual responsibility, which is a key ideal we want to stress in the curriculum (Michelson, 2013). The youth participating in the United States Fight League need to understand that ultimately the decision to have “good character” is an individual task that they need to take control over. Responsibility includes owning up to the mistake one makes and learning to grow from this. Under the umbrella of responsibility falls the notion of consequences, which is an important life lesson to teach the youth early on. In application of the sport context, it includes regularly attending practices, maintaining punctuality, paying attention to instructions given by coaches, and upholding high academics.

Resilience, the ability to bounce back after failure, is another characteristic that is crucial for developing character. Resilience may also be defined as “achieving positive outcomes despite risk,” in the context of students from a high-risk background (Brooks, 2006). By preparing students for the aftermath of failure, children no longer fear failure, which enables them to take risks that challenge themselves in their goals and actions. Within a mixed martial arts context, resilience allows students to learn from mistakes after losing a competition, rather than giving up or sulking. It is common for children, especially at this age range of 8-16 years, to use unhealthy coping mechanisms (Ginsburg, Jablow, and Mulcahy, 2011).

Literature Review

RESPECT :

Historically, it has fallen to the martial class of individuals to govern states and act as leaders; in Plato's Republic, he makes the case that in a perfect system, the rulers should be philosopher kings chosen solely among the soldierly class. He also states that there is a certain part of the soldier's soul, the Thumos, or spiritedness, which is responsible for the courage and the desire for honors. Plato makes a careful distinction in which the soldiers, who are given much power, must be utterly loyal to the state, as though "dogs...gentle to his own and those known to him" (Plato, The Republic Book 2). Furthermore, in The Republic, the soldierly or "guardian" class is composed of individuals raised since childhood in gymnastics, athletics, and eventually with observations of battle, all for the purpose of composing a future guardian class; what he had in mind would also entail a youth martial arts program. Nonetheless, Plato's program has some flaws in that it is largely based on a caste-like system, little to no free will, and total devotion of goods and property to the state; we can still take some of his thoughts on what makes the martial tradition more admirable than the artisan tradition in that artisans are largely governed by personal appetite, and that soldiers are governed by non-material values, glory, the acquisition of honor, and the well-being of the country.

In Dave Grossman's "Sheep, Wolves, and Sheepdog," the "wolf" and "sheepdog" are similar in that they have the ability to do harm through physical and martial means. The inferred difference is that "wolves" have no respect or regard for the people around them or the law while "sheepdogs" do; furthermore, "sheepdogs" are expected to respect "sheep" as productive members of society, even if the "sheep" are utterly disdainful of "sheepdogs"(Grossman 2004). This is a popular ethos in the modern United States, adopted largely by members of the military and law enforcement. Coincidentally, many students in the USFL report being interested in careers in law enforcement rather than professionally fighting.

A study on self-esteem in martial arts reveals that martial artists learn to develop empathy, "the ability to understand how a person is feeling, and how to act appropriately according to those feelings," and also develop "close friendships with their training partners" (Shireman, 2010). Students are expected to suppress anger and not lash out when accidents happen, such as an accidental strike or a joint lock with too much pressure. The study only further leads to the conclusion that a background in martial arts leads students to develop an attitude of fair play.

Current MMA programs have also seen a rise in good character of their students; group settings put positive peer pressure on kids to attend classes, kids develop healthy role models, and kids are kept off the streets in an otherwise bad neighborhood. In Orlando, a reformed convict runs a gym in an effort to save kids from turning to crime. Rubén Saldaña, the coach, says they "haven't had a single arrest under our watch in five years with hundreds of kids and including mentors." This gym also cooperates with the school in the area, Elite Preparatory Academy, which cites "grades have gone up, their attitude, attendance has been up" (Cardona, 2018).

To surmise, respect is a practical measure of how well students will function as members of society with regards to appreciating rules, laws, other citizens, and authority; in respecting other citizens and the law, it will be expected that martial arts programs will produce more conscientious people who are willing to acknowledge and stand up for what they believe is morally correct for the sake of others as well as themselves.

RESPONSIBILITY:

As an athlete, it is important for them to take responsibility for themselves on and off the mat. By teaching them to be responsible athletes, we are instilling in them how to be responsible teenagers, which will transcend into responsible adults. Additionally, it is a sense of not only being responsible for one's self, but also for other members of your team. Responsibility is a natural leeway to leadership; in order to be an effective and efficient leader, you need to know what is best for other members of your team and ensure that the tasks that need to get met are accomplished.

Through literary analysis, much evidence circulates around the importance of responsibility in a sports setting. Particularly, responsibility-based programs have shown promise in addressing the developmental needs of children and youths. Many figures have progressive applications of responsibility into their sports curriculum, such as John Cheffers who explored in 1987 the effects of structural decision-making in young children (Martinek and Hellison, 2016). Similarly, Daryl Siedentop developed a Sport Education model, where sport culture could be a foundation to built upon by assigning tasks to students that would give them a sense of responsibility within the sport context, such as by peer-coaching, keeping statistics, officiating, and performing other duties (Martinek and Hellison, 2016). More prominently, Don Hellison's Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (TPSR) included five levels representing student goals that give students the opportunity to make responsible decisions in order to move up these levels (Riciputi, McDonough, and Ullrich-French, 2016). By having the children progress in the levels, it demonstrates a sense of learned responsibility and leadership by actively taking steps to improve one's self. Thus, in analyzing the various studies done and the positive impact that implementing responsibility has on sport programs, it serves to strengthen the validity of the curriculum to serve the youth population.

RESILIENCE:

In relation to the military, a study was conducted to examine the correlation between resilience and leadership in soldiers. The study found that there was a positive correlation between the two variables. Overall, the psychological state of soldiers were better with the presence of resilience. Through examining warrior character using a military context, soldiers with higher resilience are seen to be strong leaders (Gaddy, Gonzalez, Latham, and Graham 2016). A crucial aspect of the warrior character of these soldiers is resilience. While there is no assumed causation from resilience, leaders tend to be more resilient. This finding from the study supports the importance of emphasizing resilience in the United States Fight League character curriculum. With the assumption that soldiers demonstrate the warrior character that students strive for, resilience is an important factor to building character and becoming leaders.

Ultimately, failure is inevitable, and the development of resilience through the character-building curriculum will grant children a useful life-skill. As highlighted in the previous paragraph, resilience is an important characteristic that even soldiers in the army who possess it, benefit from. It is crucial for children to develop resilience early for they can foster abilities of coping, control, and confidence in their own abilities (Ginsburg et. al, 2011). For instance, children who have higher resilience are less likely to be brought down by negative factors in their environment. It also prevents them from being affected by obstacles in their future careers.

Through conducting literary analysis on adolescents' school curriculum, resilience allows people to be more successful despite any troubles they may have grown up with. In order to develop resilience in children, teachers focus on positive characteristics, including intelligence, beneficial environmental factors, caringness, independence, and optimism. Furthermore, resilience has to be instilled through the relations with a multitude of people, such as friends, family, teachers, and neighbors, rather than one single person (Brooks, 2006). It is important for children to be surrounded by positive people who support them along their journey of character-building. At safe environments like the school and household, there may be protective factors to prevent students from risks that can continue to harm them. For instance, a strong community through a sports team at school may foster greater resilience. Through the United States Fight League, children may experience similar protection from risk factors, by building supportive and positive relationships with peers and mentors through a character-building curriculum. Their resilience will then be increased, because they may build their success despite negative external factors. Resilience provides a foundation for children to avoid risk factors that limits their abilities and sets them up for positive outcomes.

The literature, surrounding the military and school curriculum, justifies concentrating on resilience to build character. Resilience teaches students how to react after failures in MMA competitions, school, and other environments. The challenges that these students may face are unavoidable, so resilience will teach them how to overcome and learn from their obstacles. In the military, soldiers with higher resilience are viewed as better leaders, because they have the ability to be successful despite any barriers. In general, resilient children have a greater probability of succeeding in their work in spite of hardships. Resilience will not only be an important characteristic to focus on for mixed martial arts and the curriculum, but also outside of the United States Fight League.

In summary, the proposed character-building curriculum for the United States Fight League will focus on three key components: respect, responsibility, and resilience. Each of these characteristics can be broken down more extensively because it will be easier to build off on specific aspects of each characteristic. Character, as defined in the introduction of this executive summary, is who the person truly is, with the absence of any external factors. Through these three key traits, students will develop leadership and good character. Therefore, we strongly recommend the development of respect, responsibility, and resilience in pursuit of strong character.

Curriculum Introduction

Briefly describe to the students what this program will consist of. Our aim is to encourage students to develop their character and leadership skills.

We have given a broad curriculum with hope that coaches and students will take these activities and make it their own. We encourage dialogue, questions, and exploration for the students in order for their character and leadership development.

Identify the three pillars of this program: respect, responsibility, resilience

Explain to the students the “General Guidelines” (found below) in MMA Fight League.

Finish this exercise by brainstorming together what other guidelines should be followed. This can be a great way to establish a gym culture and set of expectations for your athletes. We recommend having a poster/ paper/ or some kind of visual reminder of these guidelines for the students

General Guidelines:

1. Shake hands with all competitors after every match.
2. Speak with respect to all persons in word and tone.
3. Put yourself in others' shoes and treat them as you want to be treated.
4. Formations Uniformity
5. Conformity with Class Structure and Regimentation
6. Defer to coaches' and referees' authority
7. Keep your commitments

RESPECT

“Respect is a two-way street, if you want to get it, you’ve got to give it.”

- R.G. Risch

“Without feelings of respect, what is there to distinguish men from beasts?”

- Confucius

Part 1: Respect

Overview:

Respect in a martial arts context is largely aimed at conditioning for loyalty, better group cohesion, and control of the abilities when learning a martial art. Students are often expected to bow to the coach, drill with classmates with a healthy attitude in the interest of preparing for competition, and exhibit good sportsmanship in the hopes that they will carry that attitude outside of class. It is difficult to quantify respect, especially since it is viewed as a moral virtue; to be considered respectful, the practice of respect must be repeated as a habit of life.

Why Respect?

- ❖ Students who are respectful will better absorb the lessons of their coaches.
- ❖ These students will not only go on to become better fighters, but they will also better represent the community; what is seen too often on programs like the UFC is fighters who either trash-talk before the cage or misbehave outside.
 - These bad examples drive people away from the MMA and Pankration community and contribute to the negative stereotypes of the community.
- ❖ Respectful students will be more disposed toward being better athletes and future coaches
- ❖ A good coach must be respectful, and the process of creating a potential coach starts with students. Even if students do not pursue professional fighting, learning how to act in a hierarchical organization will benefit them in the professional world.

By adopting respect as a core tenant of youth Mixed Martial Arts, and formally recognizing the applications of respect in a modern competitive context, we seek to improve the sport of MMA for future generations.

We have created a series of **drills and discussion** activities to foster respect in MMA.

Section 1: Drills

Overview: Warm-Up Activities

Goals:

- 1) Teach the athletes the importance of warming up and stretching for success in their activities
- 2) Instill in them a newfound respect for:
 - a. The exercises
 - b. Their bodies
 - c. The coaches
 - d. Their team

Coach Instructions:

We recommend focusing on each activity for a week and gradually moving up. Of course, this is completely at the discretion of the coach and the pace in which they would like to progress.

For each activity, share with the athletes the *purpose* of each exercise. This is important so that the students know the meaning behind why they are participating in these activities.

We have provided a brief description of the content for each activity and possible coaching strategies to employ.

Activity 1: Explanation of Warm-Ups**Session Goal:** Cultivate a respect for themselves in the activity of warm-ups

Content	Coaching Strategies
Explain to athletes the need to make warm-ups a crucial component of practice.	➤ Make it fun and exciting for athletes by allowing them to demonstrate their favorite warm-up
Discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Priming muscles for optimal performance2. Reduces risk of injuries3. Elevating heart rate (resting vs. exercising)4. Improvements over time through consistent practice	➤ Feel free to add any anecdotes or personal experiences on this topic.

Activity 2: Class Warm-Ups *led by coach*

Session Goals: Cultivate a respect for the coach in the activity of warm-ups

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>The coach will lead the warm-up activity through demonstration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain the small details of each workout ➤ Encourage questions in the group
<p>Then, walk around as athletes continue to work out and correct any misused exercise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use of positive reinforcement to athletes doing warm-ups well
<p>Discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of each exercise being done 2. Importance of each exercise and technique used 	

Activity 3: Warm-Ups in *small groups*

Session Goals: Cultivate a respect for team members in the activity of warm-ups

1. Instill partnership-building
2. Become better fighters through learning others' strengths

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>Students will pair up in partners. They will learn moves from each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage students to think of their strengths & what they can teach
<p>Partner A will teach Partner B their favorite move.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Instruct athletes to be respectful of their partner's skills
<p>They can test out the learned move on each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comment on how athletes can improve in their teaching method
<p>Then, Partner B will teach Partner A their favorite move and practice on each other.</p>	

Activity 4: *Student led* Warm- up**Session Goals:** Cultivate Leadership in Athletes by leading a group of peers*

Instill in them a respect for:

- a. Each other
- b. Positions of leadership

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>Athletes will come to the front of the class 1 at a time and lead a single warm up activity (20-30 second each)</p> <p>Rotate until all athletes have led an exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Add any critical warm-ups that the students together missed and explain why that warm up is necessary (ex. more muscle memory stimulated, activates lower body flexibility, etc.) ➤ Encourage creative exercises ➤ Try to take a hands-off approach on this activity ➤ Allow the Athletes to mess up and fail to use it as a teaching moment

Modification Possibilities:

* For more advanced leadership development, allow an experienced athlete to oversee the warm-up for the coach, and allow them to take your position in correcting incorrect warm-ups or leadership style.

* In order to allow multiple athletes to develop leadership, divide everyone into 3-4 groups and have a student lead that smaller group. This variant can be more efficient in larger gyms and develops more leaders faster.

SECTION 2: DISCUSSION

Overview: Discussion Activities

Goal: Make the athletes more conscious and self-aware of their actions and reflect upon their experiences. This facilitation will get students to understand what respect looks like as part of their MMA activities and outside them.

There are three parts of the discussion activities: (1) Affirmations, (2) Discussion-led Questions, and (3) Scenarios.

We recommend that the affirmations take place at the end of practice as a “cool down.”

We also recommend starting with the questions and, in the weeks later, working through the scenarios. The questions are intended for the athletes to think deeply about what respect means and the scenarios then serve to apply it to their lives.

(1) Affirmation

The affirmations are a “cool-down” activity that can be implemented daily, bi-weekly, or weekly. The frequency is up to the discretion of the coach. This activity is aimed in cultivating a shared respect between the athletes and increase unity of the group. It also helps with the self-respect of athletes by receiving recognition from others.

(2) Discussion-led Questions

Specify before starting the discussion that there is no right answer. All questions will be up to students’ interpretation.

- We recommend focusing on one prompt for a week and having a reoccurring dialogue about this topic.
- There are several questions per topic--- feel free to move at the pace of the group and introduce a new question a day or when appropriate.
- Answer any questions students may have with the terms or ideas, especially with younger athletes. Encourage students to give their opinions and share examples.

(2) Scenarios

These scenarios are meant to place the athletes in situations that test their application and understanding of respect. They are designed to create dialogue among the students. Some scenarios do not have only one answer-- what matters in this exercise is the reasoning being their responses. Encourage students to think about how they would want to be treated.

- Athletes should *explain* why they chose their answer as the correct one.
- We recommend asking students why they didn’t choose the other options-- this will help further their understanding of why one is right/more right than others.
- We recommend focusing on one scenario per day.

Activity 1: Affirmations

Session Goals:

1. Cultivate a shared respect between athletes and help with the cohesion of the group
2. Benefit the mental health of the athletes by recognizing small successes of the day and respecting themselves and their effort

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>Allow students to cool down after practice by offering each other words of affirmation based on the work they have completed.</p> <p>This will help teammates practice respect, admiration, and unity towards one another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do not force insincere compliments. ➤ Encourage genuine statements. ➤ Focus on variable actions from that day ➤ Feel free to give the students words of affirmation and set the example of how they should be done (see list below) ➤ The frequency of this activity can range from daily affirmation to weekly

Example of words of affirmation:

- I am very proud of the work you have done today.
- I am happy with the progress you have made today.
- I see that your practice on ___ has been paying off.
- You were a great partner today because_____.
- You did a great job with _____.
- You really improved on _____.

Activity 2: Discussions Questions

Session Goal: Establish an understanding of respect and the various themes of respect

Prompt #1: *Defining Respect*

1. What does respect mean to you?
2. What does it feel like to be respected?
3. What are small, respectful actions you appreciate from others?
4. What does it feel like to be disrespected?
5. Could you increase your awareness of those actions in your daily life, and if so how?

Prompt #2: *Role Models*

1. Who are the people that you respect?
2. Why do you respect them?
3. What qualities did they possess to make them respectable?
4. What role does respect play in your relationships with friends and family?

Prompt #3: *Personal Respect*

1. How do you show respect to yourself?
2. What are the rules or principles do you live by?
3. Do these principles come from higher sources of authority? (Parents, Teachers, Religion?)
4. How does following these values show respect to authority?

Prompt #4: *Adversity*

1. What would you do if during a match you were disrespected?
2. How should one react? (Ideally)
3. How would you feel after being defeated by an opponent?

Activity 3: Scenarios

Session Goal: Critically think about the application of respect in your life

Scenarios for Consideration: Certain answers are more correct than others.

Scenario 1: If you injured your partner during a match, how would you react after?

- a. Mercy is for the weak.
- b. I didn't do it.
- c. **Check up on them after the match and apologize.**

Scenario 2: Your Coach or Teacher asks you to complete a task/project and you agree to do it. Halfway through you forget what exactly is needed. What would you do?

- a. Stop the task and leave it where it is. Must not have been important if you forgot
- b. **Ask your supervisor for clarification on what you should do again.**
- c. Try to finish with just a good guess on the assignment. No need to bother them.

Scenario 3: Courtesy and Politeness are only for adults. Do you agree?

- a. Agree.
- b. No, only for your friends.
- c. **No, give it to everyone.**

Scenario 4: After a match has ended, your opponent is boasting about how they are much better at pankration. What do you say to them?

- a. Threaten them and tell them that they should stop talking
- b. Show them your moves
- c. Challenge them to a fight
- d. **Ignore them**

Scenario 5: Your coach is teaching you a striking technique, but you feel like you know a better way to do the technique. What are you going to do?

- a. Do not listen to them and do what you think is right
- b. Pretend to listen but do what you think is right anyway
- c. **Follow their technique and listen to them**
- d. **Challenge them and ask them why it is better**

1. If students choose this answer, ask them how they would challenge the teacher. Is it in a respectful or disrespectful way?

Scenario 6: You see someone struggling in class with their technique.

- a. Call them out in front of the class and make a joke about how they are doing badly
- b. **Help them out and give them positive support**
 - 1. Follow up question: How would you help them?
Ex) Provide tips after class
- c. Ignore it. It is not my responsibility

Scenario 7: You've lost a match to an opponent that you should have beaten.

- a. Be angry and treat the opponent poorly after the match
- b. **Shake their hand after the match and start training harder for next time.**
- c. Ignore them and tell yourself that today was just an off day. You did not get enough sleep tonight or whatever the reason may be, so you normally would have beaten them.
 - 1. Giving excuses for your behavior is not being responsible for your actions
 - 2. It may completely be true that you are having an off-day, but you should not treat others badly because of this.

Scenario 8: Someone from school is bullying you and taunts you. How do you react?

- a. You taunt them back.
- b. **You ignore them.**
- c. **You tell an adult.**
- d. **You politely, but firmly, stand your ground**

Scenario 9: You and a friend are having verbal banter, and you say something your friend did not take well. How do you respond?

- a. "Get over it"
- b. "I'm sorry for saying that, it won't happen again. I'll say whatever you want me to say."
- c. **"I'm sorry I've offended you and I apologize"**
 - 1. You were not showing respect to your friend-- the right thing is to take responsibility and apologize.

Scenario 10: You've been harassed by some bullies at school, and the school administration won't do anything to help you. You're strong enough for the ringleader, but generally shy away from conflict, although now you notice they've begun harassing other students. How do you respond?

- a. Enough is enough. Confront the head bully with force.
- b. **Just walk away. Think of the consequences. Live to fight another day.**
 1. How does the relation between what feels right and respecting the rules have to do with this?
- c. **Keep telling administrators/adults/teachers/parents/coaches, even if there are no immediate results.**
 1. If you fight with your words, you can help make a change- someone will listen!

RESILIENCE

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it or work around it.”

- Michael Jordan (former professional basketball player)

“It’s hard to beat a person who never gives up.”

- Babe Ruth (former professional baseball player)

Part 2: Resilience

Overview:

Resilience, the ability to bounce back after failure, is another characteristic that is crucial for developing character. By preparing students for the aftermath of failure, children no longer fear failure, which enables them to take risks that challenge themselves in their goals and actions. Within a mixed martial arts context, resilience allows students to learn from mistakes after losing a competition, rather than giving up or sulking.

Why Resilience?

- ❖ Resilience teaches athletes how to properly react after failures and difficulties in MMA competitions, school, and other environments
- ❖ Trains athletes how to balance stress and encourages mental growth
- ❖ Higher resilience associated with better, more effective leaders
- ❖ Higher resilience among athletes helps foster a positive and supportive sports environment
- ❖ A resilience mindset lends itself to reacting better to the inevitable hardships of life; by developing a resilience mindset, students will be more willing to make important decisions which entail risks or personal transformations.

We have created a series of **drills and discussion** activities to develop and strengthen resilience among the athletes.

Section 1: Drills

Overview: Correction Drills

Goal: Improve on physical moves that athletes are having difficulty with

Activity: Athletes will practice specific drills they are struggling with to feel more confident and perform better in competitions. These are a few drill suggestions that allow an athlete to focus on one specific move and practice their endurance, strength, and hardiness.

Coaches are free to use other drills that also place a narrowed focus on these key issues.

Activity #1: Ironman Drill

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>Use drill in preparation for an upcoming tournament</p>	<p>➤ The drill is a test of endurance and resilience; it teaches students to pick themselves up, fight again, and correct their faults immediately after any loss.</p>
<p>Those participating in the tournament will be the “ironman” who must stay in and spar with everyone else in a succession, whether they win or lose.</p>	<p>➤ Furthermore, the drill encourages students to never get complacent after any victory; they must always build up and persist.</p> <p>➤ Recommended to conduct the drill at the end of a given practice.</p> <p>➤ Students will be able to build on the previous drills of that practice as well as make that final push to victory. The very core of resilience is persistence.</p>

Activity #2: Post-Tournament Correction Drill

Content	Coaching Strategies
Use of the drill to improve upon weaknesses seen in tournament performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="732 422 1422 543">➤ This teaches fighters not only to improve from failure, but also to not rest after a victory.<li data-bbox="732 590 1422 751">➤ General instructions to focus on a technique or component of MMA which seemed vulnerable during the tournament<li data-bbox="732 800 1422 877">➤ The nature of this drill makes it flexible to the coach's discretion.

Section 2: Discussion

Overview: Personal Feedback Activity

Goal: Encourage mental and emotional growth through personal reflection among athletes.

Activity: Athletes will assess a variety of personal components to find areas in which they can improve.

There are three parts of this activity:

(1) **Strength and Weakness Reflection:** Athletes will reflect after competitions to evaluate their performance.

(2) **Situation Evaluation:** Athletes will reflect on a past performance and think hypothetically about this situation.

(3) **Sources of Motivation:** Athletes will reflect on what motivates them to do well in competitions and other areas of athletics.

Activity 1: Strength and Weakness Reflection

Session Goal: Understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses and learn how to improve

After a competition, regardless of whether the athlete has won or lost, the student should reflect on what they did well and what they could improve on. This way, students practice the exercise of giving themselves feedback and receiving feedback, two skills critical for resilience.

Below are suggested questions to ask to practice personal feedback:

A. Strengths

- What are unique skills or moves that you used?
- What are things that I already feel proficient or advanced in?
- What helped me during the fight?
- What is my competitive edge over other components?

B. Weaknesses

- How can I do better?
- What specific moves should I work on more?
- What prevented me from doing as well as I could have?
- How can I continue to develop myself in preparation for the next fight?

The personal feedback exercise is important because it cultivates resilience.

Outcomes of this activity:

- Learn to better analyze and understand yourself as a fighter
- Be able to walk away from fights with an attitude to continuously improve
- Cope with losses by coming up with a list of strengths and weaknesses

Coaches should encourage students after each competition or classes to fill out a personal assessment of how they are doing. It is up to the coaches' and students' discretion as to how often they want to complete their personal feedback, but we especially recommend students to complete this if they are feeling discouraged in class or competition.

Worksheets for students to fill out found below.

STRENGTH FINDER	Name: Date:
What are unique skills or moves that you used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
What are things that I already feel proficient or advanced in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
What helped me during the fight?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
What is my competitive edge over other components?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

Weakness Evaluator	Name: Date
What could I have done better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Which moves do I specifically want to practice more?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
What prevented me from doing as well as I could have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
How am I going to develop myself for the next competition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

Activity 2: Situation Evaluation

Goal: Reflection on past experiences to be more prepared for the future

This activity aims to reflect on an experience and assess what you would have done differently. By doing this, athletes can apply this to future situations.

<p>Describe the situation you wish you had a second chance at.</p>	
<p>Evaluate the decisions or choices you made that led to the outcome you wish you could revisit. Think about only your own actions, words, or thoughts. What did you do, say, or think that led to the outcome?</p>	
<p>Rewrite the description of the situation, but this time, visualize that you spoke, acted, or thought the way you now think you would have been a better course of action.</p>	

Activity 3: Personal Motivations

Goal: Understand one's own motivation to encourage good habits in gym

Motivation is very important in the context of sports. Motivation goes hand in hand with resilience because it allows athletes to persist even through intense challenges. When facing fatigue, boredom, pain, and a desire to quit, motivation is the “push” factor that keeps athletes engaged and willing to try again.

Motivation is tied with success, and the more motivated an athlete is, the greater the chance they have to succeed in competitions. Because of this relationship between motivation and performance, by having students reflect on what motivates them for various tasks, they will be able to rely on these reasons when facing difficulties.

Motivation typically falls under two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation focuses on internal reasons, such as personal enjoyment and satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation focuses on outside reasons, such as recognition, awards, and praise. It is important to keep a healthy balance of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

In the activity below, athletes will **categorize their different motivations in various situations**.

Some examples of situations they can use include:

- What motivates you to win competitions?
- What motivates you to attend practices?
- What motivates you to become stronger?
- What motivates you to stay in MMA?
- What motivates you to learn new moves?

Some possible motivators they can say include:

- I enjoy the sport (Intrinsic)
- I like feeling healthy (Intrinsic)
- I like winning medals (Extrinsic)
- I like having my parents come and watch (Extrinsic)
- I like training with my friends (Extrinsic)
- My parents want me to do well (Extrinsic)
- I want to impress my coach (Extrinsic)

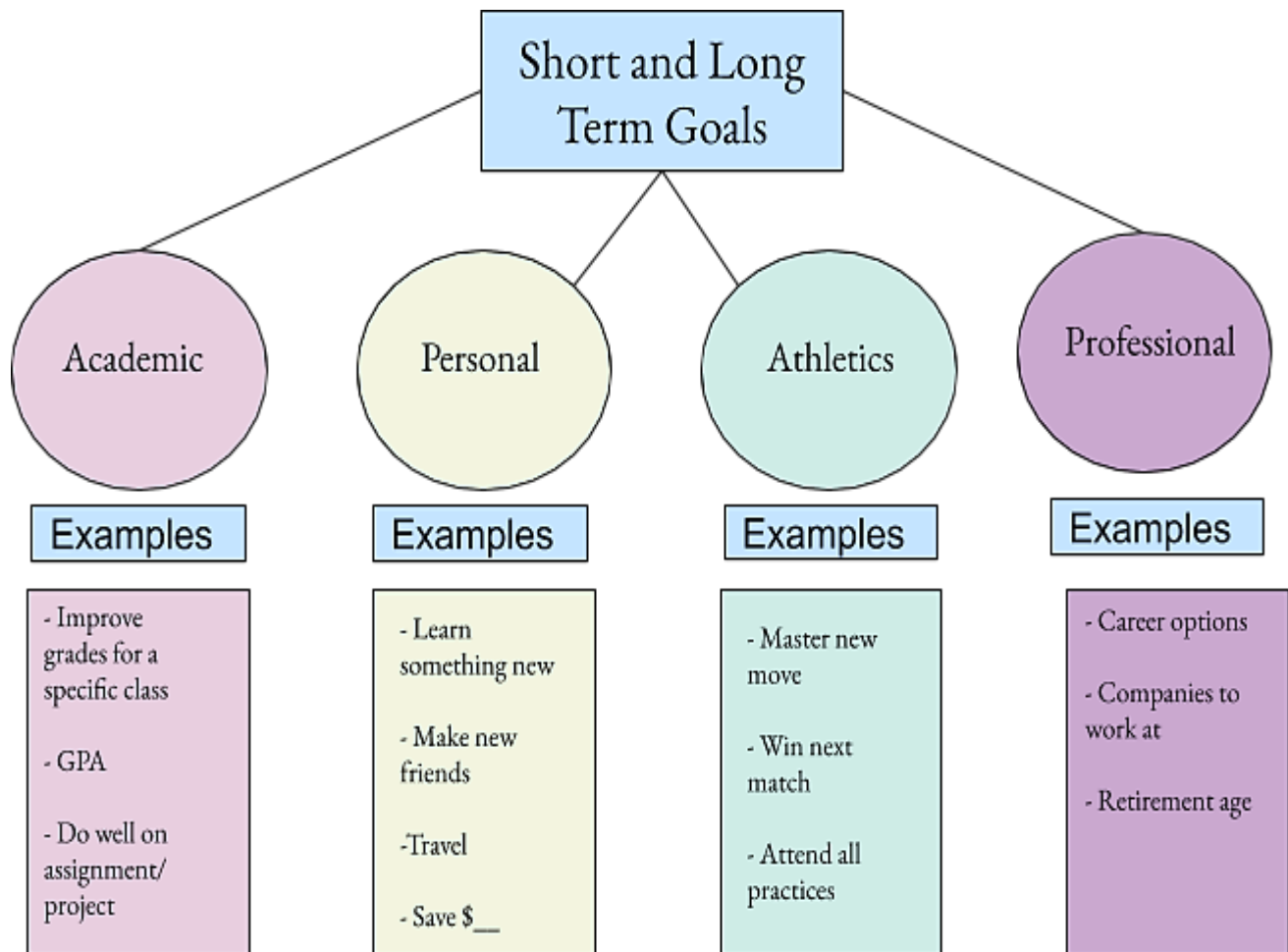
Of course, coaches are free to extend this activity to other life sectors as well, such as academics. We encourage athletes to share their motivations, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Activity	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation
Ex) Winning competitions		

Activity 4: Goal Setting

Goal: Create a set of S.M.A.R.T. short- and long-term goals to encourage, motivate, and hold athletes accountable for their future plans and aspirations.

The athletes will reflect and create a list of goals that they would like to accomplish. There are four categories for goal setting we recommend: academic, personal, athletics, and professional.



Setting **S.M.A.R.T.** goals to guide your goal setting. To make sure your goals are **clear and reachable**, each one should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Bound. Below are some descriptions of these terms, and helpful questions to consider when making goals.

Specific: *simple, sensible, significant*

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why is this goal important?

Measurable: *meaningful, motivating*

- When and how will it be accomplished?

Achievable: *agreed, attainable*

- How can I accomplish this goal?
- Is it realistic?

Relevant: *reasonable, realistic, and resourced, results-based*

- Is it the right time?
- Do I have the resources to accomplish this?

Time Bound: *time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive*

- When will I accomplish this goal?
- What can I do today?

(1) Short- term S.M.A.R.T. goals

Short term goals are typically something athletes can achieve within a **few** months.

Have athletes write down at **least four short term goals** they would like to accomplish. Encourage athletes to think about goals in academics, personal life, and sports. Feel free to use the printable worksheet below to facilitate this exercise.

Short term goals examples include:

- Academics
 - Raising grade for a specific class
 - Perform well on upcoming tests for ___ class
 - Complete all homework assignments for ____
 - Take better notes for ____
- Personal
 - Trying new hobby such as ____
 - Join a specific club or organization
 - Make new friends in a specific class
 - Go to sleep at certain times
 - Buy an item within a few months
- Sports
 - Master new move
 - Able to perform ___ amount of push ups
 - Keep up with team on ____
 - Win the next match

With short term goals, we recommend for them to be as **specific** as possible and **tailored** to each student's life.

If the students feel comfortable, ask them to share one or two of their goals with the group.

We encourage coaches to participate in this activity.

(2) Long term S.M.A.R.T. goals

Long term goals are those that take **several months or years** to accomplish. Athletes can look towards adulthood and goals they would like to achieve throughout their lives.

Have athletes write down at **least four short term goals** they would like to accomplish. Encourage athletes to think about goals in academics, personal life, and professional life. Feel free to use the printable worksheet below to facilitate this exercise.

Long term goals examples include:

- Academics
 - Improving GPA for end of year
 - Graduating with honors
 - Attend a specific college or university after graduation
- Personal
 - Travel plans to ___
 - Save \$___ amount of money by the end of year
 - Learning to cook or some other activity
- Professional
 - Career options
 - What company would you like to work at someday?
 - What age would you like to retire?

If the students feel comfortable, ask them to share one or two of their goals with the group. We encourage coaches to participate in this activity.

(3) Check-Ins

We recommend a 1 on 1 coach and athlete check-in throughout the year to track the progress of their goals. In these meetings, the coach can discuss what actions have been taken for the goals and review the athlete's smart goal planner (below).

SMART Goal Planner

Specific	What <i>exactly</i> do I want?	
Measurable	I know I have reached my goal when...	
Achievable	With hard work, is it possible to reach this goal by the deadline?	
Relevant	I will follow this plan to reach my goal:	
Time Bound	I will reach my goal by	

RESPONSIBILITY

"I must do something' always solves more problems than 'Something must be done.'"

- Author Unknown

"If you take responsibility for yourself you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dreams."

- Les Brown

Part 3: Responsibility

Overview:

Responsibility is a core principle of what defines character. Particularly in a context of martial arts, responsibility helps foster leadership, discipline, and obedience. The youth participating in the United States Fight League need to understand that ultimately the decision to have “good character” is an individual task that they need to take control over. Responsibility includes owning up to the mistake one makes, and learning to grow from this. It is important to stress not only personal responsibility, but also responsibility to the broader community.

Why Responsibility?

- ❖ In application to the sport context, it includes:
 - regularly attending practices
 - maintaining punctuality
 - paying attention to instructions given by coaches
 - upholding high academics
- ❖ Fighters will learn to own up to the mistakes they make and grow from these setbacks
- ❖ They will learn the importance of consequences with actions

We have created a series of **drills and discussion** activities to encourage responsibility among the athletes.

Section 1: Drills

Overview: Takedown Drills

Goal: Athletes will execute takedown and submission techniques with good control. Athletes will be responsible for each other's progress to encourage accountability and leadership skills

Activity: Athletes will breakout into pairs or small groups to practice both takedown and submission techniques. This activity requires consistent communication between pairs and ability to restraint oneself. Partners must be responsible for one another and must be responsive towards the need of the other.

Activity #1: Takedown Technique Drill

Content	Coaching Strategies
Takedown Drills: <i>Double leg takedown, single-leg, throws, etc.</i>	➤ Encourage athletes to takedown with sufficient speed; no lingering on the floor
Athletes switch off after each takedown	➤ Takedowns can be combined with both striking and grappling techniques to promote different combination drills ➤ Emphasize the partnership and communication between the pair ➤ All athletes are accountable for progressive improvement

Activity #2: Submission Technique Drill

Content	Coaching Strategies
<p>Submission Drills: <i>Arm-bar, kumora, rear-naked choke, arm-in guillotine/ anaconda, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Encourage athletes to execute technique without lingering➤ Emphasize the use of mechanics, rather than solely strength or speed
<p>Athletes switch off after each submission (once they hit ground)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Partners are expected to provide <i>some</i> minor resistance, but not to an excess. They are responsible for each other's training and need to demonstrate teamwork and encouragement➤ All athletes are accountable for progressive improvement

Section 2: Discussion

Overview: Personal Feedback Activity

Goals:

- 1) Foster a sense of belonging, meaning, and responsibility within the athlete
- 2) Simulate a work-like environment where the athlete must demonstrate responsible behavior

Activity: The goal of these questions is to prompt the athlete to reflect upon the community that they are choosing to serve, what impact that community has had on them, and how they can potentially give back. Building a strong relationship with and “showing up” for a community can foster responsibility.

There will be a 10-hour minimum requirement for this section (and each year onward) to encourage frequent participation within the community. The hours will be split with at least 7 hours at the gym and 3 hours at an outside organization. *There is a reflection portion **before, during, and after** the completion of the service.*

Activity #1: Reflection Questions

The intention of these questions is to allow athletes to head into and reflect upon their community service hours with meaning and purpose. The goal is to allow athletes to realize that their contributions are meaningful and that the community (to some degree) relies and depends on them.

Pre-Community Service:

1. Which organization or community will you choose? How do you fit into this community / what is your role within the community?
2. Why did you choose this community? Why is this community important to you?
3. How do you think you can positively impact the community / organization in a meaningful way?

Post-Community Service:

1. How has your perspective of the community changed after your time spent working/volunteering?
2. Was this experience more or less meaningful than you expected? In what ways?
3. Reflect on your experience as a whole, why was your contribution important?
4. Do you notice any changes in yourself throughout your time volunteering?

Community Service Volunteer Log

Date	Location	Hours Completed	Supervisor Signature	Reflection: <i>How do you feel your time and effort contributed to your community today?</i>

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