



# REFRAMING SPORT FOR TEENAGE GIRLS:

## A Guide to Applying the 8 Principles for Success



# THIS GUIDE...

- ▶ Is the second in a series to support the sport sector to reframe sport for teenage girls. Before using it, make sure you have identified your target audience of girls and have a deep understanding of their needs by using our [Guide to Understanding Your Audience](#).
- ▶ Is for sport and exercise providers who wish to enhance their existing programmes and/or develop new initiatives for teenage girls.
- ▶ Provides ideas and inspiration of how to put the 8 Principles for Success into action to make sport and exercise more relevant and meaningful to girls' lives.
- ▶ Can be used flexibly and creatively; for example, you could use it to:
  - check and challenge your existing offer for teenage girls;
  - interrogate your messaging and marketing to teenage girls;
  - run a workshop with key staff who design and/or deliver sport to teenage girls.

# SOLUTIONS SHOULD BE GIRL-CENTRED

Teenage girls should always be at the heart of your thinking!

It's important to put your own experiences of sport and physical activity aside and see the world and your offer through their eyes.

## Do this by:

- creating personas;
- developing an empathy map;
- defining the behaviour change you want to see;

and use the above to inform the design and delivery of your offer.

**WOMEN IN SPORT**

### 'DISENGAGED' NAOMI

Naomi is 14 years-old and lives in Manchester and currently attends a girls school. She lives with her mum and two younger siblings, Misha and Jaden. Her mum works as a carer and has very little time to exercise or be physically active, although she has a very busy and active job. She has encouraged all her children to work hard at school, so Naomi prioritises her studies over almost everything else in her life.

Naomi has never really been into sport. Her younger brother is really into it. She likes watching football on the TV and chatting with friends on social media, watching Netflix with the family, doing homework and revision and visiting her aunt, who looks after her when her mum is at work.

Playing sport isn't a priority for Naomi but she would like to be a bit more active, as she feels this could help her connect better with her siblings. She knows doing exercise is important but it's just not something she's ever been interested in, and is scared to do based on her previous experiences. She wouldn't even know where to start.

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### WOMEN IN SPORT EMPATHY MAP TEMPLATE

**PERSONA** (target audience)

**1. WHAT DO THEY HEAR ABOUT SPORT & EXERCISE?**  
(from friends, family, teachers, coaches, influencers?)

**2. WHAT DO THEY SEE WHEN WATCHING SPORT & EXERCISE?**  
(what does she see in her environment and in the media, what does she see others saying and doing?)

**3. WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT SPORT & EXERCISE?**  
(what have we heard her say, what can we imagine her saying?)

**4. WHAT DO THEY THINK & FEEL ABOUT SPORT & EXERCISE?**  
(what is important to her, what worries her, what are her worries and aspirations?)

**5. PAINS** (what are...)

### BEHAVIOUR CHANGE - WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Now you have a deeper understanding of how the girls you are targeting think and feel now, consider how you want them to behave and feel about your sport/activity. This can help anchor what **success looks like** and what changes you need to make.

|                  | FROM  | TO  |
|------------------|---|---|
| <b>BEHAVIOUR</b> | e.g. Only taking part in compulsory activities at school because she has to | Choosing to play sport regularly in after-school or community clubs |
| <b>ATTITUDES</b> | e.g. Feeling bored, unengaged, lacking confidence, self-conscious           | Feeling motivated, confident, engaged, happy and having fun         |

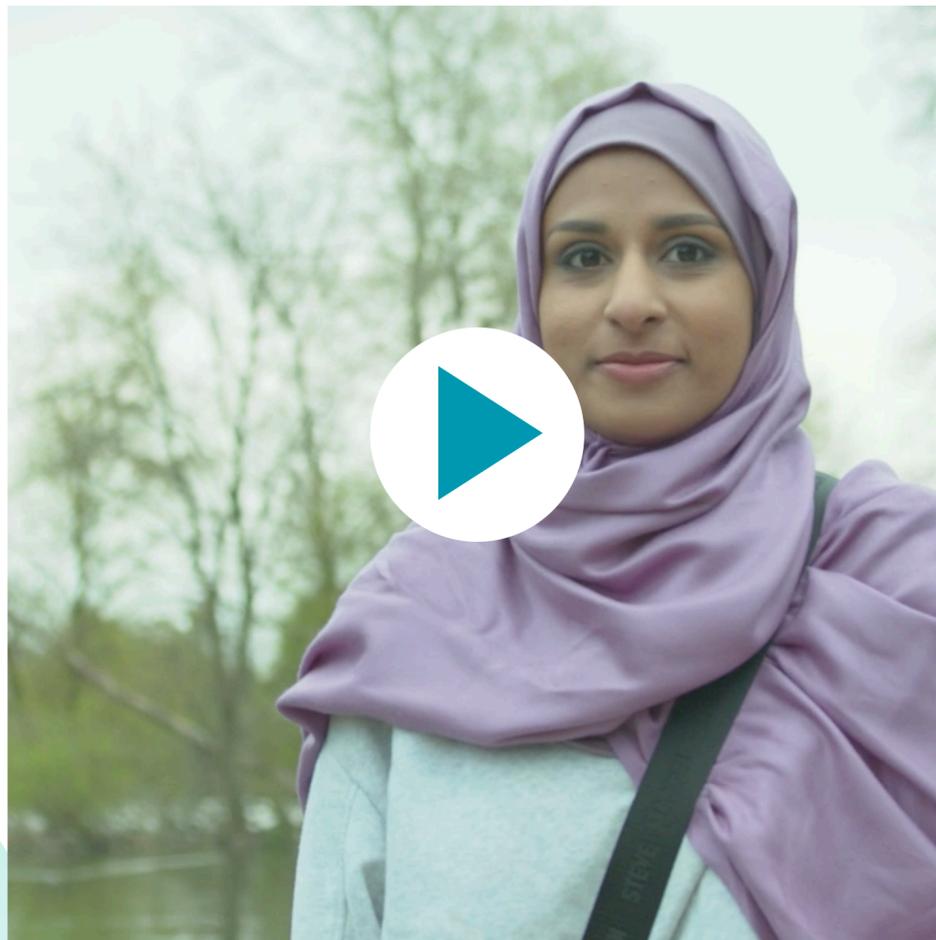
**8 PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS**

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# MAKING SPORT RELEVANT TO TEENAGE GIRLS

## MEET HALIMA



Developed with teenage girls, the 8 Principles for Success will help you to...

### REFRAME

sport in the mind of girls as something that inspires and motivates

### REDEFINE

their experience, to be broader and better than what they've ever experienced at school

### REINFORCE

the enjoyment of physical activity and sport, and how it adds real value to their lives

# THE 8 PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS

1



## NO JUDGEMENT

Take pressure off performance and give freedom simply to play.

5



## BUILD INTO EXISTING HABITS

Tap into existing behaviours in other spheres.

2



## INVOKE EXCITEMENT

Bring a sense of adventure and discovery.

6



## GIVE GIRLS A VOICE & CHOICE

Allow girls choice and control to feel empowered.

3



## CLEAR EMOTIONAL REWARD

Reframe achievement as 'moments of pride', not winning.

7



## CHAMPION WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM

Make it much more than just about health.

4



## OPEN EYES TO WHAT'S THERE

Redefine sport as more than school sport.

8



## EXPAND IMAGE OF WHAT 'SPORTY' LOOKS LIKE

Create truly relatable role models which inspire.

CLICK ON  
A PRINCIPLE  
TO LEARN MORE 



# NO JUDGEMENT

Take pressure off performance and give freedom simply to play.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Provide a **safe space** for girls to let their hair down and have fun, free from judgement and pressure to be good at your activity.
- ▶ Don't mimic the strict rules and regulations of the school environment, where girls feel most judged and scrutinised. Emphasise enjoyment and letting off steam.
- ▶ **Language is powerful** - use liberating language that emphasises freedom and fun. rather than serious language around competing, winning, trials and skill.



## THINK ABOUT

- ▶ How you communicate your offer to girls through language and imagery in your marketing.
- ▶ Where your activity takes place - would girls see this as a safe space when they arrive for the first time?
- ▶ Is your activity truly accessible for beginners? How do you encourage and support girls to feel at ease and able to give it a go?
- ▶ How you manage beginners alongside more experienced participants.
- ▶ Do you allow time for fun, play and socialising during sessions?



# INSPIRATION

## PARKRUN

- ▶ Free junior and adult community runs open to people of all abilities.
- ▶ Spirit of taking part in whatever way works for you.
- ▶ Focus on self-improvement and challenging yourself, not competing with others.



## FREEG

- ▶ Fuses gymnastics, martial arts and stunt performance.
- ▶ Teens free to explore different skills with friends and play their own music.
- ▶ No rules, no competitions – just total freedom.



# INVOKE EXCITEMENT

Bring a sense of adventure and discovery.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Girls are excited by the unusual and unexpected!
- ▶ Adventurous activities are viewed through a different lens - no one is an expert, it's all about the experience.
- ▶ Exciting experiences are a form of social currency, something to talk about and share with others (the Instagram factor!).
- ▶ Some girls seek variety in its own right - taking part in different activities removes pressure of commitment and progression, and prevents boredom.
- ▶ Traditional 'male' sports spark girls' interest.



## THINK ABOUT

- ▶ What attracts girls to music festivals, Secret Cinema, theme parks etc.
- ▶ What is the **WOW factor** that will keep less engaged girls coming back to your activity?
- ▶ How you can vary your offer to keep it exciting and give girls new experiences:
  - ▶ Sport mash ups and twists on playing traditional sports;
  - ▶ Different/unusual venues;
  - ▶ Trips to other activities;
  - ▶ Challenges/events/team parties;
  - ▶ Music.
- ▶ How you communicate excitement in your marketing - how creative is your digital content?



# INSPIRATION

## U18 CLUBBERCISE

- ▶ Fuses a night out with a fun workout.
- ▶ Easy to follow dance, toning and combat moves to music with disco lights and glow sticks!
- ▶ Girls can socialise with friends and get active in a fun and exciting way.



## RABBLE

- ▶ Team sports with a twist for all, regardless of experience or ability.
- ▶ HIIT workouts transformed into immersive games such as British Bulldog, Capture the Flag, Dodgeball, Frisbee and more.
- ▶ Variety keeps it exciting - focus is on fun, fitness and meeting people.



# CLEAR EMOTIONAL REWARD

Reframe achievement as 'moments of pride', not winning.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Girls desire purpose and personal reward – sport and physical activity is no exception.
- ▶ Reinvigorate and add credibility to the idea that it's the taking part that matters. Reinforce what girls can gain beyond winning – e.g. fun, enjoyment, wellbeing, making new friends, personal development.
- ▶ Competitiveness can be reframed into their own personal challenge.
- ▶ Shifting achievement away from win/lose levels the playing field and enables all girls to succeed and feel proud of themselves.



## THINK ABOUT

- ▶ How your offer makes girls **feel** – what is the emotional feedback loop that will keep them coming back?
- ▶ How you can give and reinforce **moments of pride** for every girl – what are the moments that give them a boost, a positive memory, and help them feel good about themselves?
- ▶ Ways to celebrate behaviour girls can be proud of, above and beyond winning:
  - ▶ Personal improvement;
  - ▶ Supporting others/team spirit;
  - ▶ Determination/hard work/resilience.
- ▶ How you can support girls to be **their best**, rather than the best?



# INSPIRATION

## ULTIMATE FRISBEE

- ▶ Self-refereed team sport.
- ▶ 'Spirit of the Game' celebrates principles beyond winning, such as sportsmanship, fair play, trust, communication, respect for others and joy of play.



## PLANET PATROL

- ▶ Plastic pollution 'clean ups' combine litter picking with physical activity - from paddle boarding to parkour and yoga.
- ▶ Social action is important to girls and clean ups give purpose and pride whilst being active.



# OPEN EYES TO WHAT'S THERE

Redefine sport as more than school sport.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Narrow, and often negative, experiences of sport and physical activity in school cloud girls' perceptions of what to expect and what they will enjoy.
- ▶ Make girls aware of the many ways they can enjoy being active and provide opportunities to try different activities that are removed from the stress, rules, and lack of freedom and flexibility they associate with PE and school sport.
- ▶ Use more accessible and exciting language that doesn't mirror their experience of school sport. Avoid words such as 'club', 'teacher', 'trials'.



## THINK ABOUT

- ▶ How you can use language and imagery in your marketing to open girls' eyes to the possibilities.
- ▶ How you can give girls opportunities to have new and different sporting experiences, for instance by:
  - ▶ Adapting formats/ways of playing your activity.
  - ▶ Collaborate with other sports to offer taster sessions, events and festivals.
- ▶ The impact of delivering your offer in schools compared to parks and community spaces.



# INSPIRATION

## US GIRLS ROCKS

- ▶ Fun and informal sports festivals where girls can try a range of traditional and non-traditional sport and fitness sessions.
- ▶ Fuses sport and fitness with other interests girls enjoy, such as beauty, fashion and lifestyle advice.



## SOCCERCISE

- ▶ An adapted version of traditional football, Soccercise combines a variety of aerobic exercises and circuit training with football.

## THE COLOR RUN

- ▶ 5K runs with a twist (an explosion of coloured powder) that celebrate healthiness, happiness and individuality.





# BUILD INTO EXISTING HABITS

Tap into existing behaviours in other spheres.

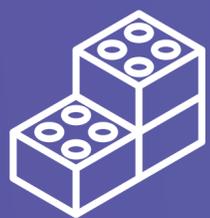
## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Tap into what is already fun and exciting for girls in their wider lives and embed physical activity within this - sport by stealth!
- ▶ Go where girls are and learn from the 'must do's' in their lives - especially social media and online gaming.
- ▶ Recognise and reinforce the physical activity in their existing behaviours that they may not perceive as exercise, e.g. active travel, family walks/cycles.



## THINK ABOUT

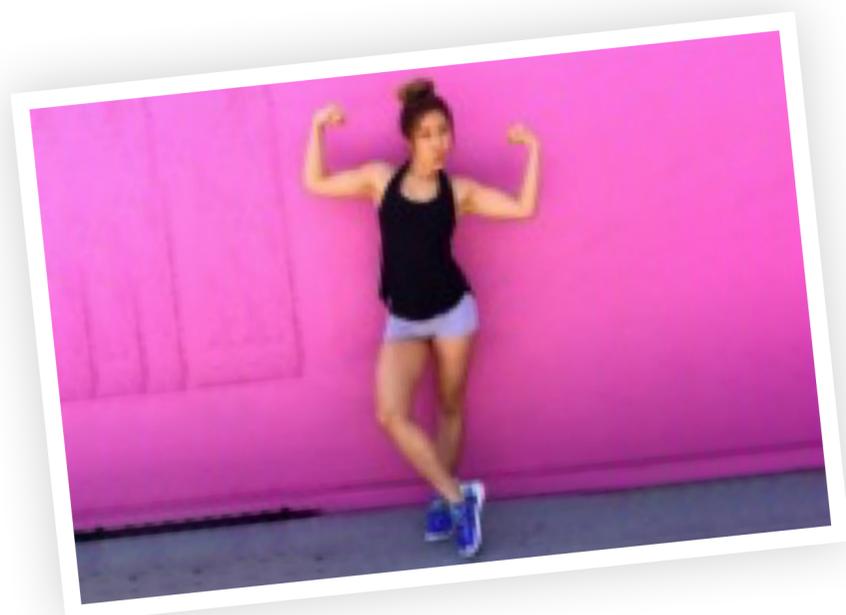
- ▶ How much presence your offer has online - can you do more to engage girls through:
  - ▶ Your website - does it have a girls' section/identity?
  - ▶ Social media - do you have profile pages for girls' teams, activities, events, achievements?
- ▶ How you might build elements of gamification into your offer in a non-judgemental way:
  - ▶ Levels, streaks, team points, shareable content.
- ▶ Creative ways to engage girls on social media through:
  - ▶ User generated content;
  - ▶ Fun films, challenges, trends;
  - ▶ Influencers;
  - ▶ Topical issues important to girls (wellbeing, body positivity, social action).



# INSPIRATION

## BLOGILATES

- ▶ YouTuber Cassey Ho provides fun exercise workout videos and advice on her app and social media.
- ▶ Taps into girls' online behaviours and allows them to exercise in a judgement-free space in a way that works for them.



## BEAT THE STREET

- ▶ A fun, free, walking, cycling, running, scooting and rolling game for a whole community.
- ▶ Participants earn points, win prizes and compete with other communities by swiping cards on Beat Boxes in the community.



# GIVE GIRLS A VOICE & CHOICE

Allow girls choice and control to feel empowered.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Girls live in a world dominated by rules and authority figures – especially when it comes to school sport.
- ▶ Giving girls more ownership to shape and run activities helps them feel more comfortable, in control and empowered – **offers designed by and for girls.**
- ▶ BUT...it's important to open their eyes to the range of possibilities or the options will still seem narrow and un motivating.
- ▶ Girls organising/leading other girls can be a virtuous circle of inspiration and support and changes the authority dynamic.



## THINK ABOUT

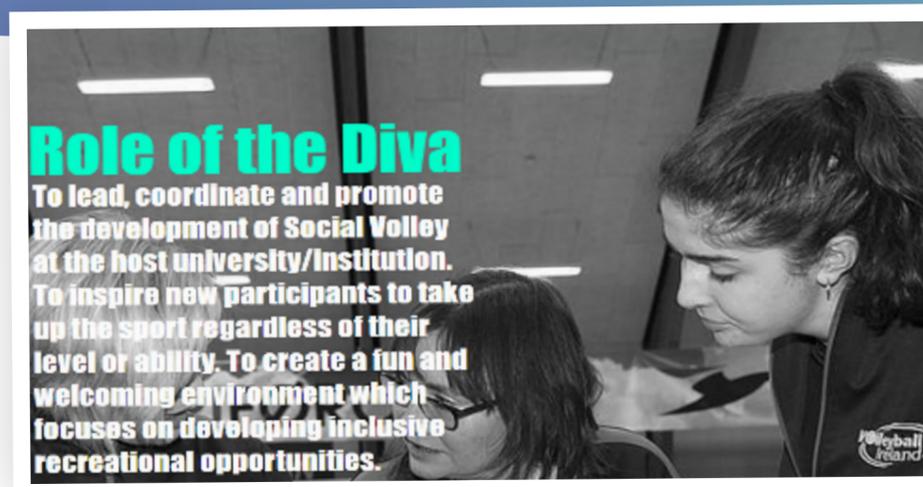
- ▶ How you consult and really listen to teenage girls – do you need to do more to ensure your offer is truly girl-centred?
- ▶ How you might change the authority dynamic in a club or community setting.
- ▶ What opportunities you can offer to help girls get more involved and use their voice, such as:
  - ▶ Coaching, officiating, leadership roles;
  - ▶ Steering groups, youth councils;
  - ▶ Mentoring, buddying;
  - ▶ Girls' 'take overs';
  - ▶ Getting girls involved in creating content for your marketing and social media.



# INSPIRATION

## GIRLS ACTIVE PROGRAMME

- ▶ Helps schools to work with girls through consultation and leadership to make change.
- ▶ Girls are actively involved in shaping and delivering activity provision, from consulting with other girls to organising events and marketing of activities.



## DEVELOPING INSPIRATION VOLLEYBALL ACTIVATORS (DIVA) PROGRAMME

- ▶ Educates and empowers college students to increase participation.
- ▶ DIVAs receive training and professional development and lead the creation and delivery of an inclusive social volleyball programme.

# CHAMPION WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM

Make it much more than just about health.



## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Girls don't need to be educated about the health benefits of being active - they know it's good for them.
- ▶ But this isn't always enough to motivate them, so we have to reinforce what else they can get out of sport and exercise.
- ▶ Opportunity to motivate girls by using the power of incentives and rewards to initially hook them in.
- ▶ But it's not just about stuff - girls are also motivated by personal development that will help them succeed in the future.



## THINK ABOUT

- ▶ How you can creatively sell the benefits of taking part in your offer? Can you inspire girls by sharing others experiences of:
  - ▶ friendship, belonging, teamwork, support, fun, joy, confidence, resilience, letting off steam
- ▶ Offering age appropriate incentives to spark their interest:
  - ▶ Discounted 'bring a friend' sessions
  - ▶ Freebies such as water bottles, wristbands, t-shirts
  - ▶ Discounts on popular brands and experiences
- ▶ What opportunities you can provide to help girls develop their skills:
  - ▶ Recognised training, qualifications and awards
  - ▶ Transferable skills and experience to bolster their CV's



# INSPIRATION

## FOOTBALL BEYOND BORDERS

- ▶ A football based social inclusion programme to support girls through adolescence and school.
- ▶ Girls experience a wide range of topics that support their development and sense of self; such as music, mental health, social action, youth culture and how to lead other girls.



## CHANCE TO SHINE - GIRLS LEADERSHIP THROUGH CRICKET PROGRAMME

- ▶ Recognising the importance of sport for future career success, the programme supports girls aged 11-16 to play sport and develop key employability and leadership skills.
- ▶ Young leaders were trained to take on coaching responsibilities in sessions and supported to put their skills in practice in after school clubs and leading cricket festivals.



# EXPAND IMAGE OF WHAT 'SPORTY' LOOKS LIKE

Create truly relatable role models which inspire.

## THE PRINCIPLE

- ▶ Girls like to hear and learn from other people's experiences, especially people to whom they can relate.
- ▶ People who are deemed extremes such as elite athletes, or even coaches and PE teachers, don't resonate with non-sporty girls in the same way.
- ▶ Broadening the image of what being sporty looks like can reinforce a healthy body image - it's about what your body can do, not what it looks like.



## THINK ABOUT

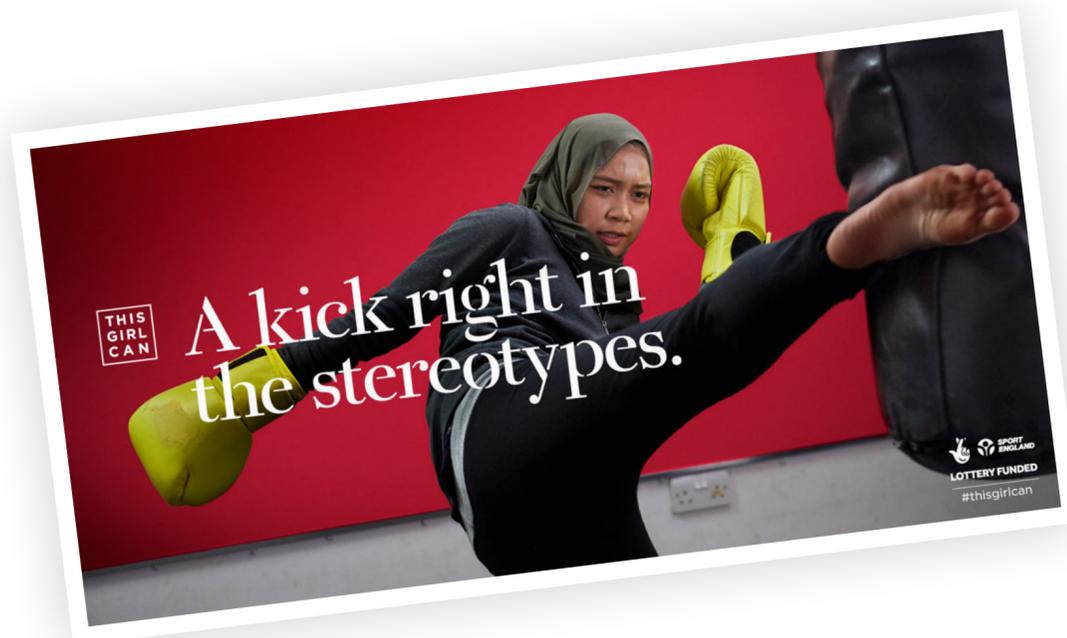
- ▶ Whether the imagery in your marketing embraces a diversity of body shapes and sizes, as well as girls from different ethnicities and walks of life.
- ▶ How you can help girls to form a positive relationship with their bodies and feel comfortable and confident in their own skin.
- ▶ Who are the truly relatable role models you can use to influence other girls to take part? Use authentic storytelling to inspire:
  - ▶ participant journeys;
  - ▶ relatable non-sporty influencers;
  - ▶ guest speakers.



# INSPIRATION

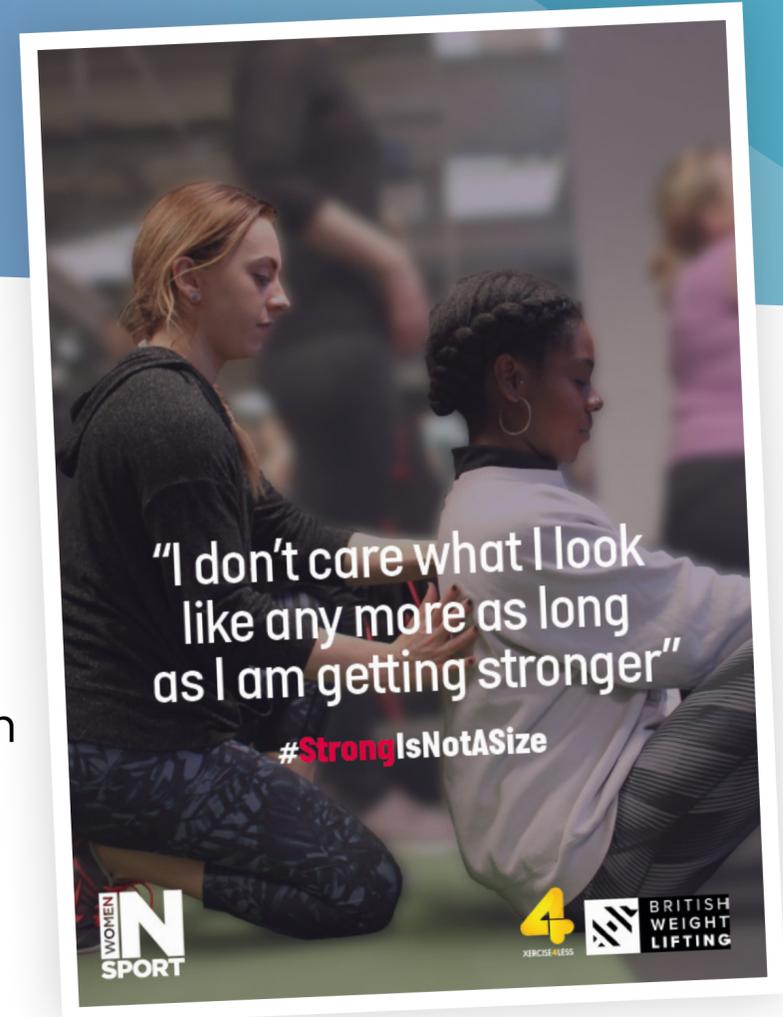
## THIS GIRL CAN

- ▶ A national campaign and movement that uses real, relatable role models to influence and inspire women and girls to get active.
- ▶ Challenges the image of sporty by using everyday women and girls in its marketing and through shared experience.



## STRONG IS NOT A SIZE

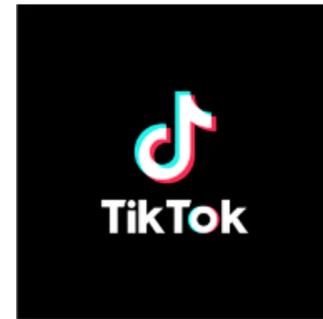
- ▶ A social media campaign empowering women of all abilities to feel comfortable and confident stepping into weights areas of the gym.
- ▶ Challenges gender stereotypes associated with weight-lifting (and body image) with real women sharing their stories of how they 'find their strong'.



# TAKE INSPIRATION BEYOND SPORT

In addition to good practice within the sport sector, take inspiration from further afield and consider how other organisations, apps and brands engage teenage girls.

This will help you tap into what is relevant and meaningful in girls' wider lives.



**PRETTYLITTLETHING**



**ASOS**



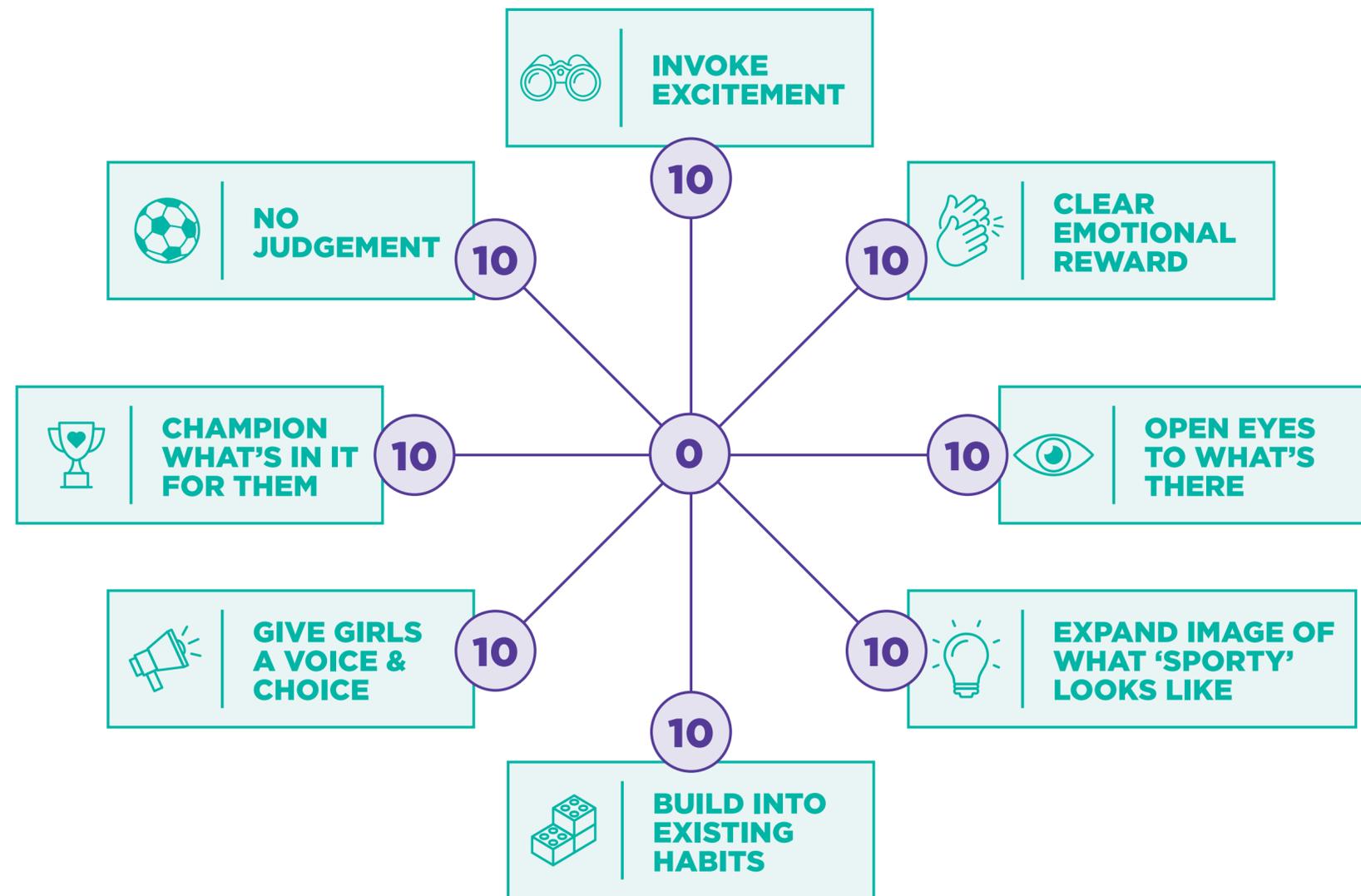
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# EVALUATING YOUR OFFER AGAINST THE PRINCIPLES

Use this performance profile wheel to reflect on how your offer currently performs against each principle on a scale of 1-10.

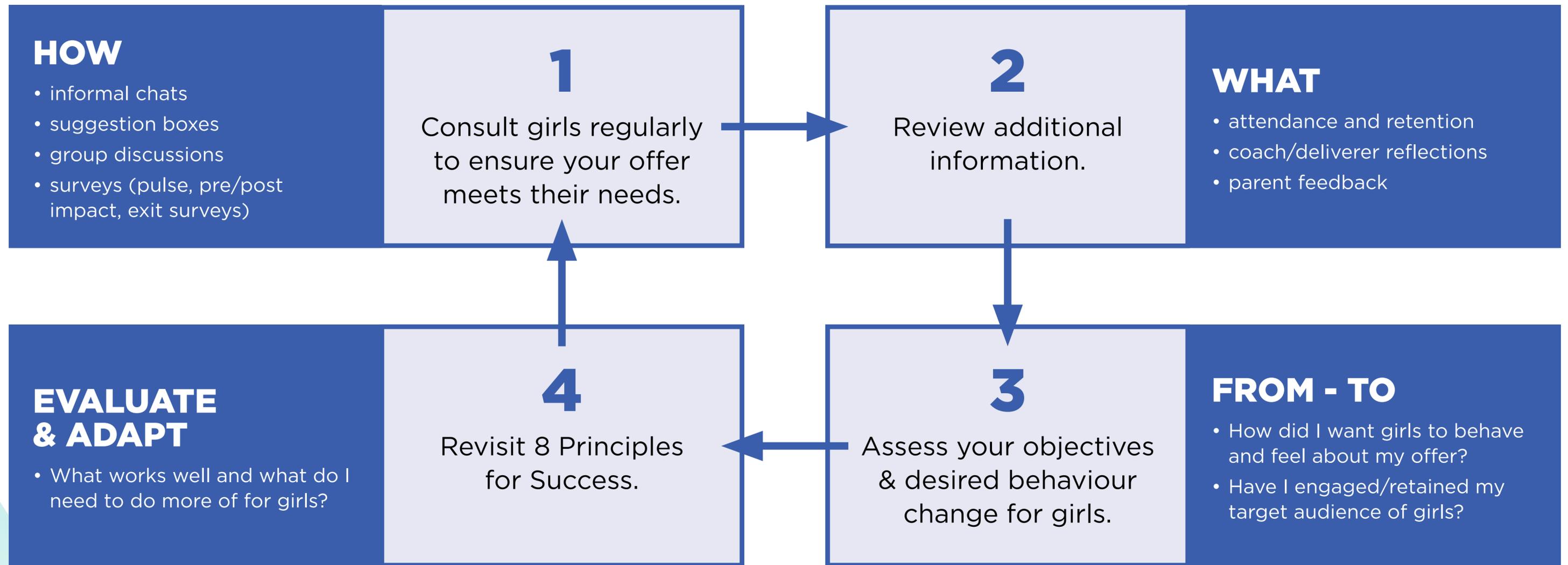
Complete the template on the next page to help stretch your thinking into areas you may not have considered before.



# PERFORMANCE PROFILE TEMPLATE

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>PRINCIPLE:</b>  |   | <b>TARGET AUDIENCE:</b>  |  |
| <b>RATING OUT OF 10:</b>                                     |   | (disengaged, gradually disengaged, engaged)  |  |
| <b>WHAT DO WE DO ALREADY THAT WORKS WELL? HOW DO I KNOW?</b> | <b>WHAT COULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY TO IMPROVE ON THIS PRINCIPLE?</b> | <b>WHERE HAVE I SEEN THIS DONE WELL ELSEWHERE?</b><br>(other sports/activities, other sectors) | <b>ACTION PLAN</b><br>(consider design, delivery, marketing and messaging) |
|  |   |  |  |
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# MONITOR, EVALUATE & ADAPT ANY INTERVENTIONS



**For more ideas and resources to help you Reframe Sport for Teenage Girls visit our online toolkit »**

**We would love to hear how you have used this guide, get in touch with us at:**

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