



Dylans Big decision

Sports, Regulation & Belonging.

For some children and young people who have experienced trauma, anger can be felt in the body long before they have the words to explain what is happening. Their heart may race, muscles may tense, their body may feel restless or full of energy, and their thoughts can become difficult to slow down.

Sport and physical activity can provide a healthy outlet for some of this physical energy such as;

- Running
- Kicking a ball,
- Swimming,
- Shooting hoops or
- Simply moving the body

Can help shift some of the intensity that can build up when a young person is angry, frustrated or overwhelmed. Physical activity can support regulation by giving the body something active and purposeful to do.

Dylan's experience also highlights something bigger than the sport itself, its about belonging.

Being part of a team can give a young person a sense of being included, valued and needed.

Teammates:

- Notice when someone turns up.
- They learn each other's strengths.
- They encourage one another.
- Celebrate successes and sometimes work through disappointment together.

These experiences can help build connection and trust.

For a young person who has experienced separation from family, friendships and team relationships can become particularly meaningful. They do not replace family, and they cannot undo the losses a young person has experienced.

But they can provide another important experience of connection –

- I have people here
- I am part of something
- I matter to this group

Sport can also provide opportunities to practise managing anger in real time. Losing a game, making a mistake, disagreeing with a teammate or feeling frustrated can all bring up strong emotions.

With supportive adults and coaches, these moments can become opportunities to learn that anger is allowed, while harmful behaviour is not.

Young people can learn to pause, breathe, move their bodies, ask for space, repair relationships and try again.

For Dylan, the team is therefore more than a place to play. It can become a place to belong, connect, regulate and experience mateship.

Sometimes a young person doesn't need someone to tell them to calm down. They need somewhere safe to put all that energy, people who will stick around, and a team that reminds them they are not on their own.



You can find more resources at
www.ourlifetales.com.au