

Scenario Four – Dealing

The soccer coach sees Amy handing pills out to her U18 team mates. The coach approaches and tells the girls what she has seen and asks what it is Amy has handed out them.

It is important to remember that there are a variety of reasons why young people will experiment with and use illegal substances – peer/parental use, cost and availability, mental ill-health, fun – and this is putting their health and safety at risk.

In this scenario, it's important to discourage Amy and her team mates from taking the pills (no one really knows what they are and how they will affect the girls). This is the key reason for approaching the group at the time you observe the pills being handed out – to prevent the drug use. Wherever possible, once the girls have agreed to not take the pills follow the advice obtained from the police (during policy development) as per what to do when drugs are found on club premises or confiscated from club members. For example, police may advise you to dispose of the suspected drugs immediately or they may ask you to secure them until they are able to come and seize them.

The coach is likely to have a level of rapport and trust with the group which may help to ensure the team members chose to hand over any pills for disposal. If, however, they refuse (or panic) and take the pills then the issue escalates and will require you to treat it as a potential medical emergency. In this instance, the girls should be advised that they have put their health and safety at risk and discuss calling their parents for safe transport home. If the girls' health decline rapidly, call 000 and administer first aid until an ambulance arrives.

Following the incident (1-2 days later) a nominated club official or coach should contact the girls' parents/guardians to see how the girls are and to request an individual catch-up with each family and player. During this meeting the players involved should be reminded of the health and safety risks of using an illegal drug and be provided with information about a local youth or health service from which to get advice and support. The club could also appoint a suitably qualified person as a mentor to provide guidance around the seriousness of drug use and positive role modelling. It is also recommended that an official letter is sent to each individual involved outlining the seriousness of their actions, the club's response (as above) and the club's policy.

The president may choose to hold a compulsory club meeting reminding everyone of the illegal drug policy and club's code of conduct. The club could also invite the local health service to help provide a drug information session or workshop.