

Vocabulary

- **Abuse**
 - Refers to actions or a pattern of behavior that causes harm or threatens to cause harm to another person, including neglect, regardless of intent. Abuse often has a pattern of power and control.
- **Affirming Language**
 - Validating and compassionate words used to support a survivor of abuse or misconduct.
- **Background Check**
 - The process of verifying that a person is who they say they are, and a first step in ensuring they are safe to work around athletes.
- **Bias**
 - Unfair favoritism towards groups that can affect decisions and the treatment of others.
- **Body Safety**
 - Awareness of boundaries, personal safety, body parts, and safe and unsafe touch.
- **Boundaries**
 - Limits that we can set for ourselves based on what we are comfortable with and how we want to be treated by others.
- **Bullying**
 - Conduct that intends to or does hurt, control, or diminish another athlete, often someone who may be viewed as vulnerable. Bullying characteristically is repetitive and intentional and leverages an imbalance of power between parties. Bullying behavior tactics can include and involve previously described elements of verbal, emotional, physical, financial, and sexual abuse, discrimination, and/or harassment.
- **Bystander Intervention**
 - Actions taken by an individual when they see or interact with a situation that is harmful or potentially harmful to protect the safety and well-being of others.
- **Code of Conduct**
 - A set of best practices agreed upon by coaches, parents, athletes, and other stakeholders to implement and enforce a safe and healthy environment.

- **Coercive Control**

- Coercive control is a pattern of behavior used to gain power over another person by limiting their independence, confidence, and ability to make their own choices. It often develops gradually through tactics such as intimidation, manipulation, isolation, threats, monitoring, or making approval and opportunities conditional on obedience. Over time, these behaviors can make an athlete feel dependent on the person in power, making it difficult to recognize abuse or leave.

- **Cognitive Dissonance**

- When our perceptions or assumptions clash with reality, experience, or facts. For example, the struggle to accept that 'Coach is an excellent footballer and is well regarded' AND 'Coach is harming athletes.' It can be hard to accept that two opposites can be true at the same time.

- **Compassion Fatigue**

- When we find ourselves exhausted from emotionally or physically caretaking for someone.

- **Consent**

- Consent requires a person to be informed, make the decision voluntarily, and be competent to do so, meaning an athlete knows what they are saying yes to. All three of these components must be met. When we apply this to athletes of all ages and in all settings, we must consider the power imbalance between athletes and people in positions of power, perhaps another athlete, a coach, a medical professional, a staff member, or another authority figure. For a romantic or sexual relationship between an athlete and a person in a position of power, consent isn't possible. The three components of valid consent cannot be met.

- **Code of Conduct**

- A set of best practices agreed upon by coaches, parents, athletes, and other stakeholders to implement and enforce a safe and healthy environment.

- **DARVO (Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender)**

- When someone or an organization denies that the misconduct occurred, attacks the person reporting it, and portrays the accused as the victim.

- **Disclosure**

- A person-to-person sharing of an experience of abuse or misconduct.

- **Discrimination**

- Discrimination is the prejudicial treatment of athletes or groups based on attributes or protected categories. Simply put, it is treating some athletes differently than others because of certain characteristics. Protected characteristics may include age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, ability, marital status, pregnancy status, sexual orientation, and genetic and health conditions. When discrimination occurs, athletes are negatively impacted by unfair decisions, practices, and policies.

- **Early Sports Specialization**

- The commitment to a single sport for over 8 months per year during development in prepubertal children.

- **Exploitation**

- Exploitation is an abuse of power when an athlete is harmed or treated unfairly for gain or benefit. In the world of sports, this can look like this:
 - **Financial abuse:** financial control over an athlete (withholding, limiting access, stealing, or lying about funds), forced labor without fair compensation
 - **Sexual exploitation:** forcing sexual activity for profit, recording, distributing, allowing others to watch sexual activity, exposure to disease
 - **Trafficking:** transporting athletes for economic gain and/or forced labor or sexual acts, withholding documentation and paperwork

- **Grooming**

- A pattern of behaviors and tactics to gain the trust of an athlete through manipulation, control, isolation, and secrecy with the intent to exploit or abuse them.

- **Harassment**

- Harassment is unwelcome conduct that causes fear, humiliation, annoyance, discomfort, and/or offends, degrades, or reflects a discriminatory bias that creates a hostile environment. In sports, this can look like this:
 - **Verbal:** Threatening, ridiculing, using slurs and offensive language or jokes, insults
 - **Physical:** Touching, intimidation, or assault
 - **Sexual:** Unwanted advances, making sexual requests, communication, and conduct of a sexual nature
 - **Visual:** Displaying or forcing someone to look at offensive content
 - **Superiority:** Attempting to assert dominance against a person or group based on discriminatory characteristics
 - **Conditional:** Submission to, objection to, or rejection of such harassment as a term for employment, standing participation in, or sports-related decisions

- **Hazing**

- Hazing refers to actions or practices that intend to or are likely to subject an athlete to harmful circumstances and/or activities as a condition to join or be socially accepted by a group, team, or organization. StopHazing describes hazing behaviors as follows:
 - **Intimidation:** deception, assignment of demerits, silence period with threats for violation, social isolation, demeaning names, expecting certain items to always be in one's possession
 - **Harassment:** verbal abuse, threats or implied threats, forced nudity, forcing to wear embarrassing attire, degrading or humiliating skits, sleep deprivation, sexual simulations
 - **Violence:** forced substance consumption, physical assault, branding, forced ingestion of vile substances, water intoxication, kidnapping, sexual assault

- **Healing**

- The self-defined and non-linear process of becoming well again.

- **Hiring Best Practices**

- Guidance for incorporating safeguarding in hiring intended to keep sports safe, healthy, and fun for all.

- **Institutional Betrayal**
 - Institutions harming the best interests of their members instead of protecting them.
- **Institutional Courage**
 - Institutions doing the right thing on behalf of each community member above all else.
- **Intersectionality**
 - The interconnected parts of a person's identity (race, sexuality, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) that overlap and combine, which can influence their experience in terms of discrimination and privilege.
- **Justice**
 - The process or result of using different laws and processes to fairly judge cases, redress wrongs, and punish crimes; the quality of being just or fair.
- **Legal Representation**
 - An attorney who has been admitted or licensed to represent clients in your jurisdiction.
- **Mandatory Reporting**
 - The requirement of some individuals to notify law enforcement or organizations about suspected, observed, witnessed, or disclosed harm.
- **Misconduct**
 - Refers to a violation of a rule or policy or accepted standard of behavior that may or may not cause direct harm.
- **Neglect**
 - Neglect refers to actions or the absence of actions that fail to provide care, supervision, affection, protection, and support for an athlete's basic needs, health, safety, and well-being and that are likely to result in serious impairment of the athlete's holistic development. In sports, neglect can present in a variety of ways:
 - **Physical neglect:** failure to provide for physical needs, safety requirements, inadequate supervision during training, competition, and travel, allowing bullying or hazing
 - **Emotional neglect:** withholding attention, failing to provide psychological support and well-being, or ignoring the athlete's emotional needs
 - **Medical neglect:** failing to provide an athlete with needed medical attention, disregarding medical directions pertaining to time to heal from illness or injury, forcing athletes to play/perform while injured, improperly treating injuries
 - **General neglect:** failure to provide an athlete with appropriate food and water, shelter, using inadequate and unsafe equipment, and/or the ill-treatment of athletes with disabilities, failure to report abuse
 - **Improper training and overtraining:** forcing an athlete to train in a way that is dangerous to their body, not allowing enough recovery time between strenuous sessions
- **Online Abuse**
 - Abusive or inappropriate behaviors directed at an individual through use of digital platforms such as messaging, social media, or calling.

- **Perspective**

- The way someone views or interprets a situation based on their own experiences and understanding.

- **Physical Abuse**

- Physical abuse refers to intentional or unintentional physical actions that cause or threaten to cause harm to athletes. This does not include accidental injury or well-regulated sport-sanctioned conduct acceptable in certain sports. In the sporting context, physical abuse can look like this:
 - **Contact:** punching, hitting, poisoning, drowning, burning, shaking, beating, biting, striking, strangling, slapping, stabbing, pulling hair/ears, grabbing, pushing, cutting, paddling, scarring, whipping, branding, hitting with objects/sports equipment, rough corrections of position
 - **Non-contact:** forcing an athlete to play while injured or return to sport without medical clearance, fabricating symptoms of injury on behalf of the athlete, deliberately inducing sickness, confining and isolating an athlete in a small space, forcing an athlete to assume a painful position for no legitimate reason, providing any illicit substance including drugs, alcohol, or non-prescribed medication to an athlete

- **Power Imbalance**

- Power imbalances occur when one person holds power over another and exerts influence over them. When a power imbalance is present, there is an increased need for boundaries. Consent cannot be appropriately given when there is an imbalance of power.

- **Prejudice**

- A negative attitude and irrational opinion about others that can lead to unfair treatment, exclusion, and harassment.

- **Prevention**

- The proactive process of taking action to stop harm or reduce the risk of harm.

- **Preventative Best Practices**

- Proactive actions taken to reduce the risk of harm, such as washing hands and wearing seat belts.

- **Psychological/Emotional/Verbal Abuse**

- Psychological, emotional, or verbal abuse refers to acts and behaviors, most often repeated and persistent, that interfere with and negatively impact an athlete's positive emotional and social development and self-worth. In athletics, this can happen online and in person and can look like this:
 - **Verbal acts:** name-calling, body-shaming, ridiculing, humiliating, bullying, threatening, discriminating, mocking, spreading rumors, quick oscillation between praise and criticism, promoting disordered eating
 - **Physical acts:** ignoring, isolating, segregating, denying coaching and guidance, punching/throwing things around the athlete
 - **Stalking:** monitoring, observing, excessively messaging
 - **Tactics:** manipulation, gaslighting, controlling an athlete's social interactions, domination, guilt-tripping, mind games, silent treatment, possessiveness, frightening

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment**
 - “This for that.” A form of sexual harassment in which a victim receives something (like playing time or position on the team) in exchange for sexual activity.
- **Relationship Dynamics**
 - The ways in which individuals relate to one another.
- **Report**
 - A formal complaint that misconduct or abuse has occurred.
- **Retraumatization**
 - The process by which a person who has previously experienced trauma encounters a situation, environment, or interaction that recreates or triggers the conditions or feelings of the original event.
- **Retaliation**
 - Actions taken to punish an individual for reporting or standing up against wrongdoing.
- **Rights**
 - Individual protections, freedoms, and entitlements.
- **Risk Factor**
 - A characteristic that makes a sporting environment more or less susceptible to instances of abuse and misconduct.
- **Risk Assessment**
 - An exercise that helps to consider and reflect upon the nuances and spaces (online and physical) of our organizational structures and programming from a safeguarding perspective to identify ways to decrease the likelihood of harm.
- **Rule of Three**
 - Following the Rule of Three means ensuring that interactions between coaches and authority figures have at least three people present when the interactions are not easy to observe.
- **Safe Adult(s)**
 - An adult who can be relied upon to provide resources, support, and help to a minor.
- **Safeguarding**
 - The term safeguarding applies to actions taken to ensure participants are protected from harm. Abuse, harm, violence, and neglect prevention pertains to physical, emotional, mental, and psychological health and well-being. The goal of safeguarding is to proactively create safe and healthy sporting environments. This goal is achieved by providing clarity and standardizing expectations on preventative best practices and healthy relationship dynamics.

- **Safeguarding Officer**
 - An individual or team within an organization tasked with receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints of misconduct, as well as implementing procedures which mitigate the risk of misconduct in the first place.
- **Safeguarding Policy**
 - An organization's set of processes and procedures about protecting participants from harm, which should include components such as a code of conduct, safeguarding officer information, reporting information, preventative education material and guidance, and hiring practices.
- **Self-Care**
 - Actions taken to support ourselves to prevent burnout or trauma and in the aftermath of those events.
- **Strengths-Based Coaching**
 - Coaching an athlete in a way that encourages their growth, highlights their skills, and uses respectful feedback and coaching tactics.
- **Sexual Abuse**
 - Sexual abuse is conduct or threatened conduct that is forced and/or coerced, and is sexual in nature, that the athlete does not fully understand, cannot consent to, or has no choice to consent to. In athletics, this may look like this:
 - **Indecent exposure:** exposing or requesting child sexual abuse material or pornographic material, forcing an athlete to look at or produce sexual images or activities, and encouraging an athlete to behave in a sexually inappropriate way
 - **Nonconsensual contact:** masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching with an object or body part (clothed or unclothed) of an athlete's genitals, breasts, or buttocks
 - **Nonconsensual intercourse:** oral sex, any penetration with an object or body part
 - **Grooming:** a pattern of behaviors and tactics to gain the trust of an athlete through manipulation, control, isolation, and secrecy with the intent to exploit or abuse them
 - **Inappropriate relationships:** a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by an athlete as consensual when the relationship involves an imbalance of power; consent is impossible as the athlete's options are limited due to force, coercion, or manipulation
- **Stigma**
 - When an individual is seen as less than or different because of an identity or experience, leading to judgment, exclusion, shame, or unfair treatment.
- **Stigma as Abuse**
 - Less known and discussed is how stigma, the societal or interpersonal disapproval or mark of disgrace towards a particular quality or circumstance, can be a form of abuse. Stigma can be associated with mental health, survivorship, domestic violence, disabilities, abuse, incarceration, and substance use. In sports, stigma can result in the shame, discrediting, negative perception, and mistreatment of an athlete. This means that the athlete may be treated differently due to others' stigma, which may manifest as a lack of opportunity, barriers to seeking help and resources, and dismissal of their experiences.

- **Toxic/Abusive Coaching**
 - Coaching in a way that causes harm to athletes and the community.
- **Trauma**
 - An emotional, psychological, or physical response to an event or experience, or series of events, that can impact an individual's safety and well-being.
- **Trauma Response**
 - An individual's body's involuntary and unconscious mechanism to cope and survive in the short term and long term.
- **Vicarious Trauma**
 - The potential effects of working with someone who has experienced trauma, or being exposed to traumatic material for extended periods.
- **Victim Shaming and Blaming**
 - The phenomenon of assigning blame and shame on the victim of abuse instead of the perpetrator.
- **Visualization**
 - Imagining scenarios or outcomes to improve performance, mental health, relaxation, or calmness.
- **Window Rule**
 - Following the Window Rule means that one-on-one interactions between athletes and authority figures occur in a space that promotes transparent, observable, and interruptible interactions – as if they are taking place through a window.

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