

# COACHES' BULLYING BEHAVIOR DISCUSSION GUIDE



**Purpose:** To help Minor Athletes (under age 18) in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement recognize and respond to Bullying Behavior.

**Estimated Time:** 30 minutes or two sessions (10 minutes and 20 minutes)

**Materials:** This discussion guide is for you and other coaches to use as you lead the discussion. The accompanying Bystander Intervention Scenarios handout is for your Minor Athletes.

SECTION/TIME	TALKING POINTS
<b>Understanding Bullying Behavior (10 minutes)</b>	
<p><b>Introduction</b> (2 minutes)</p>	<p>Let athletes know this is a team conversation to help them recognize and respond to Bullying Behavior. It is not a time to confront team members about specific incidents.</p> <p>Encourage them to be open and engaged in the discussion.</p> <p>Let them know you expect them to not share anything that is said beyond the group.</p>
<p><b>Definition</b> (3 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask for a volunteer to define bullying. Explain to athletes that bullying is called Bullying Behavior in the SafeSport Code. Tell them they need to know and follow the Code definition.</p> <p> <i>Bullying Behavior is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Directed at or about someone under the age of 18</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Repeated, aggressive behavior or a single, severe incident intended or likely to hurt or control someone emotionally, physically, or sexually.</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Physical, verbal, written, visual, social (including cyberbullying), discriminatory, or criminal</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Bullying that is sexual in nature is called Sexual Bullying Behavior. It also includes bullying related to someone's actual or perceived sex or sexual orientation. This is true even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.</i></p>

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SECTION/TIME	TALKING POINTS
<b>Understanding Bullying Behavior (10 minutes)</b>	
<p><b>Examples</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask your team to share examples of Bullying Behavior against Minor Athletes. They should not use real incidents that involve anyone on the team. If they have trouble coming up with examples, use the ones below.</p> <p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Repeatedly shoving someone and knocking off their glasses</li> <li>▶ Tripping someone every time they pass</li> </ul> <p><b>Verbal, Written, or Visual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Regularly mimicking and laughing at someone with a speech impediment</li> <li>▶ Making fun of someone's weight every day at practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Social (including cyberbullying)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Frequently taunting someone with an intellectual disability online</li> <li>▶ Ignoring a teammate and refusing to sit near them for an entire season</li> </ul> <p><b>Discriminatory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ripping an athlete's hijab off and telling them to go back to their country</li> <li>▶ Calling players racial slurs</li> </ul> <p><b>Sexual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Regularly sending sexually explicit memes to a teammate</li> <li>▶ Making homophobic comments and calling someone "gay" all the time</li> </ul> <p>Tell your team they should report incidents of Bullying Behavior to you or another adult in the organization. If your organization has specific procedures or ways to report, share them with your team now. Let your team know that you are a mandatory reporter and must report any bullying of a sexual nature or Child Abuse to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport immediately.</p>

# COACHES' BULLYING BEHAVIOR DISCUSSION GUIDE



SECTION/TIME	TALKING POINTS
<b>Responding to Bullying (20 minutes)</b>	
<p><b>Bystander Intervention</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Introduce the concept and importance of bystander intervention—saying or doing something to stop inappropriate behavior you notice.</p> <p> <i>You have a lot of power to stop or prevent Bullying Behavior because it often happens when adults aren't around. It can be hard to know what to do—or to do anything. Let's discuss a range of options so you can find something (or multiple things) you feel comfortable doing. Doing something is better than doing nothing, and talking to me is always a good option.</i></p> <p>Introduce athletes to the 5 Ds of bystander intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Distract:</b> Create a diversion, like asking one of the people involved to help you with something. You can also help deescalate the incident by encouraging people to walk away and not give the person who is bullying an audience.</li> <li>▶ <b>Delegate:</b> Get a coach, parent, or teacher to address the concern. If your teammate wants to talk to the coach or another trusted adult, offer to go with them.</li> <li>▶ <b>Document:</b> Write down the date, time, location, information about people involved, and a summary of what happened. Give the information to someone with more power to act, like a coach or teacher. Remember that many adults have a legal or organizational responsibility to report Bullying Behavior.</li> <li>▶ <b>Delay:</b> Walk away until you feel it is safer to intervene. If you are friends with the person who is bullying, talk privately with them about how their words or actions are hurtful. Talk privately with the teammate being bullied to let them know what happened isn't their fault.</li> <li>▶ <b>Be Direct:</b> If you feel comfortable, say something in the moment, like telling the person who is bullying that their behavior is not okay or asking the person being bullied if they want to leave.</li> </ul>

# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SCENARIOS FOR COACHES (15 minutes)



Read each scenario and discuss with them how they might respond. This will help prepare them to address similar situations in real life.

## Scenario 1

Izzie is eating a sandwich and chips at lunch. Some of her track teammates sit next to her. Sarah says “Are you sure you should be eating that? You were looking slow out there yesterday. Must be all that extra weight you’re carrying. Eat any more chips and your butt will be hanging out of your shorts!” Sarah looks at the other girls and encourages them to laugh.

Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?	What would you do if you witnessed this incident?
<p>Maybe. While this one incident may not violate the SafeSport Code, it might be if it is repeated or part of a larger pattern of behavior. However, making fun of someone’s weight is never acceptable.</p>	<p>Ask for volunteers to give examples of how they would respond. If they have trouble coming up with examples, talk them through the 5 Ds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Distract:</b> Interrupt Sarah to tell a story about something that happened in class earlier that day. Ask Sarah a question about something unrelated, like homework. Ask Izzie to help you with something, then leave the table.</li><li>▶ <b>Delegate:</b> Ask the coach or team captain to talk to Sarah about her behavior and to check on Izzie.</li><li>▶ <b>Document:</b> Write down what happened (including day/time) and give the information to your coach or another trusted adult.</li><li>▶ <b>Delay:</b> Wait until you are alone with Sarah, then tell her she is not being a good teammate when she treats Izzie like that. Tell Sarah’s teammates after practice that when they laugh at Sarah’s inappropriate comments, they are being as hurtful as she is. Find Izzie and ask if she is okay and if there is anything you can do to help.</li><li>▶ <b>Be Direct:</b> Tell Sarah that her comments are not okay, and that teammates don’t treat each other that way. Tell the other girls it isn’t cool to laugh at Sarah’s comments. Tell Izzie that Sarah’s comments are inappropriate and wrong, and to ignore Sarah.</li></ul>

# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SCENARIOS FOR COACHES



## Scenario 2

Ryan is a competitive swimmer who just made the club team. He has an above-knee amputation and isn't allowed to wear his prosthetic leg in the water. After practice, two teammates hide his prosthetic and laugh when he can't find it.

Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?	What would you do if you witnessed this incident?
<p>Yes, this is Bullying Behavior, and it violates the SafeSport Code. Even if it only happened once, this is severe behavior. Ryan's prosthetic is considered part of his body. His teammates not only intended to hurt him, but they interfered with his ability to walk.</p>	<p>Ask for volunteers to give examples of how they would respond. If they have trouble coming up with examples, talk them through the 5 Ds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Distract:</b> Tell a story or joke to redirect people's attention from Ryan.</li><li>▶ <b>Delegate:</b> Find a coach or other adult to help Ryan and address the teammates who hid his prosthetic.</li><li>▶ <b>Document:</b> Write down what happened and give the information to your coach or another trusted adult.</li><li>▶ <b>Delay:</b> Wait until you are alone with Ryan's teammates and talk to them about how their actions hurt Ryan and were bad for the team. Privately ask Ryan if there is anything you can do to help him feel safer on the team going forward.</li><li>▶ <b>Be Direct:</b> Tell your teammates that what they did isn't funny and that they need to give the prosthetic back immediately. Ask Ryan what you can do to help.</li></ul>

# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SCENARIOS FOR COACHES



## Scenario 3

Brianna is a starting forward on the soccer team. She is strong, fast, and a leading scorer. While a cooperative teammate, she is not close friends with anyone on the team. After Brianna confides in Ava (one of the most popular players) about something private, Ava repeatedly spreads nasty rumors about her online, along with an AI-generated image of Brianna in an unflattering pose.

Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?	What would you do if you witnessed this incident?
<p>Yes, this is Bullying Behavior, and it violates the SafeSport Code. Ava takes repeated and aggressive actions to hurt and embarrass Brianna. Ava put the information online, so it spread further and did more harm.</p>	<p>Ask for volunteers to give examples of how they would respond. If they have trouble coming up with examples, talk them through the 5 Ds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Distract:</b> Respond to a post with “Don’t we have better things to talk about?” and then start a new topic.</li><li>▶ <b>Delegate:</b> Ask your coach, a parent, or a school counselor to check on Brianna and talk to Ava.</li><li>▶ <b>Document:</b> Take screenshots of the posts and send them to your coach or another trusted adult.</li><li>▶ <b>Delay:</b> Wait until you can talk to Ava privately, then tell her that what she did hurt Brianna and damaged trust on the team. Talk to Brianna privately to see how she is doing and ask how you can support her.</li><li>▶ <b>Be Direct:</b> Tell Ava that what she did was wrong, hurtful, and has no place on the team.</li></ul>

# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SCENARIOS FOR ATHLETES



This handout is for Minor Athletes. The accompanying discussion guide is for coaches.

## 5 Ds of Bystander Intervention

- ▶ **Distract:** Create a diversion, like asking one of the people involved to help you with something. You can also encourage witnesses to walk away so the person who is bullying will not have an audience.
- ▶ **Delegate:** Get a coach, parent, or teacher to address the concern. If your teammate wants to talk to the coach or another trusted adult, offer to go with them.
- ▶ **Document:** Write down the date, time, location, information about people involved, and a summary of what happened. Give the information to someone with more power to act, like a coach or teacher.
- ▶ **Delay:** Walk away until you feel it is safer to intervene. If you are friends with the person who is bullying, talk privately with them about how their words or actions are hurtful. Talk privately with the teammate being bullied to let them know what happened isn't their fault.
- ▶ **Be Direct:** If you are comfortable, say something in the moment, like telling the person who is bullying that their behavior is not okay or asking the person being bullied if they want to leave.

**SCENARIO 1:** Izzie is eating a sandwich and chips at lunch. Some of her track teammates sit next to her. Sarah says "Are you sure you should be eating that? You were looking slow out there yesterday. Must be all that extra weight you're carrying. Eat any more chips and your butt will be hanging out of your shorts!" Sarah looks at the other girls and encourages them to laugh.

1. Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?
2. What would you do if you witnessed this incident?

**SCENARIO 2:** Ryan is a competitive swimmer who just made the club team. He has an above-knee amputation and isn't allowed to wear his prosthetic leg in the water. After practice, two teammates hide his prosthetic and laugh when he can't find it.

1. Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?
2. What would you do if you witnessed this incident?

**SCENARIO 3:** Brianna is a starting forward on the soccer team. She is strong, fast, and a leading scorer. While a cooperative teammate, she is not close friends with anyone on the team. After Brianna confides in Ava (one of the most popular players) about something private, Ava spreads nasty rumors about her online, along with an AI-generated image of Brianna in an unflattering pose.

1. Is this Bullying Behavior? Why or why not?
2. What would you do if you witnessed this incident?

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