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## Summary of SafeSport Process Improvements

April 1, 2024

After conducting a thorough review of its processes and seeking feedback from athletes and national governing bodies (NGBs), the U.S. Center for SafeSport has launched an initial set of process improvements that impact nearly every aspect of its work.

These changes reflect the Center's ongoing evolution and commitment to continuous improvement. The Center will continue to review its processes, change as necessary, and seek input from athletes and stakeholders along the way.

Learn more about the Center's recent efforts to improve efficiency, information sharing, and trauma sensitivity:

### 1) **Streamlined Response & Resolution**

The Center has restructured the Response and Resolution department to align internal communication and improve efficiency, combining the Intake and Resolutions, Investigations, and Legal teams to make a cohesive Response and Resolution unit reporting to General Counsel and Vice President of Response and Resolution, Jessica Perrill.

### 2) **Improved Process Communication**

The Center has created a new Process Education unit within the Education and Research department. Process Navigators (formerly Resource & Process Advisors) were transitioned from the Response and Resolution department over to Education with the goal of grounding their work in a department with strong subject matter expertise on pedagogy and the psychology of learning. This team is tasked with designing role-specific educational materials (for Claimants, Respondents, parents/friends/support people) that will account for the neurobiological impact of trauma on the way that people learn and retain information about processes and procedures. Participants in the Center's process can contact Process Navigators at:

[Process.Navigators@safesport.org](mailto:Process.Navigators@safesport.org)

### 3) **Enhanced Training Development**

The Center is dedicating 50% of an employee's time to implementing a comprehensive training curriculum for its Response and Resolution department, including enhanced trauma-sensitivity training grounded in research and best practices.

### 4) **Categorizing Outcomes for Case Closures and Holds**

Starting April 1, 2024, the Center will be redefining and recategorizing Administrative Closures and Holds to provide more clarity and understanding. As a part of this change, the Center will provide to participants in its process and NGBs specific categories that explain the reason for these outcomes, without compromising Claimant confidentiality. The Center continues to preserve its ability to hold a case with the potential for re-opening it if more

information becomes available or a Claimant later decides to participate in the investigative process. The Center maintains that while NGBs are free to impose safety plans, limit one-on-one access to athletes, and make membership and employment decisions, federal law prohibits them from investigating allegations of sexual misconduct.

5) **Specialized Interview Team for Minor Claimants**

In January of 2024, the Center established a Specialized Interview Team trained in forensic interviewing of minors and trauma-sensitivity. The team travels for interviews as needed and is partnering with Child Advocacy Centers throughout the nation to use their locations for interviews and provide families with resources. The goal is for this highly-trained team to eventually conduct all interviews of minor Claimants.

6) **Opportunity to Review and Respond to Evidence**

After active investigations conclude, Claimants and Respondents will now have the option to review the Center's evidence (with the exception of confidential information such as medical records or personal identifiable information). Within a 14-day window, Claimants and Respondents may submit a written response and provide any additional relevant information. This procedural change will limit Respondents' ability to introduce new information during arbitration. This change took effect on April 1, 2024.

7) **Ensuring Consistent Communication**

The Center is taking steps to ensure consistent communication with those involved in its process by asking Claimants their preferred method and cadence of communication and committing to providing updates as requested. The Center will also contact Respondents every 30 days. With the new case hold and closure types (discussed in #4), the Center will be providing more clarity to NGBs and encouraging them to engage with the Center more on process questions. These enhanced communication protocols went into effect on April 1, 2024.

8) **Improving Data Collection and Accuracy**

The Center has built a Research, Evaluation & Data team who are working to develop new software architecture to more accurately capture information that is unique to the Center. The goal is to implement more robust systems that will allow the Center to collect, analyze, and share more complex and impactful information about cases and trends. The Center is also investing in staff training to ensure data consistency.

9) **Revamping Online Education**

The Center is currently overhauling its online courses to make them shorter, role-specific, and sport-contextual. Newly-created guiding philosophies will be applied to ensure all education is theory and data informed, rooted in best practices, and trauma-informed. The Center will be forming an advisory group, consisting of subject matter experts in the fields of prevention

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education, trauma-informed learning, and sport culture to solicit insight and feedback on educational content. The new online courses are expected to roll out in 2025.

**10) Expanding Event Audits into Grassroots Sports**

Considering the substantial number of minor athletes competing at non-national level events, the Center began conducting audits to seek accountability deeper into grassroots sports. These audits began in January of 2024 and were announced in 2022. In preparation, NGBs were provided site visits and technical assistance, and additional information was codified in the updated National Governing Body Audit Manual released to NGBs on November 16, 2023.

Please email [RRLegal@safesport.org](mailto:RRLegal@safesport.org) with questions, comments, suggestions for educational content, or training needs regarding these changes.