



2020 ATHLETE CULTURE & CLIMATE SURVEY

JULY 14, 2021





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ABOUT THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

Established in 2017, the U.S. Center for SafeSport is the independent and exclusive authority charged by Congress with responding to and preventing all forms of abuse and misconduct within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. The Center is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

The Center receives, investigates, and responds to reports of abuse and misconduct from individuals affiliated with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and its National Governing Bodies (NGBs). The Center ensures that the USOPC and NGBs properly apply policies and procedures to govern abuse prevention and maintains a database of individuals sanctioned from participation in their sport.

Throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, the Center trains athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, and organizations at all levels on best practices and principles for preventing abuse in sport settings. In doing so, the Center advances its mission of making athlete well-being the center of our nation's sports culture through abuse prevention, education, and accountability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Athletes are at the core of what the Center does, and we are committed to creating environments to support their participation in sport without fear of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse. This Athlete Survey is the first of many initiatives the U.S. Center for SafeSport will undertake to increase athlete engagement, outreach, and trust.

This initiative was possible because of the teamwork and dedication of many. We express our appreciation for the tireless work of our research partners at the University of North Carolina Greensboro Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness: Jeff Milroy, DrPH, Samantha Kelly, MPH, and Emily Beamon, MA, MPH; and Annie Kearns Davoren, PhD, at NORC at the University of Chicago. Additionally, we appreciate the guidance of the SafeSport Athlete Advisory Team (SAAT), Athletes' Advisory Council (AAC), United States Olympians and Paralympians Association (USOPA), Climate Survey Advisory Committee (listed below), and Dr. Gretchen Kerr and Erin Willson who played key roles in related research on Canadian sport, and allowed the Center to use some key questions from the AthletesCAN¹ survey in this survey. Most of all, we extend our deep gratitude to all the athletes who shared their experiences, lent their voices, and provided their perspectives and recommendations.

SafeSport Athlete Advisory Team Convened by the U.S. Center for SafeSport:

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Kelley Humphries, USA Para Powerlifting
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Taylor Payne, USA Diving
Liz Podominick, USA Boxing
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Nellie Viner, USA Triathlon
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UNCG and NORC Representatives listed above

¹ Kerr, G., Willson, E., & Stirling, A. (2019). *Prevalence of maltreatment among current and former national team athletes*. University of Toronto/AthletesCAN.

FROM THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT CEO

Four years ago, the U.S. Center for SafeSport opened its doors. It was a time when the nation was still reeling from the news of abuse that rocked the world of gymnastics. Yet while we have known abuse has existed throughout sport and society, for some time we simply did not know how pervasive it really was.

Existing research in the field has been relatively limited. This has left many questions unanswered related to prevalence, perceptions, and surrounding factors related to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse among U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Athletes.

While the Center undertakes many activities to support athlete safety: To fully solve a problem, it is crucial to fully know the problem. Headlines of episodes gain our attention and stoke our desire for change—as they ought to. But quantitative and qualitative data outlining the abuse and misconduct landscape can help spur diverse stakeholders and policymakers to action, in support of systemic athlete safety and culture improvements we hope to foster.

For this reason, we contracted with the Institute to Promote Athlete Health and Wellness at the University of North Carolina Greensboro to develop, administer, and produce this first-of-its-kind report of findings from our 2020 U.S. Center for SafeSport Athlete Culture & Climate Survey.

With nearly 4,000 athletes in more than 50 sports contributing their experiences and perspectives, the survey is the most in-depth look to date at prevalence and factors related to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and misconduct among U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement athletes.

Its findings suggest that while progress has been made to increase athlete safety and dignity throughout and beyond sport, abuse, misconduct, and misconceptions persist. We will use these findings to inform new priorities and initiatives the Center will undertake in partnership with stakeholders, outlined in Key Actions and Next Steps that conclude this report.

This survey is our first foray into collecting Movement-wide data to better understand athlete experiences and the extent of abuse in sport. Responses to over 100 questions will establish baselines to help us gauge progress in future culture surveys—the next of which we will administer in 2023, for 2024 publication.

Thank you for all you do to keep athletes safe, supported, and strengthened.



Ju'Riese Colón, CEO, U.S. Center for SafeSport

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Center for SafeSport contracted with Prevention Strategies and the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness (IPAHW) at the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2020 to develop a survey to assess athlete experiences and the culture and climate within U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport.

3,959 adult athletes (including 151 Olympians/Paralympians and 56 medalists) from more than 50 sports responded to the survey between October 6 – November 30, 2020. While shared broadly across the United States Olympic and Paralympic Movement, participants were mostly white (87.6%), heterosexual (88.6%), female (76.1%) athletes, and athletes without disabilities (93.1%). Though some minority demographics are less represented than others, this report aims to also shed light on the unique experiences of diverse athletes and the notable experiences they shared in this survey.

Current and former athletes responded to survey questions on the following topics: athlete satisfaction; discriminatory or unfair treatment in their sport setting; mental, physical, and sexual harm within sport setting; impact of sexual harm; mental health; awareness of resources to help address misconduct; and other important topics. Though nearly 4,000 athletes completed the survey in whole or in part, these findings may not reflect the experiences of all athletes.

Key findings: Overall

- 27.5% of athlete participants think sexual, emotional, or physical misconduct is a problem in their sport—but far more (48%) are aware of coaches developing sexual relationships with athletes.
- 93% of individuals who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact did not submit a formal report/complaint of it.
- 18.1% of individuals having unwanted sexual experiences also indicated they were retaliated against.
- More than half of athlete participants who indicated having unwanted sexual experiences said that some or all of those experiences happened when they were under 18.
- Approximately 80% of athlete participants indicated experiencing at least one of 18 indicators of psychological harm or neglect.
- 21.7% of athlete participants indicated being physically harmed.
- 9% of athlete participants experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement.

Key Findings: Athlete Satisfaction

- 90.8% of survey participants agree that they are satisfied with their athletic career.
- 83% of survey participants agree that they would recommend being a member of their National Governing Body of sport to other athletes.
- White survey participants were more likely to report satisfaction with their sport than Black survey participants. Athletes with a self-reported disability were less likely to report satisfaction with their sport.

Updates made on Jan. 25, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Findings: Diversity & Inclusivity

- 72.4% of athlete participants indicated they had experienced an anti-inclusive behavior.
 - Examples of anti-inclusive behaviors indicated by survey participants include:
 - You were given a lower score or ranking than you earned
 - You felt other players repeatedly excluded you from team/group activities
 - People assumed that your injuries weren't as significant or painful as they actually were
- Approximately 48% of athlete participants indicated they had experienced discrimination in some form during their involvement with their governing body.

Key Findings: Psychological Harm

- Approximately 80% of athlete participants indicated experiencing at least one of 18 indicators of psychological harm or neglect.
- Athletes with a disability noted significantly more experiences with psychological harm and neglect than those without a disability. Additionally, women and gender-nonconforming participants experienced higher rates of psychological harm and neglect compared with men.

Key Findings: Physical Harm

- Black, Multiracial, and Asian athletes were more likely to experience physical harm.
- Rates of physical harm experienced by those who indicated that they were bisexual were almost double when compared to any other sexual orientation.
- Rates of physical harm were higher for athlete participants who were ever a collegiate athlete compared to athletes who did not participate in college varsity athletics.

Key Findings: Sexual Harm

- 48% of participants were aware of coaches developing sexual relationships with athletes.
 - Nearly 32% of athletes surveyed indicated that a sexual relationship between a coach and another athlete negatively impacted the coaching they received as an athlete.
 - Similarly, 56% reported a negative impact on the coaching other athletes receive when a coach has a sexual relationship with an athlete.
- 9% of athlete participants experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement.
- Black athletes (compared with other races) and bisexual athletes (compared with other sexual orientations) experienced nearly double the rates of inappropriate sexual contact. Athlete participants with a self-reported disability also had more experiences of inappropriate sexual contact, compared with those without.
- Nearly 34% of participants indicated having had an experience with unwanted sexual comments or looks from another individual.
- 3.2% of athlete participants reported a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.
 - Athletes who experienced sexual assault indicated that it most often happened with coaches, trainers, or another sport administrator (55%), or with an athlete peer (45%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Black athletes (followed closely by Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial athletes) reported the most experience with sexual assault. Athletes who are gender nonconforming indicated greater likelihood of experiencing sexual assault than those who identify as male or female. Participants who self-report as having a disability also indicated significantly greater likelihood of experiencing sexual assault. Athletes who indicated they had ever participated in a NCAA/NAIA varsity sport also indicated experiencing sexual assault more than athletes who did not participate in collegiate sport.

Key Findings: Impacts of Sexual Harm

- Overall, athletes who experienced sexual harm reported that the biggest impacts included their perception of themselves being negatively impacted (37.5%), their mental health suffering (33.9%), and their friendships and other important relationships being negatively impacted (31.4%).

Key Findings: Mental Health

- 34% of athletes reported mental health impacts as a result of sexual harm experiences.
- 53.4% of athletes surveyed indicated experiencing at least one of six mental health indicators.
- Nearly half of athlete participants reported experiencing depression or anxiety symptoms, whether their sport experience is past or present.
- Nearly 49% of athletes indicated that they have sought treatment to deal with mental health concerns.

Key Findings: Reporting Sexual Harm

- Nearly 68% of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment indicated that they did not feel they had a place to talk about their experiences within their governing body of sport.
- Only 6.7% of the athlete participants who reported experiencing sexual harm indicated that they had made a formal report/complaint about sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact they experienced during their involvement with the sport.
- Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (13.9%) were more likely to have reported their experience with sexual harm compared to those who have not been a varsity athlete (4.1%).

Key Findings: Resource Knowledge

- 79% of participants indicated having heard of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- 41% of athletes indicated that they have NOT within the past 24 months received written or verbal information from anyone at their governing body of sport or the U.S. Center for SafeSport about how to report retaliation.
- Approximately 45% of athlete participants believe that the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the leadership of their NGB is a trusted resource by individuals within their sport organization, compared with 27% who did not.
- Of the three types of abuse the Center addresses (sexual, physical, and emotional), knowing what emotional misconduct is and where to report it is less known than other forms of abuse.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Next Steps and Key Actions

This 2020 Athlete Culture & Climate Survey establishes baseline measures of key indicators of abuse and misconduct and related well-being aspects in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement. Going forward, this survey data will help us develop benchmarks—against which we can gauge progress in future culture surveys toward measurable and meaningful culture change in sport.

These survey results will inform specific actions and initiatives to promote better, safer sport cultures, and will align with other education and outreach and initiatives in the Center's 2021-23 Strategic Plan, including:

1. Developing additional educational resources focused on reporting abuse, retaliation, and power imbalance
2. Establishing a web resource connecting athletes with available mental health resources
3. Developing a feedback mechanism to inform the Center's response and resolution process
4. Releasing an annual Public Impact report, starting in 2022, to provide insights on what we learn from athletes and updates on our progress
5. Releasing new video resources to better guide participants through the Center's Response and Resolution process
6. Evaluating the 2022 Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) implementation and impact, with feedback informing MAAPP updates planned for 2025
7. Publishing annual SafeSport audits of each NGB
8. Issuing a follow-up Culture Survey in 2023 to solicit continued feedback from athletes

The Center will also meet with individual athlete groups, National Governing Bodies, and sport groups to discuss the findings, share future prevention and outreach strategies, and solicit additional feedback from athletes. These conversations will further shape the Center's strategic path toward creating safer sport environments for all athletes.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center) contracted with Prevention Strategies and the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness (IPAHW) at the University of North Carolina Greensboro to develop and administer a survey to assess the culture and climate of athlete safety within National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Paralympic Sport Organizations (PSOs)². Responses to this survey provide the Center with baseline data from current and former athletes regarding athlete satisfaction with their sport career, athlete engagement with sport, discriminatory or unfair treatment within sport setting, mental and physical harm within sport setting, neglect within sport setting, sexually harassing and assaulting behavior within sport setting, repercussions of unwanted sexual experiences in sport setting, reporting of unwanted sexual experiences in sport setting, mental health and help-seeking behaviors, and knowledge of resources to help address misconduct.

² At the time this project initiated, Paralympic Sport Organizations were known as High Performance Management Organizations.

At the conclusion of the survey, athletes were provided with links to report a concern to the Center if they chose to, and to access support information anonymously through an hotline partnership with the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Sexual Harm is used synonymously with the term “unwanted sexual experiences” throughout this report. Sexual harm was measured using 12 survey questions that assessed a range of experiences including sexual harassment, unwanted sexual contact and noncontact behaviors, and sexual assault. For each item, athlete participants were asked to think only about unwanted experiences that occurred during their involvement in sport.

Inappropriate sexual contact is a term used in this report to refer to unwanted sexual touching, kissing, or sexual exploitation; it does not include sexual assault or attempted sexual assault (which were assessed separately). Inappropriate sexual contact was measured using four survey items that were included in the 12-item Sexual Harm scale. For each item, athlete participants were asked to think only about unwanted experiences that occurred during their involvement in sport.

Sexual assault is defined in this report as the experience of non-consensual sex with penetration. Sexual assault was measured using a single item within the 12-item Sexual Harm scale. For this item, athlete participants were asked to think only about unwanted experiences that occurred during their involvement in sport.

Psychological harm is a term used in this report to describe emotionally harmful and/or neglectful interactions that occurred within the sport setting. Psychological harm was measured using 18 survey items that assessed a range of experiences including being yelled at, humiliated, pressured, not having basic needs met, and more.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Population

The targeted sample for data collection included current and former athletes across all levels of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Movement who are 18 years of age or older. Participants were engaged from the 55 NGBs/PSOs and invited to complete the survey via an anonymous Qualtrics survey link.

Survey Administration

The online, self-administered, anonymous survey was open online from October 6 to November 30, 2020. An anonymous survey link and promotional tools to support consistency were shared with athlete representatives (AAC, SAAT, USOPA), NGBs, PSOs, and the USOPC. NGBs and PSOs independently invited athletes using their own methods of recruitment (e.g., website promotion, email, social media). Athletes were also recruited to participate through an announcement on the Center's website and an email from the CEO of the Center. Additional recruitment and reminders for this study were sent by the Center. To promote participation, the original survey closing date was extended from November 15 to November 30. Additionally, an accessible version of the survey was created to allow individuals using a screen reader to access and complete the survey. To promote participation, athletes were offered a financial incentive in the form of a \$20 Amazon gift card to complete the survey. Incentives were capped and offered on a first-come, first-serve basis until the incentive cap was met.

Measures

Instrument development was an iterative process between the research team, Center staff, and a research advisory group formed by the Center that included representation from athletes, NGBs, PSOs, and the USOPC. Past Center survey instruments as well as the *AthletesCAN*³ survey served as a foundation for the 2020 Center instrument. Once a near-final instrument was complete, the research team conducted cognitive interviews with four current and former athletes to test the instrument for language clarity and to ensure key topics were covered accurately. Adjustments to survey language and flow were made as a result of these cognitive interviews.

The primary objective of the survey was to capture information on the culture and climate of sport, including incidences and repercussions of abuse in sport. More specifically, the measures focused on the following:

- Athlete satisfaction with their sport career
- Athlete engagement with sport
- Discriminatory or unfair treatment within sport setting
- Mental and physical harm within sport setting
- Neglect within sport setting
- Sexually harassing and assaulting behavior within sport setting
- Repercussions of unwanted sexual experiences in sport setting
- Reporting of unwanted sexual experiences in sport setting
- Mental health and help-seeking behaviors
- Knowledge of resources to help address misconduct
- Perceptions of athlete peer norms related to abuse and misconduct⁴

³ Kerr, G., Willson, E., & Stirling, A. (2019). *Prevalence of maltreatment among current and former national team athletes*. University of Toronto/AthletesCAN.

⁴ Although we surveyed athletes regarding peer norms, these findings were not included in this report.

DEMOGRAPHICS & FINDINGS

The total number of participants was 3,959; however, because athletes were given the option to skip questions at their will, the participant numbers varied by survey question; therefore, total number of responses (Ns) within each section below will total less than 3,959 and vary by section.

Findings were analyzed by individual characteristics. Table 1 reflects the demographic characteristics by which findings are analyzed, along with the number of participants and percent of participants within each category.

Further information regarding the categorizations:

- **Race:** “Other than listed here” includes Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Native American or Alaskan Native and Other race than listed here.
- **Sexual Orientation:** “Other than listed here” includes gay, lesbian, queer, and sexual orientations other than listed here.
- **Gender:** Participants were asked both “gender assigned at birth” as well as “what gender do you self-identify as.” For purposes of analysis, these two items were cross-analyzed. “Cisgender woman” is defined as those who replied “female assigned at birth” and “self-identify as a cisgender or transgender woman now.” Cisgender man is defined as those who replied “male assigned at birth” and “self-identify as a cisgender or transgender man now.” Gender nonconforming, transgender, “gender other than listed here” are defined as “those who had intersex assigned at birth,” “those who self-identify as genderqueer or gender nonconforming,” “those who self-identify as a gender other than gender assigned at birth,” and “those who self-identify as another gender than listed here.”

Table 1. Individual Characteristics of Survey Participants, by Category⁵

CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTIC	N	% WITHIN CATEGORY
Race	Asian	55	2.5%
	Black	57	2.6%
	Hispanic	54	2.4%
	White	1,942	87.6%
	Multi-racial	75	3.4%
	Other than listed here	33	1.5%
Sexual Orientation	Asexual	92	4.1%
	Bisexual	84	3.8%
	Heterosexual	1982	88.6%
	Gay, lesbian, queer, and sexual orientations other than listed here	79	3.5%
Gender Identity	Woman (cisgender)	1,670	76.1%
	Man (cisgender)	497	22.6%
	Gender nonconforming/transgender/Gender other than listed here	28	1.3%
Disability	Athlete with disability (self-identify)	157	6.9%
	Athlete without disability	2,110	93.1%
College Varsity Athlete	Yes, in lifetime	655	28.8%
	No, never	1,620	71.2%
Competitive Athlete Status	Currently active	1,874	82.4%
	Not currently active	400	17.6%

⁵ Where there are statistically significant differences by individual characteristic, those are noted. Tests were considered statistically significant using p<.05

DEMOGRAPHICS & FINDINGS

Table 2. NGB Representation (N = 3959)

NGB	N (%)	NGB	N (%)
US Equestrian Federation	2060 (52%)	USA Hockey	19 (.5%)
US Tennis Association	635 (16%)	USA Curling	17 (.4%)
USA Gymnastics	147 (3.7%)	USA Cycling	17 (.4%)
USA Softball	129 (3.3%)	USA Boxing	15 (.4%)
USA Swimming	123 (3.1%)	USA Roller Sports	15 (.4%)
USA Taekwondo	95 (2.4%)	USA Weightlifting	15 (.4%)
USA Track & Field	76 (1.9%)	USA Wrestling	15 (.4%)
USRowing	69 (1.7%)	US Figure Skating	12 (.4%)
Other, not listed above	65 (1.6%)	USA Archery	12 (.3%)
USA Artistic Swimming	51 (1.3%)	USA Fencing	11 (.3%)
US Ski & Snowboard Association	47 (1.2%)	USA National Karate-Do Federation	11 (.3%)
US Speedskating	43 (1.1%)	USA Volleyball	11 (.3%)
USA Climbing	34 (.9%)	USA Badminton	10 (.3%)
USA Diving	23 (.6%)	Prefer not to say	37 (.9%)
USA Triathlon	21 (.5%)	Other NGB ⁶	124 (3.1%)

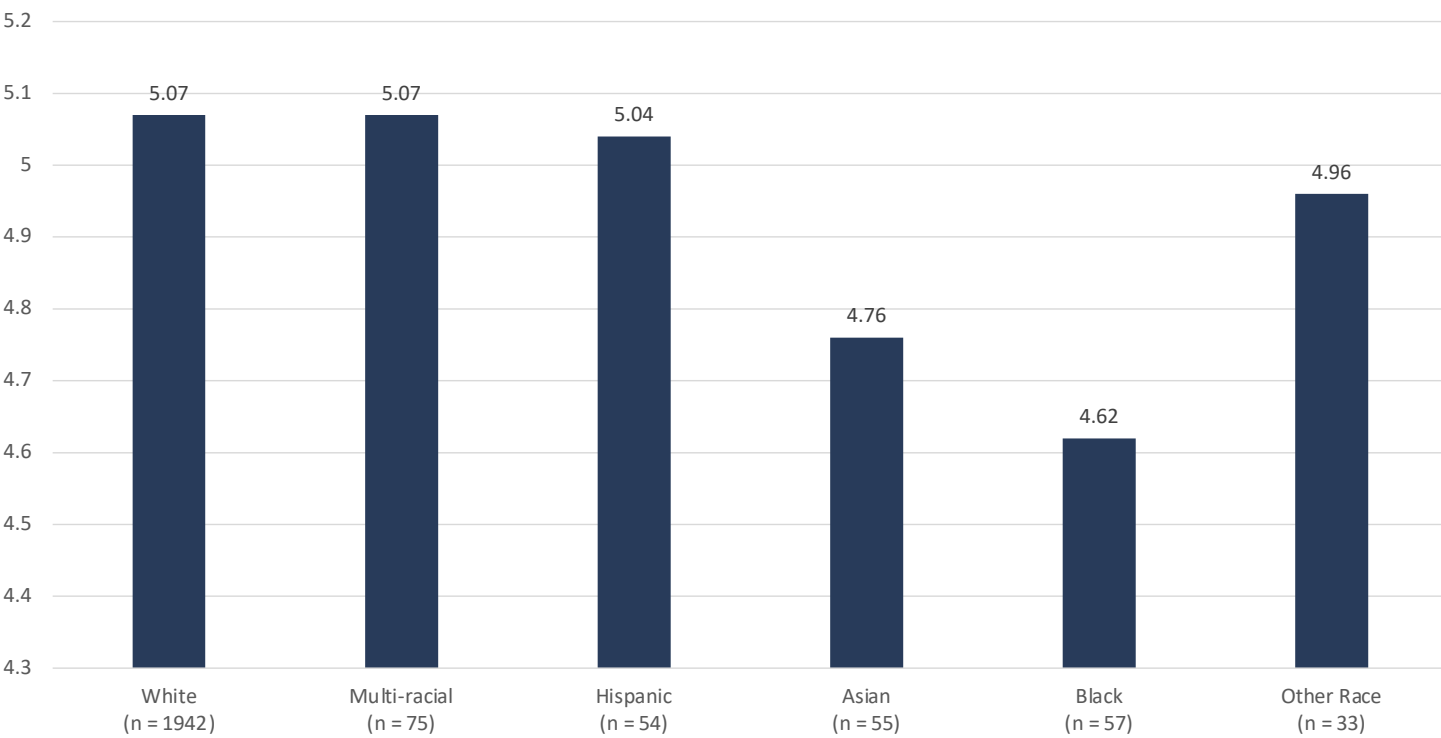
⁶ NGBs with fewer than 10 respondents: ACA USA Canoe/Kayak, Lakeshore Foundation USA Wheelchair Rugby, Logan University USA Para Powerlifting, National Wheelchair Basketball Association, US Biathlon Association, US Bobsled & Skeleton, US Bowling Congress, US Sailing, US Soccer Federation, USA Baseball, USA Basketball, USA Boccia, USA Field Hockey, USA Golf, USA Luge, USA Pentathlon, USA Racquetball, USA Rugby, USA Shooting, USA Surfing, USA Table Tennis, USA Team Handball, USA Water Polo, USA Water Ski & Wake Sports, USOPC (Paralympic Alpine Skiing, Paralympic Cycling, Paralympic Nordic Skiing, Paralympic Swimming, Paralympic Track & Field)

ATHLETE SATISFACTION

Key Findings

- 90.8% of survey participants agree that they are satisfied with their athletic career.
- 83% of survey participants agree that they would recommend being a member of their National Governing Body of sport to others.
- White survey participants were more likely to report satisfaction with their sport when compared to Black survey participants. Athletes with a self-reported disability were less likely to report satisfaction with their sport.

Figure 1. Athlete Satisfaction with Sport, by Race, on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest)

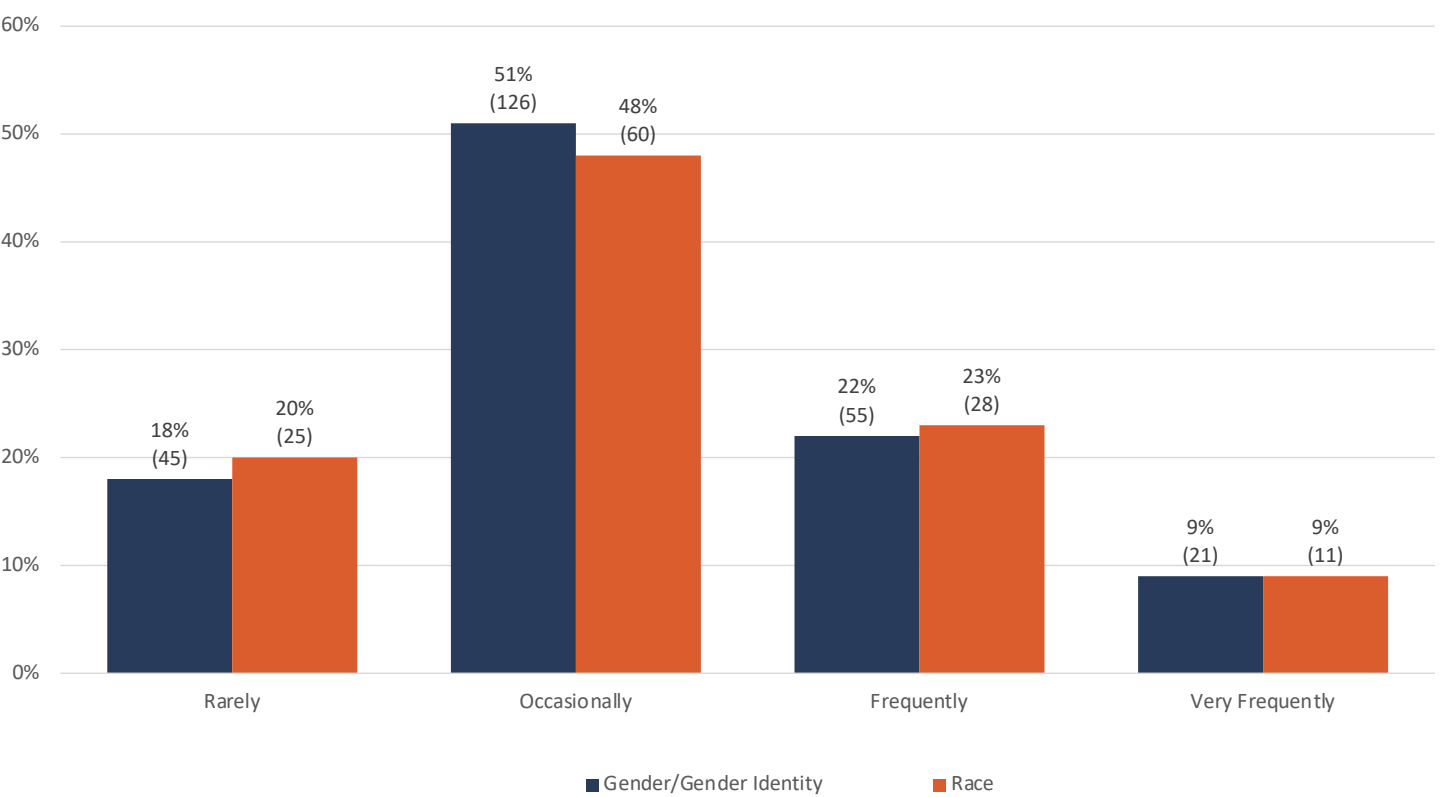


DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Key Findings

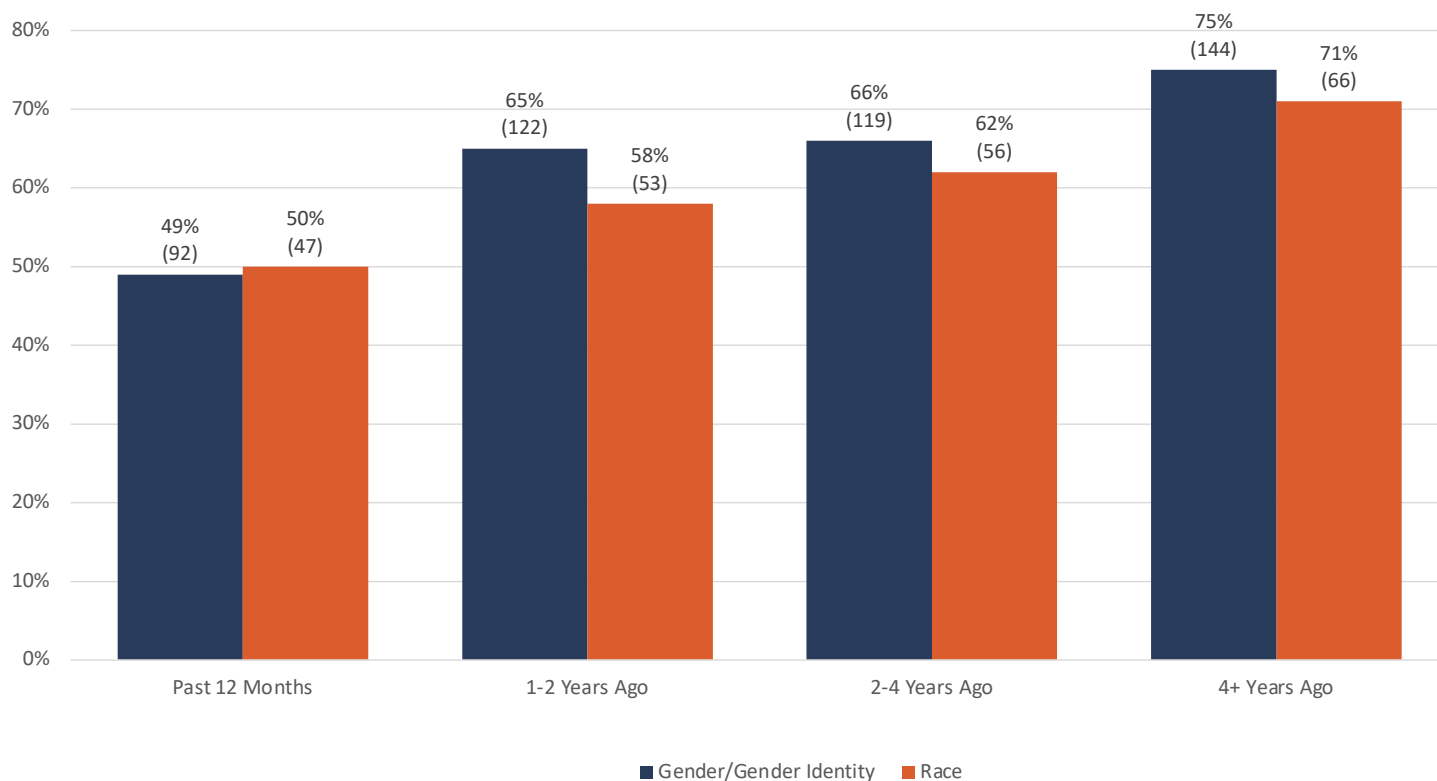
- 72.4% of athlete participants indicated they had experienced an anti-inclusive behavior.
 - Examples of anti-inclusive behaviors indicated by survey participants include:
 - You were given a lower score or ranking than you earned
 - You felt other players repeatedly excluded you from team/group activities
 - People assumed that your injuries weren't as significant or painful as they actually were
- Approximately 48% of athlete participants indicated they had experienced discrimination in some form during their involvement with their governing body.

Figure 2. Frequency of Racial and Gender-Based Discrimination for Athletes who Experienced Either



DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Figure 3. Time Frame of Racial and Gender-Based Discrimination



Discrimination Experiences

Participants in the following demographic groups were more likely to report they experienced discriminatory behavior during their involvement with their national governing body of sport compared with their counterparts:

- **Race:** Multiracial (68%), Black (67.5%), and Asian (62.5%) participants, compared with White (47.4%), Hispanic (46.2%), or Other racial identity (Hawaiian, Native American, or other than listed; 46.2%)
- **Gender Identity:** Gender nonconforming, transgender, or gender other than male/female (76.2%) compared to men (37.9%); women (53.2%) compared to men
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (56.9%) compared to those who were not (46.5%)

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Figure 4. Percentage of Athletes who experienced Discriminatory Behavior, by Race

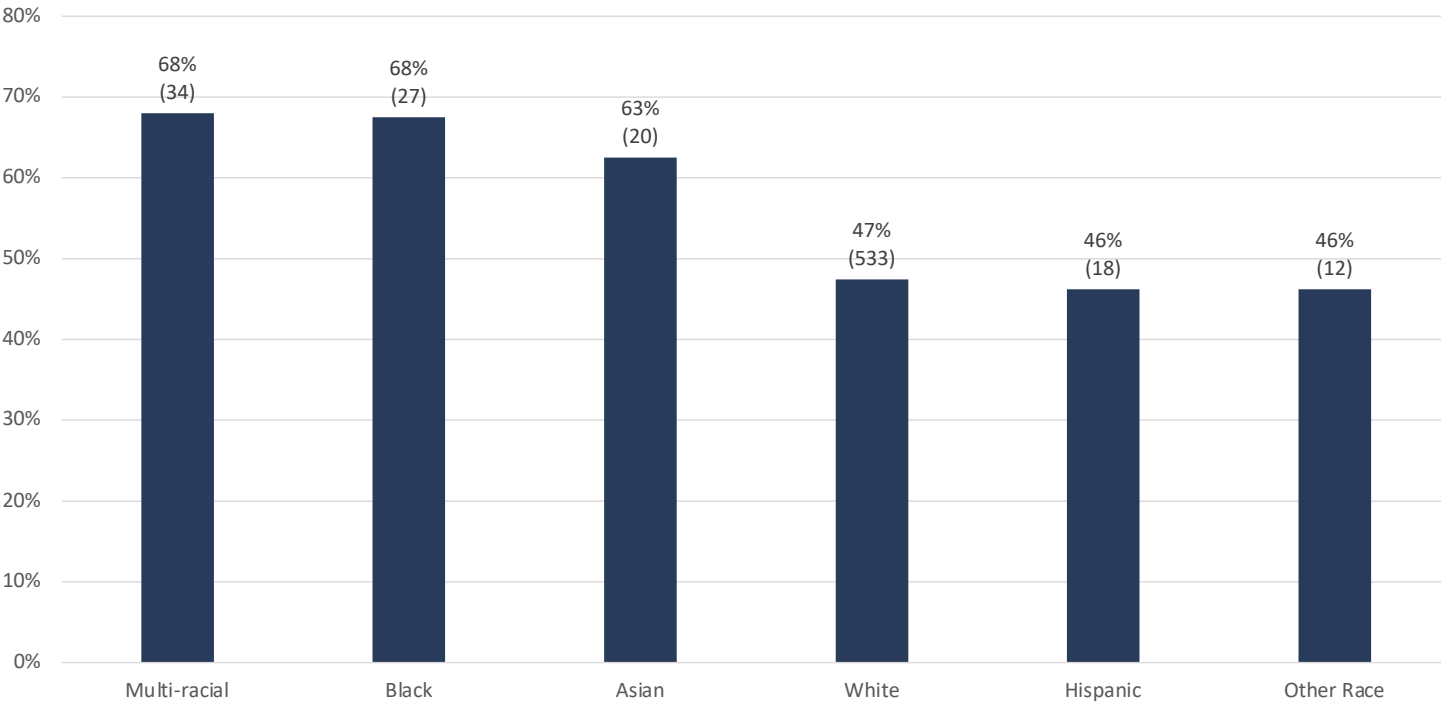
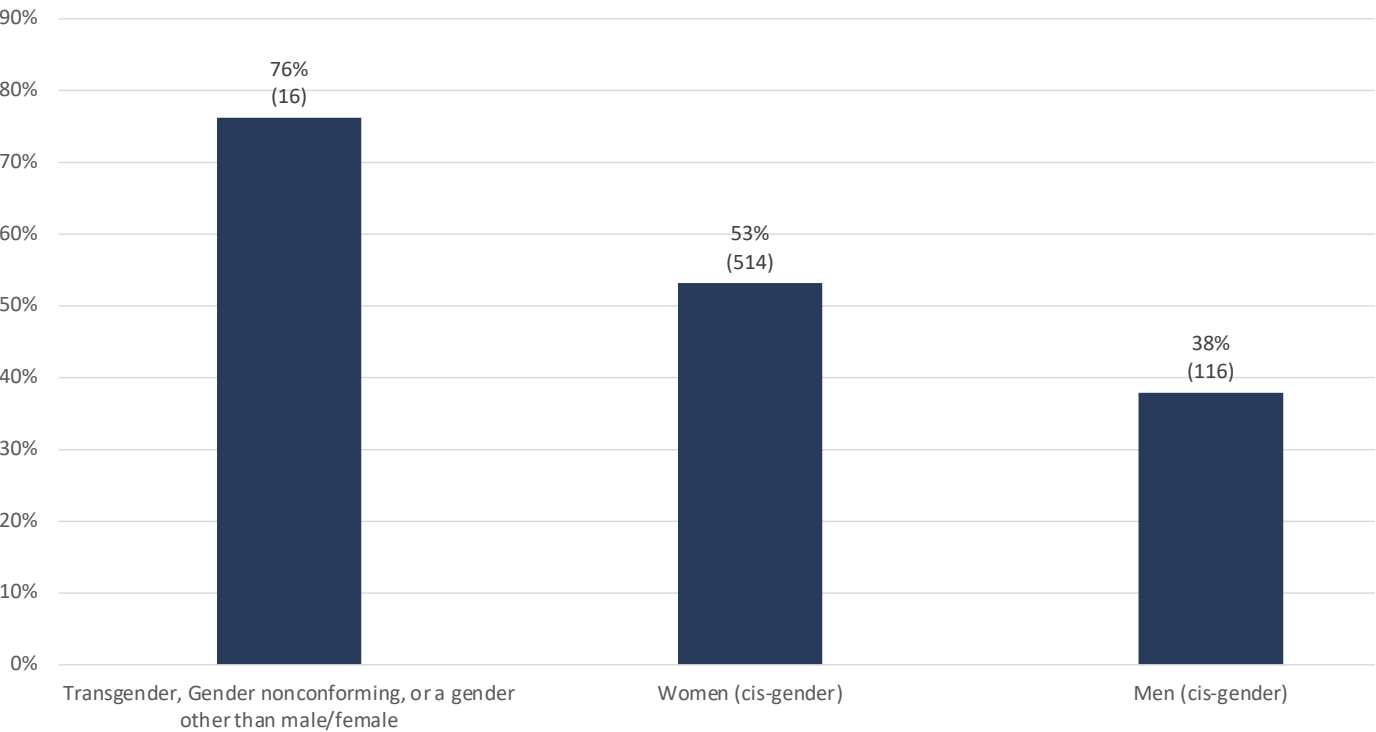


Figure 5. Percentage of Athletes who experienced Discriminatory Behavior, by Gender Identity

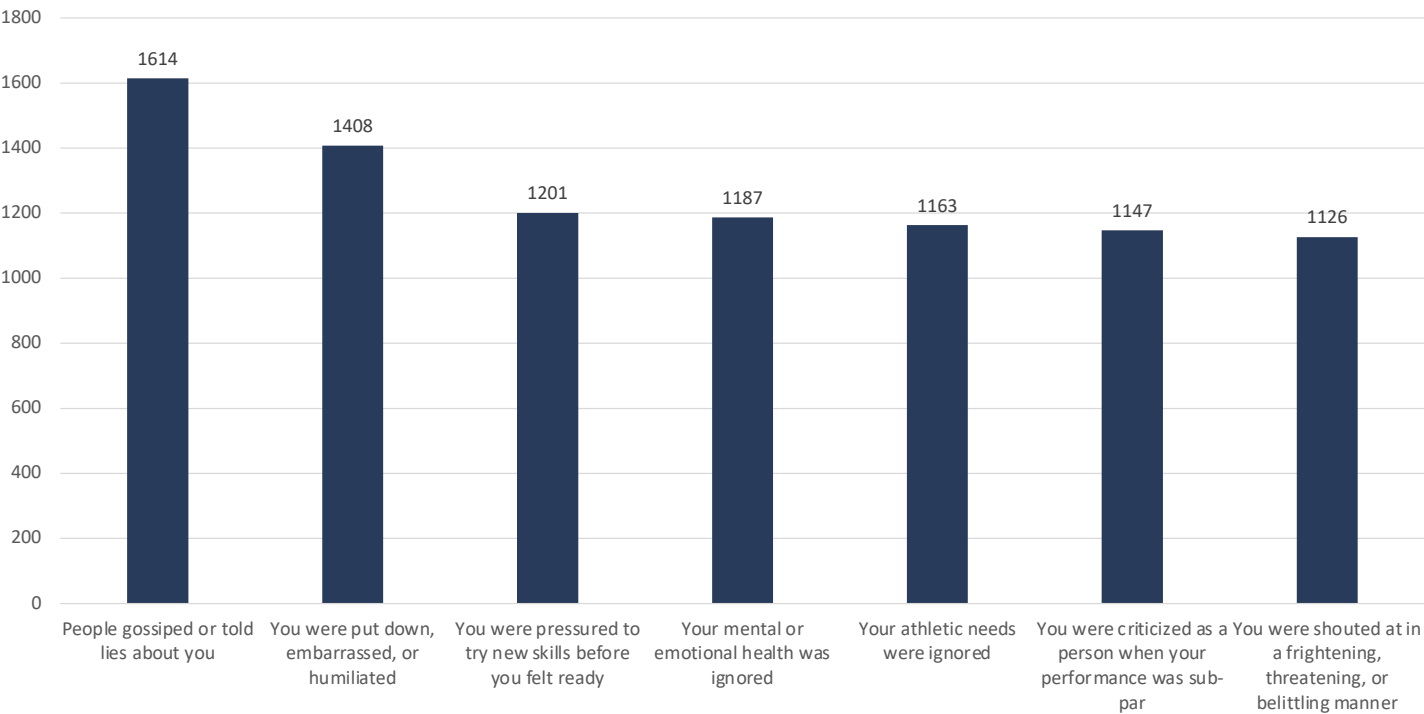


PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM

Key Findings

- Approximately 80% of athlete participants indicated they had experienced at least one of 18 indicators denoting psychological harm or neglect.
- Athletes with a disability were significantly more likely to report having experienced psychological harm and neglect than those without a disability. Additionally, women and gender-nonconforming participants experienced higher rates of psychological harm and neglect, compared with men.

Figure 6. Number of Athletes who experienced Psychological Harm & Neglect, by Indicator⁷



Psychological Harm & Neglect

Participants in the following demographics were more likely to report psychological harm and neglect compared with their counterparts:

- **Gender Identity:** Women (81.4%) and gender nonconforming/transgender/other gender identity (82.8%) compared to men (70.4%)
- **Disability:** Those with a self-reported disability (87.3%) compared to those without a disability (78.3%)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (84.4%) compared to those who were not a varsity athlete (77.0%)

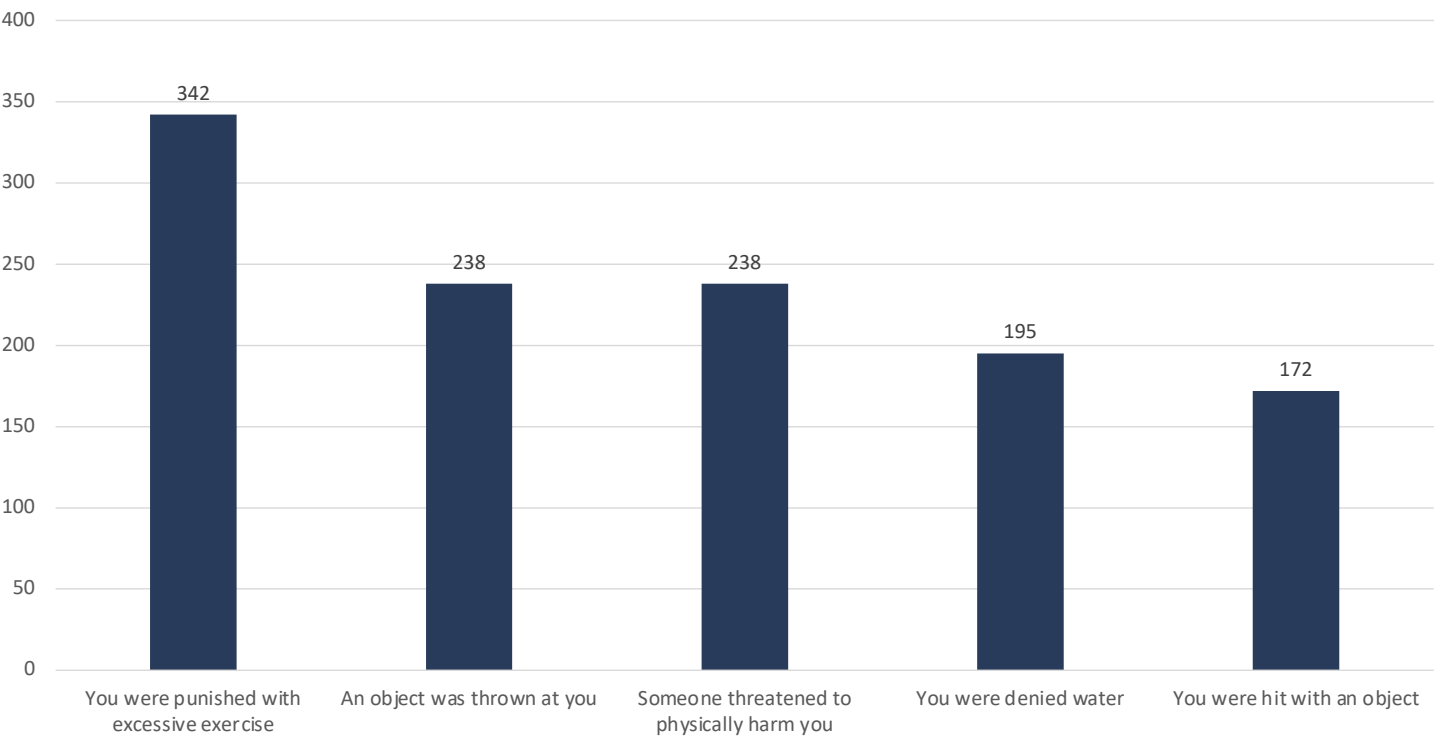
⁷Total number of athletes who responded to these indicators ranged from 3,153 to 3,280. Variation in indicator response rates is due to athletes skipping items and/or not completing the survey.

PHYSICAL HARM

Key Findings

- 21.7% of athlete participants indicated being physically harmed.
- Black, Multiracial, and Asian athletes were more likely to experience physical harm.
- Rates of physical harm experienced by those who indicated that they were bisexual were almost double when compared to any other sexual orientation.
- Rates of physical harm were higher for athlete participants who were ever a collegiate athlete compared to athletes who did not participate in college varsity athletics.

Figure 7. Number of Athletes who experienced Physical Harm, by Indicator⁸



⁸Total number of athletes who responded to these indicators ranged from 3,052 to 3,063. Variation in indicator response rates is due to athletes skipping items and/or not completing the survey.

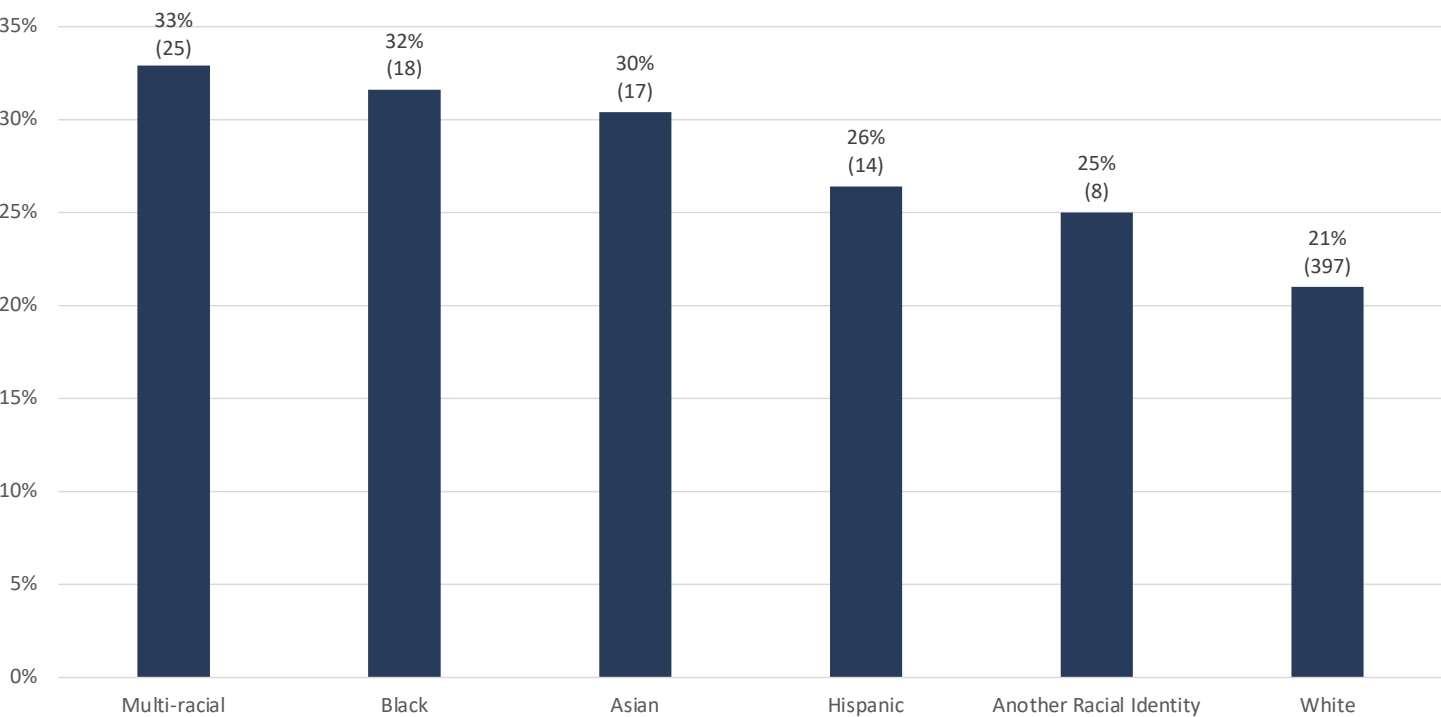
PHYSICAL HARM

Physical Harm

Participants in the following demographics were more likely to report experiencing physical harm when compared with their counterparts:

- **Race:** Multiracial (32.9%), Black (31.6%) and Asian (30.4%) participants compared with Hispanic (26.4%), Other racial identity (25%) or White participants (21%)
- **Sexual Orientation:** Bisexual (39.5%) compared to Other sexual orientation (25.6%), Asexual (24.2%), and Heterosexual (21.1%)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (29.7%) compared to those who were not a varsity athlete (18.9%)
- **Active Status:** Participants who are not currently active in their sport (31%) compared to athletes who are currently active (20.1%)

Figure 8. Percentage of Athletes who experienced Physical Harm, by Race

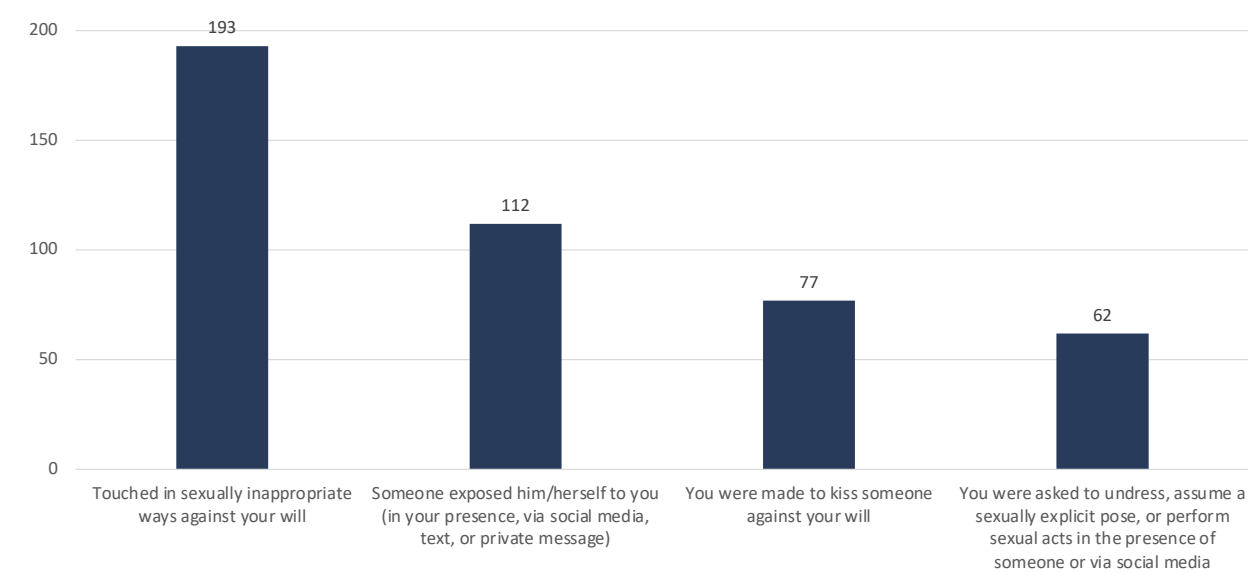


SEXUAL HARM

Key Findings

- 48% of participants are aware of coaches developing sexual relationships with athletes.
 - Nearly 32% of athletes surveyed indicated that a sexual relationship between a coach and another athlete negatively impacted the coaching they received as an athlete.
 - Similarly, 56% reported a negative impact on the coaching other athletes receive when a coach has a sexual relationship with an athlete.
- 9% of athlete participants experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement.
- Black athletes (when compared with other races) and bisexual athletes (compared with other sexual orientations) experienced nearly double the rates of inappropriate sexual contact. Athlete participants with a self-reported disability also had more experience with inappropriate sexual contact compared with those without.
- Nearly 34% of participants indicated having had an experience with unwanted sexual comments or looks from another individual.
- 3.2% of athlete participants reported a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.
 - Athletes who experienced sexual assault indicated that it most often happened with coaches, trainers, or another sport administrator (55%), or with an athlete peer (45%).
- Black athletes (followed closely by Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial athletes) reported the most experience with sexual assault. Respondents who are gender nonconforming indicated greater likelihood of experiencing sexual assault than those who identity as a male or female. Participants who self-report as having a disability also indicated significantly greater likelihood of experiencing sexual assault. Athletes who indicted they had ever participated in a NCAA/NAIA varsity sport also indicated experiencing sexual assault more than athletes who did not participate in collegiate sport.

Figure 9. Number of Athletes who experienced Inappropriate Sexual Contact, by Indicator⁹

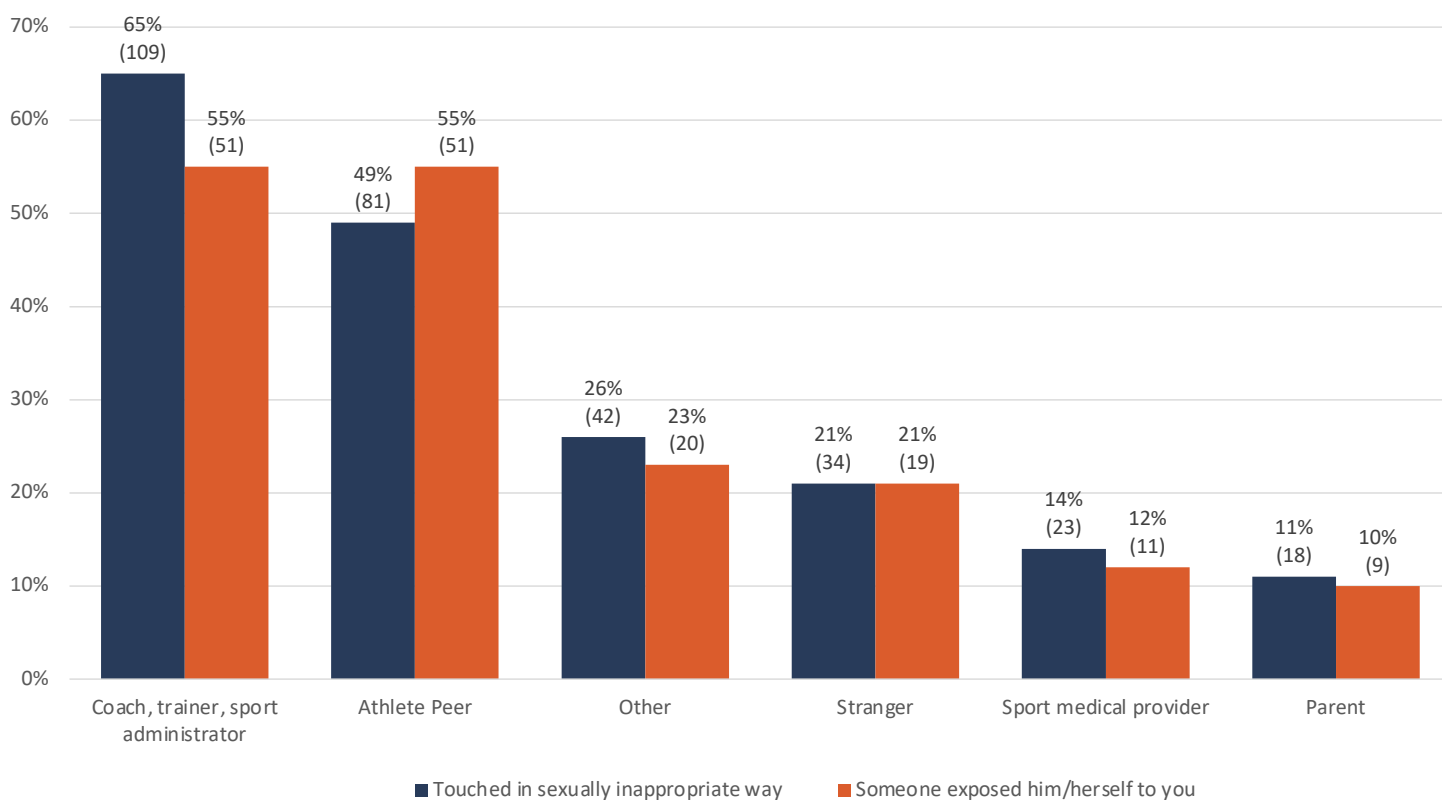


⁹ Total number of athletes who responded to these indicators ranged from 2,895 to 2,937. Variation in indicator response rates is due to athletes skipping items and/or not completing the survey.

SEXUAL HARM

Participants who indicated having unwanted sexual contact were asked follow-up questions related to the type of perpetrator (in a “select all that apply” manner). Figure 10 shows the percentage of athletes who received those follow-up questions and indicated “yes” to having perpetrators in a particular category.

Figure 10. Perpetrator Type indicated by Athletes who experienced Inappropriate Sexual Contact



Inappropriate Sexual Contact

Participants in the following demographics were more likely to report they experienced inappropriate sexual contact, compared with their counterparts:

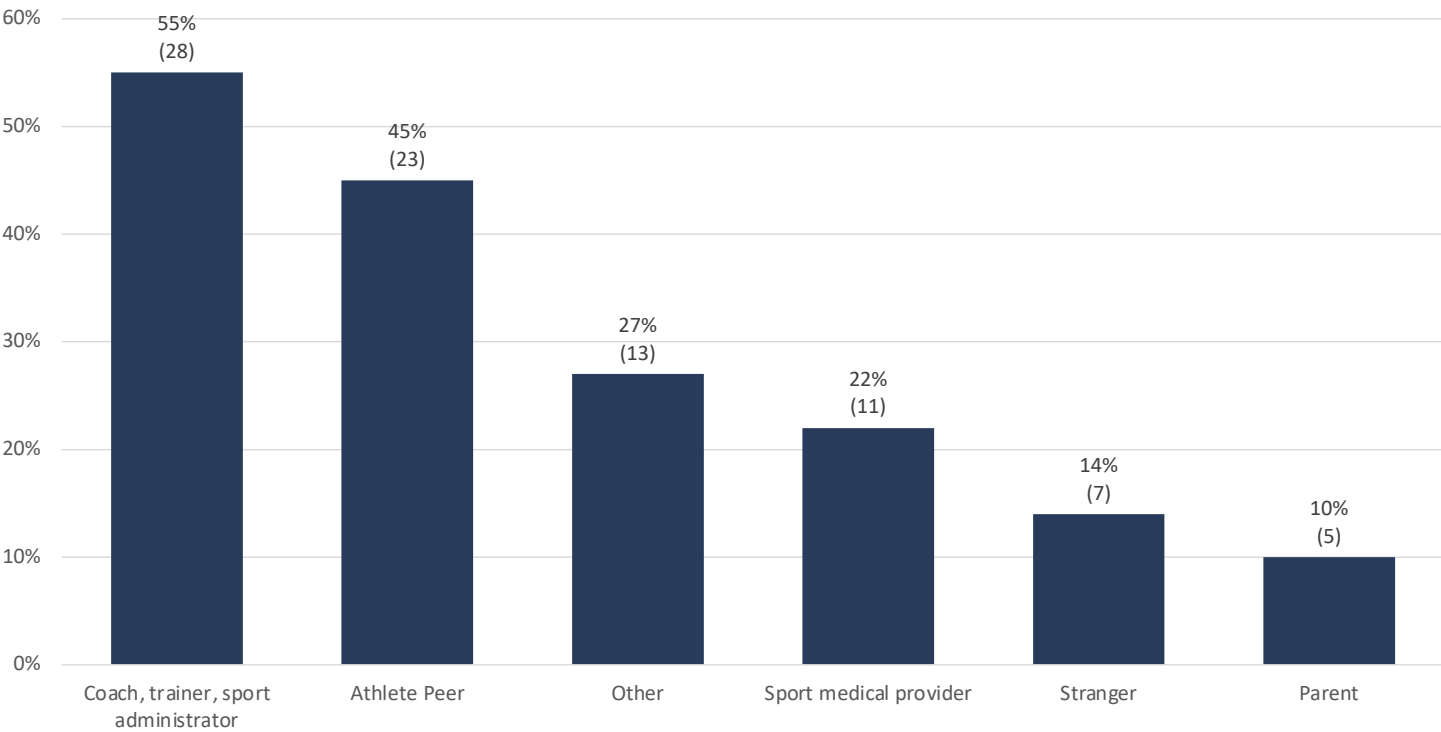
- **Race:** Black (21.1%) participants, compared with multi-racial (13.3%), Hispanic (13%), other race than listed (12.1%), Asian (11.1%), and White (8.2%) participants
- **Sexual Orientation:** Bisexual (20.2%) participants, compared with other sexual orientation than listed (12.7%), asexual (12%), and heterosexual (8.1%) participants
- **Gender Identity:** Gender-nonconforming participants (13.8%), compared with women (9.8%) and men (6.4%)
- **Disability:** Those with a self-reported disability (14.6%) compared with those without a disability (8.3%)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (13.2%) compared with those who were not a varsity athlete (7%)
- **Active Status:** Participants who are not currently active in their sport (12%) compared with athletes currently active in their sport (8%)

SEXUAL HARM

Sexual Assault

Participants who indicated experiencing sexual assault were asked follow-up questions related to the type of perpetrator (in a “select all that apply” manner). Figure 11 shows the percentage of athletes who received those follow-up questions and indicated “yes” to having perpetrators in a particular category.

Figure 11. Perpetrator Type indicated by Athletes who experienced Sexual Assault



SEXUAL HARM

Participants in the following demographics were more likely to report they experienced sexual assault when compared with their counterparts:

- **Race:** Black (7%), Asian (5.6%), Multiracial (4%) and Hispanic (3.7%) compared with White (1.9%) and Other (0%)
- **Gender Identity:** Gender-nonconforming participants (10.3%), compared with women (2.6%) and men (0.8%)
- **Disability:** Those with a self-reported disability (7.1%), compared with those without a disability (1.8%)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (3.7%), compared with those who were not a college varsity athlete (1.5%)

Participants reported that sexual assault most often occurred with coaches, trainers, or another sport administrator, or an athlete peer. In terms of recency: Sexual assault was most commonly described as occurring over four years ago.

Black athletes (followed closely by Asian athletes) reported greater occurrence of sexual assault. Participants who are gender nonconforming indicated greater occurrence of sexual assault than those who identify as male or female. Participants who self-report as having a disability, and those who participated in NCAA/NAIA varsity sports, also indicated significantly greater occurrence of sexual assault.

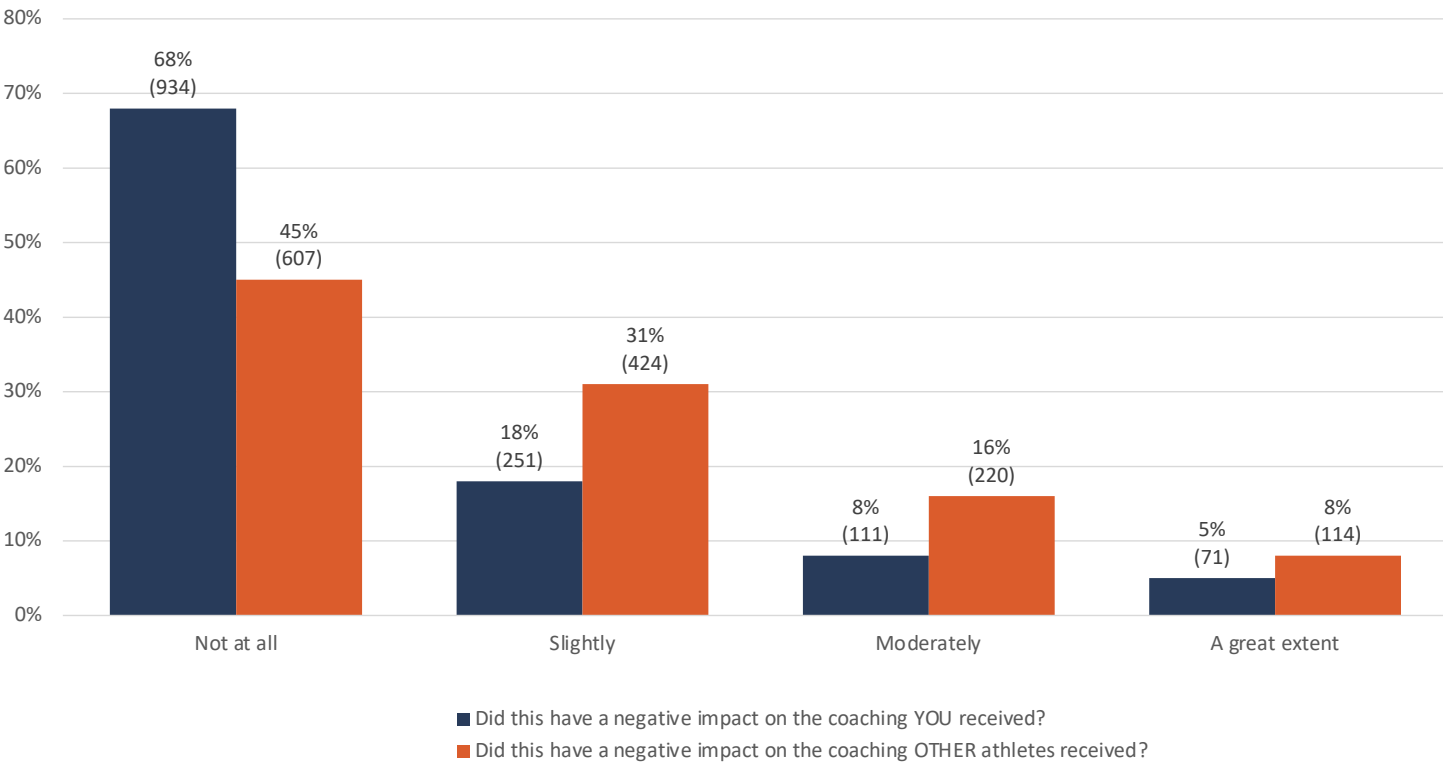
Summary of Sexual Harm Findings

The most common categories of perpetrator, in relation to each type of sexual harm indicated in the survey, were coaches, trainers, and other sport administrators, as well as athlete peers. Sexual harm was most commonly described as having happened over four years ago.

When race was a significant demographic indicator, Black athletes reported the greatest occurrence of sexual harm (more specifically, in relation to inappropriate sexual contact and sexual assault). Participants who are members of a sexual minority category (bisexual, asexual, or other sexual orientation) reported having the greatest occurrence of sexual harm, across types of harm indicated in the survey. Athletes who identify as gender nonconforming also reported experiencing greater incidence of sexual harm across all four sexual harm measures. Participants who self-identify as having a disability reported greater incidence of sexual harm than those without a disability on every sexual harm measure. Participants who are not currently active in their sport and those who have previously been a college varsity athlete reported greater incidence across types of sexual harm indicated in the survey.

Participants were also asked, “In your governing body of sport, how frequently have coaches developed sexual relationships with an athlete (e.g., teammate or other athlete in your sport)?” Approximately 48% of athletes indicated that they had known of a sexual relationship between coaches and athletes. Figure 12 indicates how the athletes felt that this sexual relationship impacted themselves and other athletes, respectively. Nearly 32% of athletes surveyed indicated that a sexual relationship between a coach and another athlete at least slightly negatively impacted the coaching they received as an athlete. Similarly, about 56% reported a negative impact on the coaching other athletes receive when a coach has a sexual relationship with an athlete.

Figure 12. Impact of Coach-Athlete Sexual Relationships on Coaching Received



IMPACTS OF SEXUAL HARM

Key Findings

- Overall, athletes who experienced sexual harm reported that the biggest impacts included their perception of themselves being negatively impacted (37.5%), mental health suffering (33.9%), and their friendships and other important relationships being negatively impacted (31.4%).
- Nearly 68% of athletes who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact also indicated that they did not feel they had a confidential or supportive place within their governing body of sport to talk about their experiences.

Impacts of Sexual Harm

An Impacts of Sexual Harm score was calculated. The total score was made up of 22 no/yes questions. A response of “no” = 0 and a response of “yes” = 1. A total score was calculated for each participant by adding up all the “yes” responses and it ranged from 0 through 22. This total score was then averaged (M = mean) across key groups and the standard deviation (SD) from the mean score is included below. Nearly 63% of athlete participants experiencing sexual harm reported at least one negative outcome as a result.¹⁰

The following participants were more likely to report they were negatively impacted by the sexual harm they experienced when compared with their counterparts:

- **Race:** Black (M = 8.21, SD = 6.55) compared to Asian (M = 4.86, SD = 5.99), White (M = 4.18, SD = 5.25), Multi-racial (M = 4.14, SD = 5.20).
- **Sexual Orientation:** Asexual (M = 8.00, SD = 6.65) compared to bisexual (M = 5.14, SD = 5.82) and heterosexual (M = 4.08, SD = 5.19); Other sexual orientation than listed (M = 5.93, SD = 5.71) compared to heterosexual.
- **Gender Identity:** Gender nonconforming (M = 9.09, SD = 7.08) compared to men (M = 2.98, SD = 4.11) and women (M = 4.55, SD = 5.51); women compared to men
- **Disability:** Those with a self-reported disability (M = 6.58, SD = 5.84) compared to those without a disability (M = 4.15, SD = 5.28)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (M = 5.48, SD = 5.80) compared to those who were not a college varsity athlete (M = 3.80, SD = 5.07)

Summary of Impacts of Sexual Harm

Athletes reported significant negative impacts on their lives as a result of experience with sexual harm. Participants who were Black on average reported the greatest negative impacts, compared to athletes who were Asian, White, or multiracial. Athletes who identified as asexual or gender nonconforming on average reported the greatest negative impact, compared with those with other sexual orientations. Those who self-identified as having a disability, as well as those who have been a college varsity athlete, also had higher ratings of negative impact from sexual harm.

¹⁰ Standard deviation indicates how much scores vary from the mean. A higher number indicates more variation in scores among that group.

MENTAL HEALTH

Key Findings

- 34% of athletes reported mental health impacts as a result of experiencing sexual harm.
- 53.4% of athletes surveyed indicated experiencing at least one of six mental health indicators.
- Nearly half of all athlete participants reported experiencing depression or anxiety symptoms, whether their sport experience is past or present.
- Nearly 49% of athletes indicated that they have sought treatment to deal with mental health concerns.

Table 3. Presence of Mental Health Indicators

FACTOR	ITEM	PERCENT
Mental Health Symptoms	Struggle with depression or anxiety?	49.1%
	Engage in disordered eating behaviors (e.g., restrain, binging, purging)?	21.6%
	Struggle with another mental health concern?	21.4%
	Have suicidal thoughts?	16%
	Engage in self-harming behaviors (e.g., cutting, self-hitting, burning)?	5.9%
	Receive professional treatment related to disordered eating?	5.5%

MENTAL HEALTH

The following participants were **more likely to report mental health indicators** when compared with their counterparts:

- **Race:** Black (64.9%), Multiracial (64%), and White (54.6%) compared with Asian (50.9%), Hispanic (33.3%), or Other Race than listed (36.4%)
- **Sexual Orientation:** Bisexual (78.6%) compared with other sexual orientations (55.7%), asexual (54.3%), or heterosexual (53.5%)
- **Gender Identity:** Women (59.8%) and gender-nonconforming participants (65.5%) compared with men (37.8%)
- **Disability:** Those with a self-reported disability (67.3%) compared with those without a disability (52.8%)
- **College Varsity Athlete:** Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (61%) compared to those who were not a varsity athlete (51.7%)
- Athletes who experienced sexual harm reported mental health indicators significantly more than athletes who did not experience sexual harm (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Occurrence of Mental Health Indicators, by Sexual Harm Experience

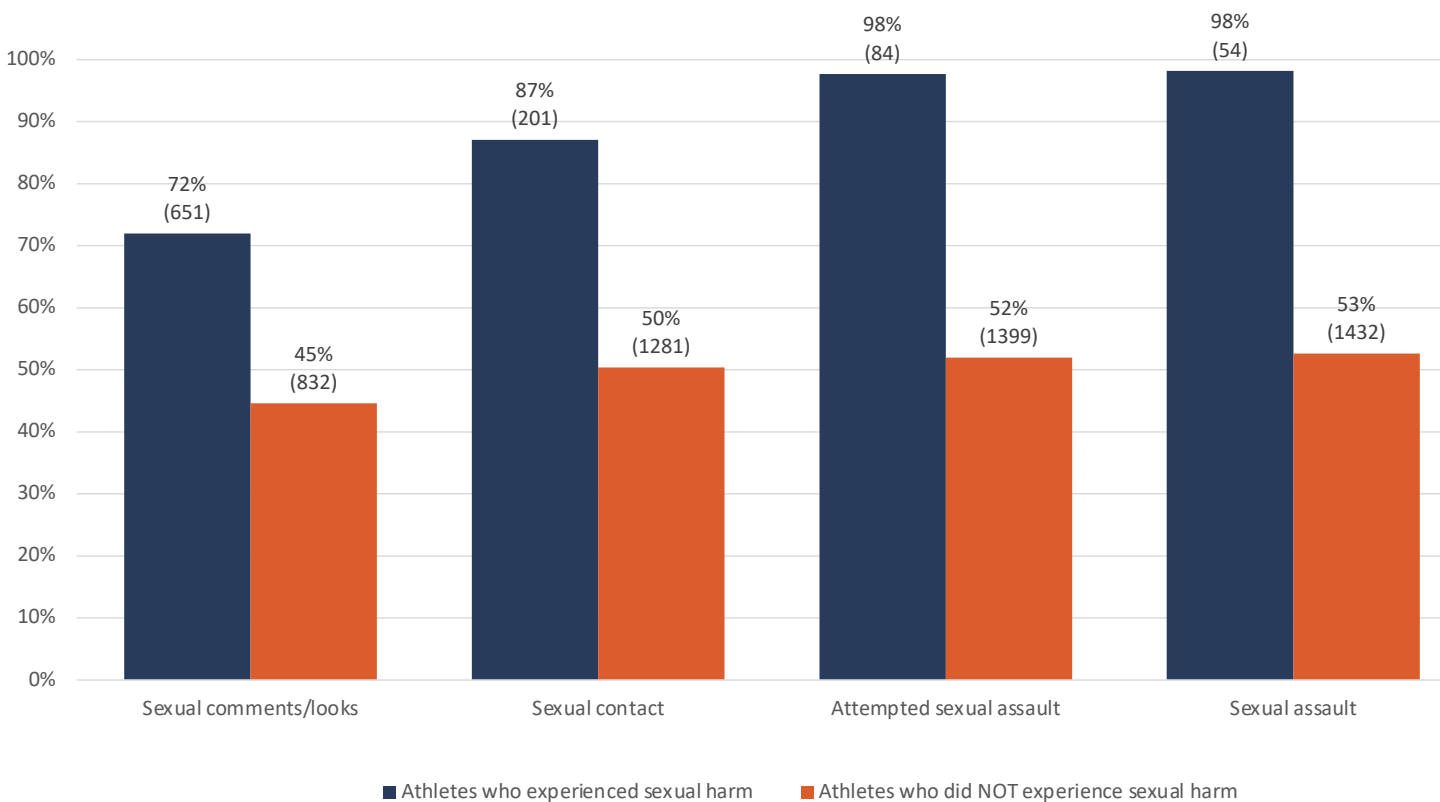
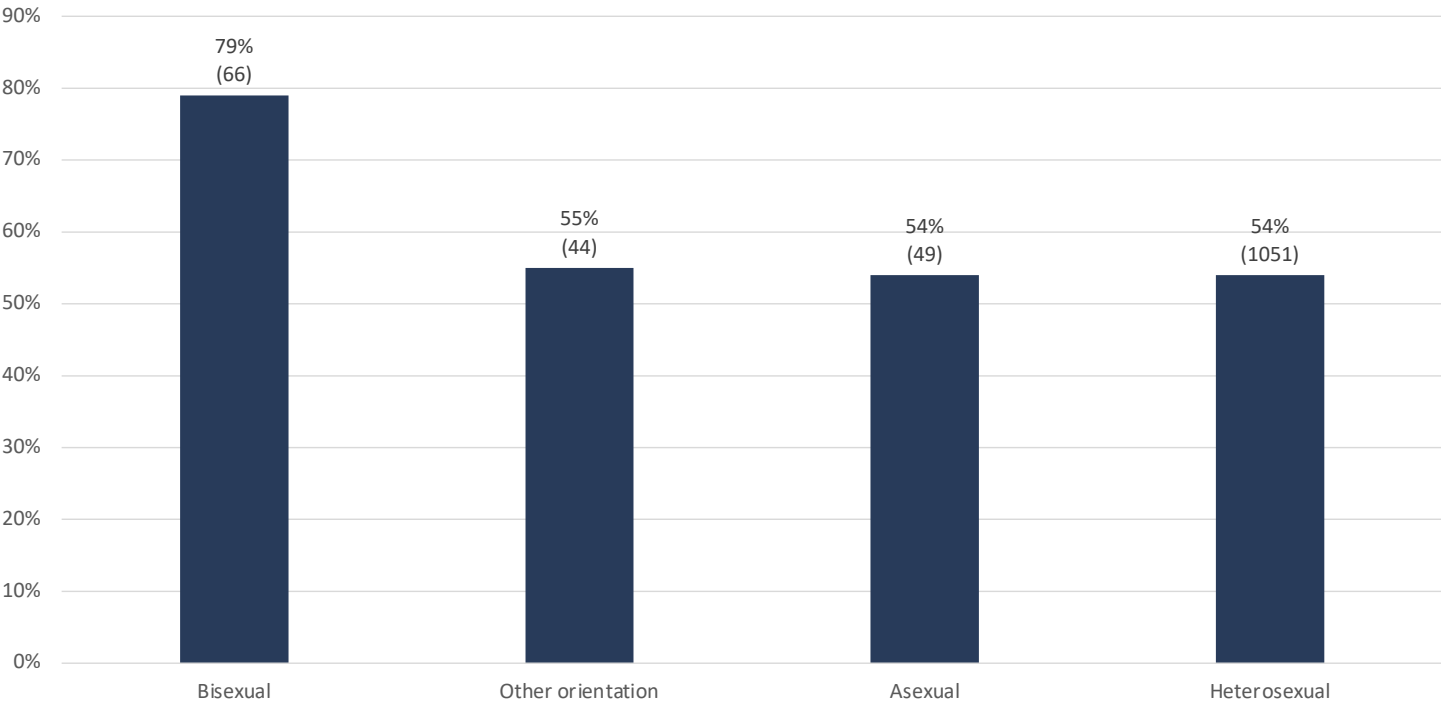


Figure 14. Occurrence of Mental Health Indicators, by Sexual Orientation



REPORTING SEXUAL HARM

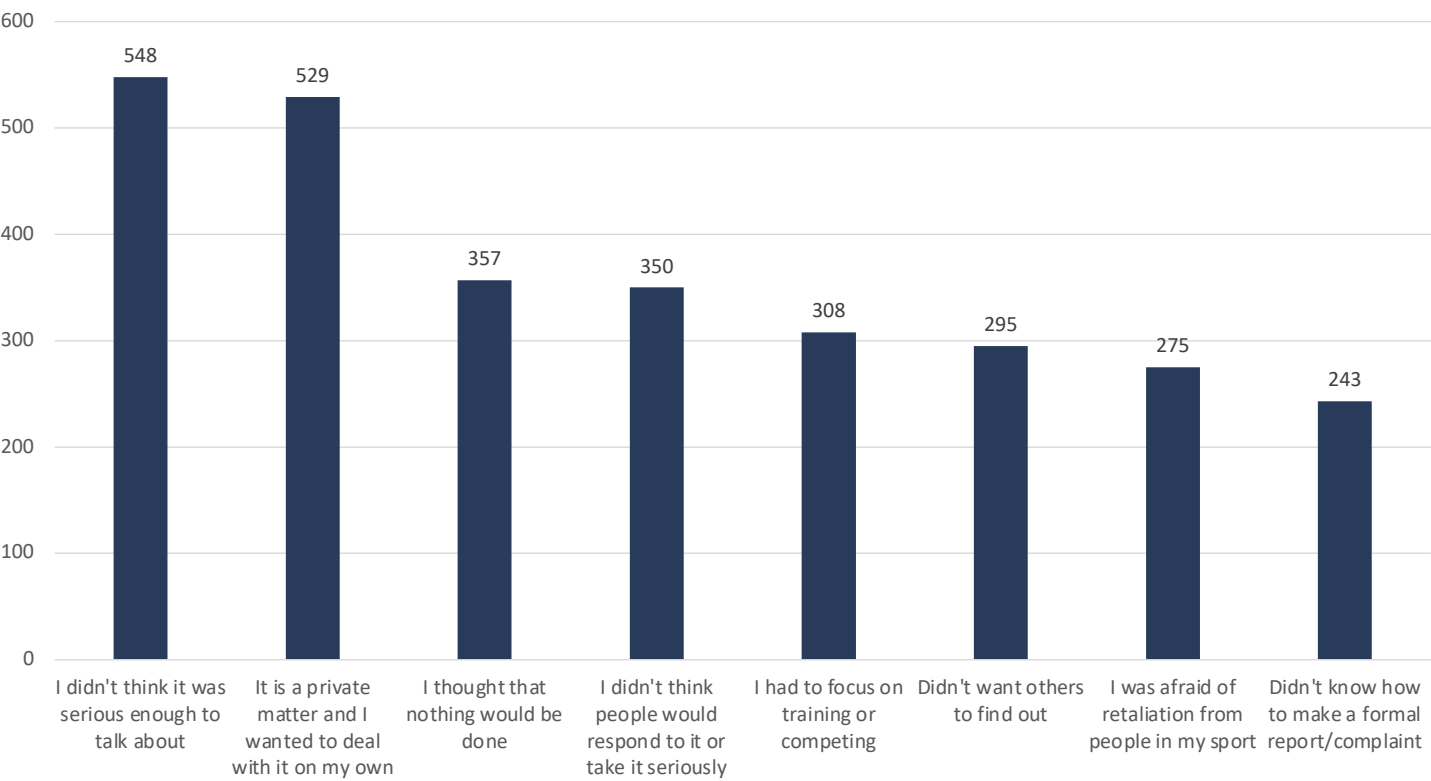
Key Findings

- Nearly 68% of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment indicated that they did not feel they had a place to talk about their experiences within their governing body of sport.
- 6.7% of athlete participants indicated that they had made a formal report/complaint about sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact they experienced during their involvement with the sport.
- Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (13.9%) were more likely to report their experience with sexual harm compared to those who have not been a varsity athlete (4.1%).

Reasons Why No Report/Complaint Was Made

832 participants did not submit a formal report/complaint about experiences with sexual harassment and sexual contact. These 832 participants were then asked to indicate possible reasons why a report was not made. Figure 15 reflects reasons why participants who had experiences related to sexual harm did not report it.

Figure 15. Top Reasons Why a Report/Complaint Was Not Made¹¹



¹¹ Total number of athletes who responded to these indicators (in a "select all that apply" manner) ranged from 763 to 779. Variation in indicator response rates is due to athletes skipping items and/or not completing the survey.

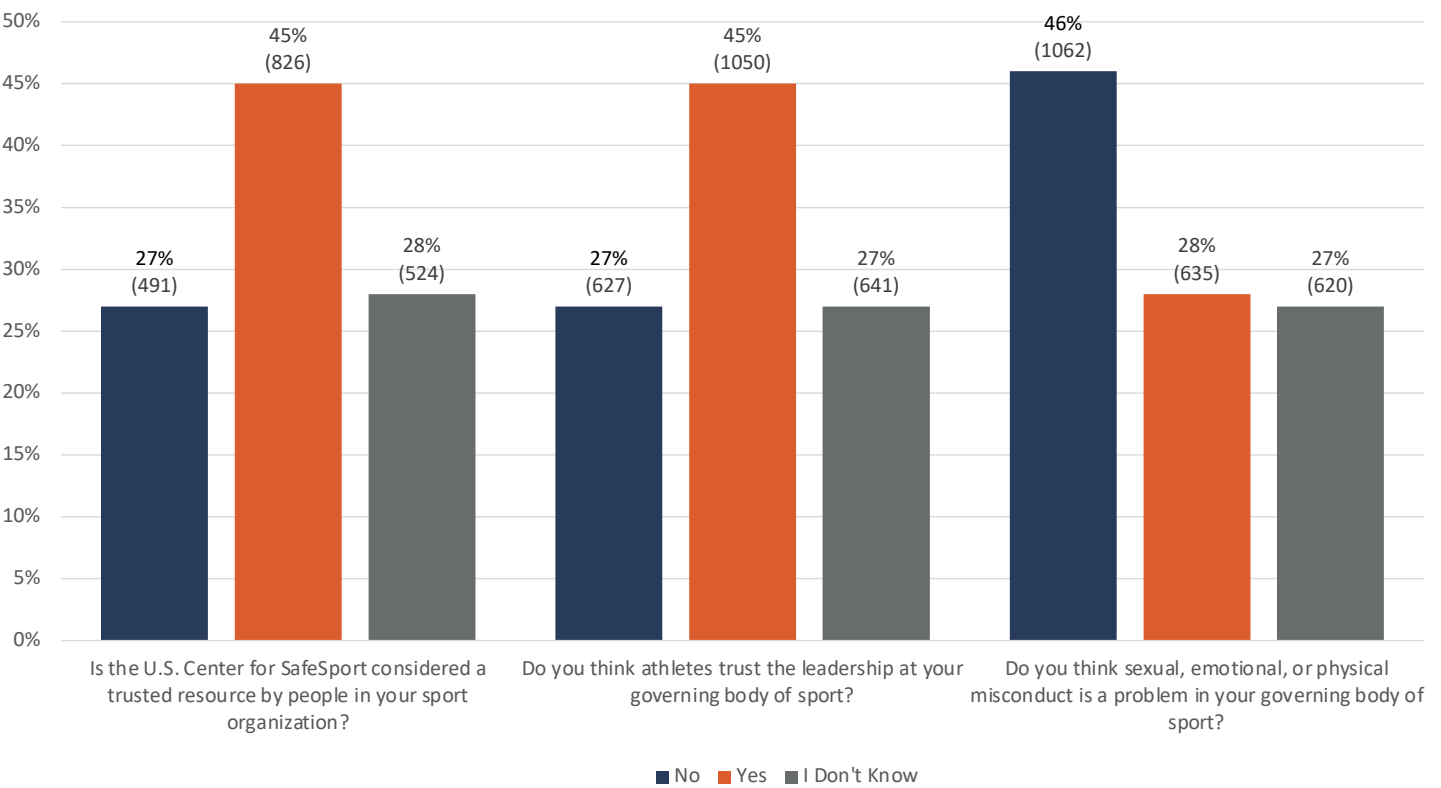
RESPONSE TO REPORTING SEXUAL HARM

Key Findings

- Nearly 70% of athlete participants indicated that, within both the Center and governing body of sport, they feel better off now because of the response from either organization.
- Approximately 45% of athlete participants believe that the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the leadership of their NGB is a trusted resource by individuals within their sport organization, compared with 27% who did not.
- 27.5% of athlete participants think sexual, emotional, or physical misconduct is a problem in their sport.

Nearly 45% of participants indicated that they believed the U.S. Center for SafeSport was considered a trusted resource by individuals within their sport organization, whereas 27% of participants indicated that it was not and 28% indicated “I don’t know.” 45% believed that athletes trust the leadership within their governing body of sport; 27% of participants indicated they did not, and 27% replied “I don’t know.”

Figure 16. Attitudes of Athlete Participants



RESOURCE KNOWLEDGE

Key Findings

- Nearly 79% of participants indicated having heard of the U.S. Center for SafeSport
- 41% of athletes indicated that they have NOT within the past 24 months received written or verbal information from anyone at their governing body of sport or the U.S. Center for SafeSport about how to report retaliation.
- Of the three types of abuse the Center addresses (sexual, physical, and emotional), knowing what emotional misconduct is and where to report it is less known than other forms of abuse.

Participants in the following demographics were more likely to be aware of the U.S. Center for SafeSport when compared with their counterparts:

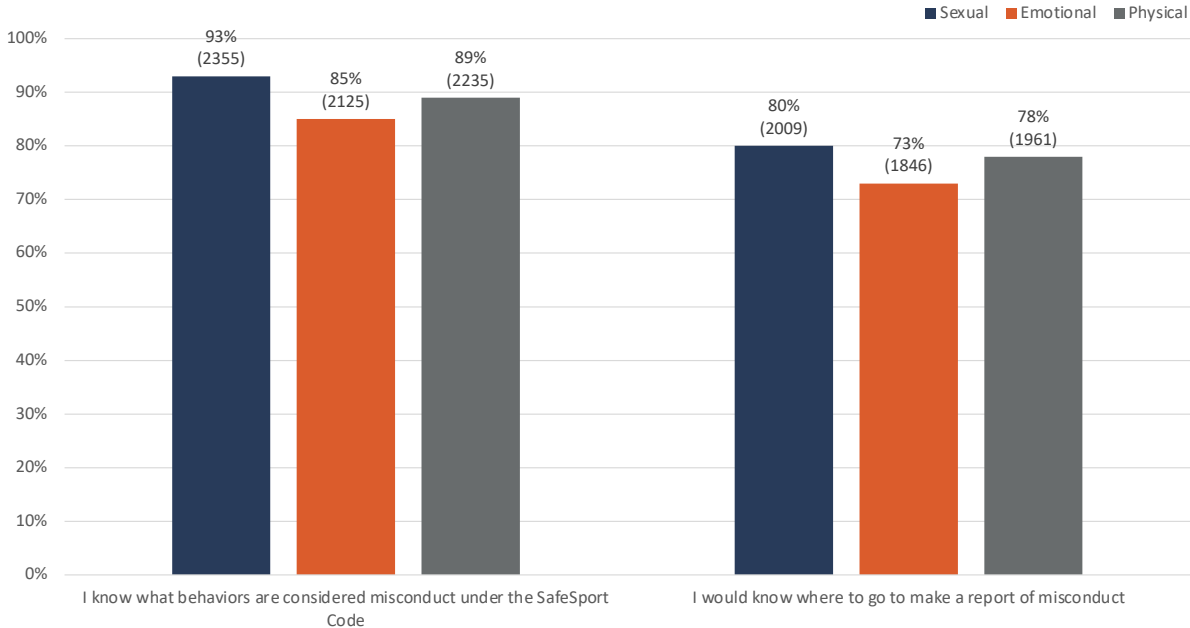
- **Race:** White (81%), compared with Other (75%), Asian (70.4%), Hispanic (70.9%), Black (70.2%), and Multiracial (69.3%)
- **Gender Identity:** Women (83.4%), compared with gender nonconforming (72.4%) and men (70.2%)

Findings: Behaviors & Where to Make a Report

Figure 17 shows the differences in participant recognition of what behaviors are considered sexual, emotional, or physical misconduct, and knowledge of where to make a report of abuse or misconduct.

Nearly 93% of participants reported knowing what behaviors are considered sexual misconduct and 80% indicated knowing where to make a report of sexual misconduct. In contrast, 85% and 73% of participants reported knowing what emotional misconduct is and where to report it, respectively. Approximately 89% of athletes noted knowing what behaviors are classified as physical misconduct, but only 78% reported knowing where to go to make a report of physical misconduct.

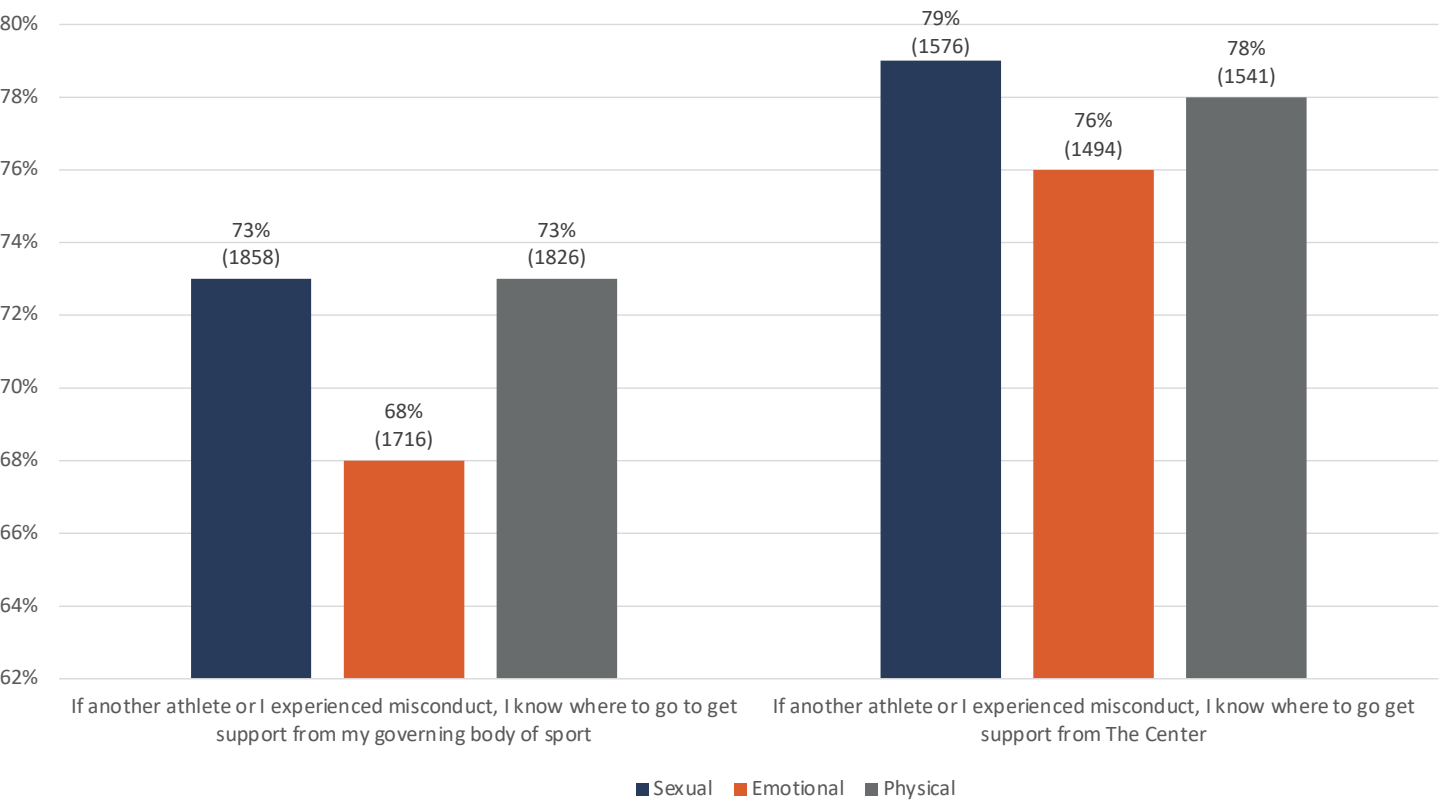
Figure 17. Knowledge Related to Reporting, by Type of Misconduct



RESOURCE KNOWLEDGE

Participants were asked to indicate if they would know how to get support from either their governing body of sport or the U.S. Center for SafeSport, if they or another athlete were to experience misconduct (Figure 18). Across the board, athletes indicated greater knowledge of where to go to receive support from the Center, most notably regarding sexual and physical misconduct. In contrast, fewer athletes reported knowing where to turn to receive support from their governing body of sport, least so in regard to emotional misconduct.

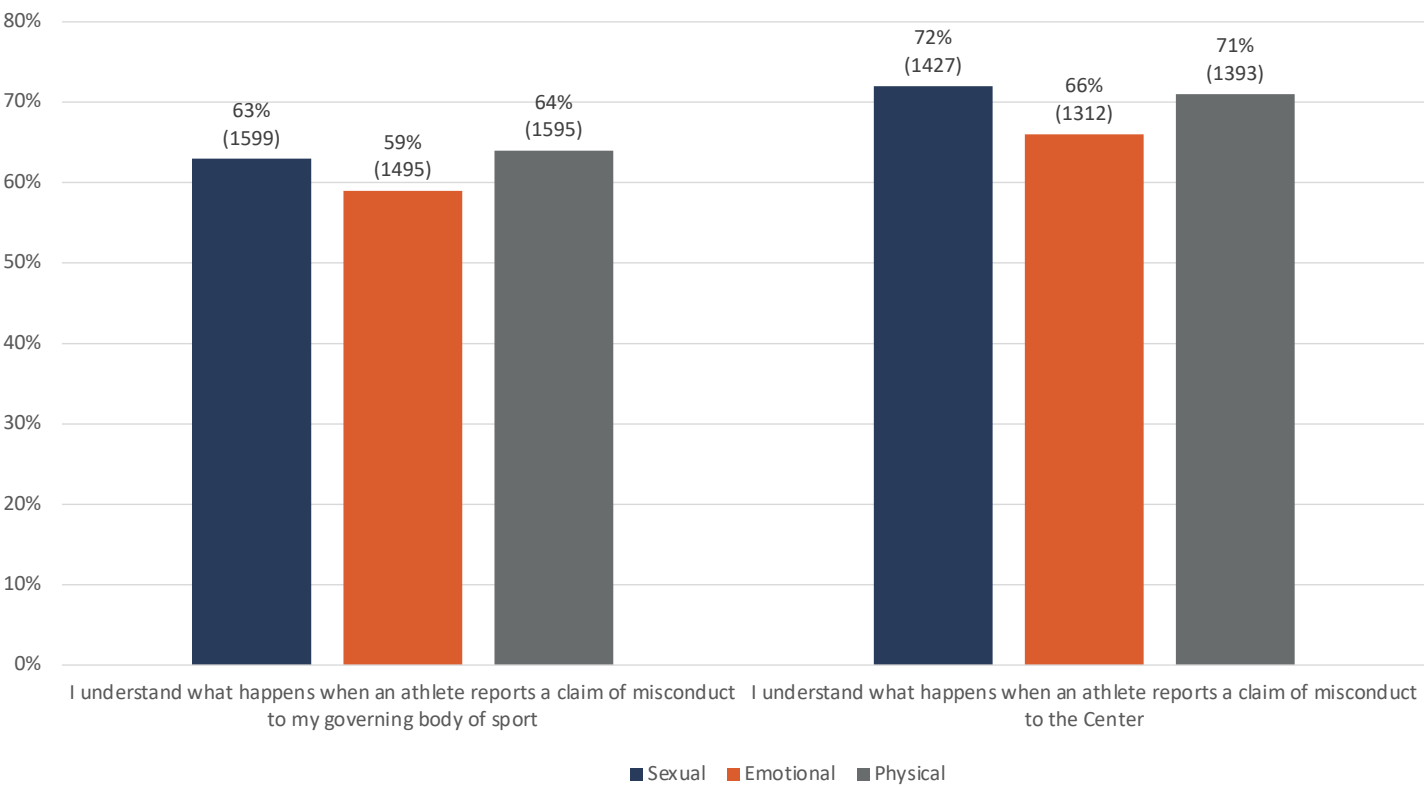
Figure 18. Knowledge of Where to Get Support from NGB or the Center, by Type of Misconduct



RESOURCE KNOWLEDGE

Athletes were also asked to indicate their level of understanding regarding what would happen when an athlete reports a claim of misconduct to either their governing body of sport or the U.S. Center for SafeSport (Figure 19). Athletes indicated greater understanding of what would happen if misconduct were reported to the Center. Similar to the previous two figures: when reporting to their governing body of sport, athletes indicated greater knowledge of what would happen when reporting sexual and physical misconduct than when reporting emotional misconduct.

Figure 19. Knowledge of What Happens When a Report is Made, by Type of Misconduct



NEXT STEPS AND KEY ACTIONS

This 2020 Athlete Culture & Climate Survey establishes baseline measures of key indicators of abuse and misconduct and related well-being aspects in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement. Going forward, this survey data will help us develop benchmarks—against which we can gauge progress in future culture surveys toward measurable and meaningful culture change in sport.

These survey results will inform specific actions and initiatives to promote better, safer sport cultures, and will align with other education and outreach and initiatives in the Center's 2021-23 Strategic Plan, including

1. Developing additional educational resources focused on reporting abuse, retaliation, and power imbalance
2. Establishing a web resource connecting athletes with available mental health resources
3. Developing a feedback mechanism to inform the Center's response and resolution process
4. Releasing an annual Public Impact report, starting in 2022, to provide insights on what we learn from athletes and updates on our progress
5. Releasing new video resources to better guide participants through the Center's Response and Resolution process
6. Evaluating the 2022 Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) implementation and impact, with feedback informing MAAPP updates planned for 2025
7. Publishing annual SafeSport audits of each NGB
8. Issuing a follow-up Culture Survey in 2023 to solicit continued feedback from athletes

The Center will also meet with individual athlete groups, National Governing Bodies, and sport groups to discuss the findings, share future prevention and outreach strategies, and solicit additional feedback from athletes. These conversations will further shape the Center's strategic path toward creating safer sport environments for all athletes.

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE OR MISCONDUCT

If you have experienced (or suspect) abuse or misconduct affecting someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement:

You can make a report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport by:

- Completing the secure form at [this page](#).
- Calling 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233): 24 hours; operator available 9am-5pm MT Mon-Fri

If you need live support or assistance at any time, contact the 24-hour SafeSport Helpline at 866-200-0796, staffed by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network in partnership with the Center.