
For Immediate Release

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Contact: media@safesport.org

New Bullying Prevention Handbook Developed for Youth Sport Coaches

Handbook released on National Stop Bullying Day, Bullying Prevention Month

Denver, CO – The U.S. Center for SafeSport (The Center) today released a new [Bullying Prevention Handbook](#). The handbook, which is tailored to coaches of minor athletes, provides useful tools to create safe and inclusive sporting environments for all athletes.

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) notes that 20% of students ages 12-18 experienced bullying. Those who experience bullying are at an increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic performance, and other negative outcomes according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

“Youth sports should be fun and confidence-boosting, but bullying can seriously impact an athlete’s physical and mental health,” Ju’Riese Colón, CEO, U.S. Center for SafeSport said. **“Using the Center’s bullying prevention handbook, caring and engaged coaches can foster supportive environments to help athletes thrive on and off the field.”**

The handbook’s core themes focus on how to:

- **Recognize Bullying Behavior:** Coaches can learn how to identify bullying behaviors common in youth sports, which can be physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, and may even rise to the level of criminal conduct. Coaches can also get information on how to be vigilant for athletes who might be at a greater risk of being bullied because of their body weight, LGBTQ identity, race, ethnicity, or disability. By recognizing inappropriate behaviors early on, coaches can be better prepared to intervene.
- **Prevent Bullying Behavior:** Coaches can gain strategies to prevent bullying in their programs by creating positive and inclusive environments, deploying trauma-sensitive coaching techniques, establishing strong organizational policies, and empowering bystanders to speak up in the face of unacceptable behavior by teammates.
- **Respond to Bullying Behavior:** The handbook advises coaches on creating a response plan based on organizational policies and also discusses considerations around reporting obligations to ensure any bullying of a sexual nature involving a minor is reported to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

“Since most youth do not tell an adult that they have been bullied, it is critical that coaches learn how to spot inappropriate behaviors early on,” said Monica Rivera, Vice President of Prevention Education, U.S. Center for SafeSport. **“We are providing coaches proven tools and tactics to create the most enriching sport experience possible for their players.”**

The handbook's release coincides with National Stop Bullying Day during National Bullying Prevention Month, which is meant to raise awareness and educate the public about bullying and cyberbullying prevention.

In addition to guidance provided in the handbook, the Center offers numerous educational resources to help parents, coaches, and others in the sport community recognize, prevent, and respond to abuse and misconduct. Other resources include:

- [Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Courses](#)
- [Emotional & Physical Misconduct Toolkit](#)
- [Parent & Guardian's Handbook for Safer Sport](#)

Need for Abuse Prevention in Sport

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is the nation's only independent organization dedicated to ending sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport. The Center emerged in response to high profile cases of sexual abuse of minor athletes within Olympic and Paralympic sport in the mid-2010s. With the mission of making athlete wellbeing the centerpiece of the nation's sport culture, the Center has since been setting safety policies and receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints of abuse and misconduct. The Center also serves as an educational resource for sports organizations at all levels, from recreational sports organizations to professional leagues.

With the goal of ensuring athletes within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement are safe, supported, and strengthened, the Center:

- Establishes safety policies, including the [SafeSport Code](#) and the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies \(MAAPP\)](#).
- Investigates and resolves allegations of abuse and misconduct in a neutral manner, and levies sanctions, including temporary and permanent bans from sport.
- Delivers comprehensive abuse prevention education within and outside of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

About the U.S. Center for SafeSport

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 codified the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center), a Denver, Colorado based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, as the nation's safe sport organization. It furthered the Center's independence while underscoring its authority to hold individuals accountable. It also charged the Center with developing policies, procedures, and training to prevent abuse and misconduct to protect the 11 million individuals affiliated with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

In October of 2020, the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 became law, even further strengthening the Center's independence and oversight functions while mandating minimum funding requirements for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

The Center opened its doors in March of 2017.

Reporting and Resources

[Report here](#) to the U.S. Center for SafeSport if you have experienced abuse or misconduct—or if you have reasonable suspicion of abuse or misconduct inflicted on, or by, someone in the U.S. Olympic and

Paralympic Movement. You can also call 833-587-7233 to make a report.

If a situation does not involve sport or anyone within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, you can contact [RAINN's 24/7](#) online hotline or call 800-656-HOPE (4673).

For anyone in crisis, the [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides 24/7 free and confidential support at 988lifeline.org or by calling 988.

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