

For Immediate Release

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Contact: media@safesport.org**SafeSport Announces New Anti-Bullying Resource**

In recognition of Bullying Prevention Month, the Center's latest resource provides tangible steps for shifting sport culture and interrupting cycles of bullying behavior

DENVER—In recognition of Bullying Prevention Month, the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](https://www.uscenterforsafesport.org/) (the Center) today announced the release of a new resource, [Could My Kid be the Bully](#). Going beyond tools that often focus solely on the child who is being bullied, the new resource seeks to address the broader culture around bullying and provides tangible actions to interrupt cycles of bullying.

“Shifting culture isn't about ignoring or making excuses for bad behavior,” said Monica Rivera, Vice President, Education & Research at the Center. **“Shaping a new narrative means reframing our approach to kids who bully not as villains but as kids in distress. All athletes who bully need adult intervention.”**

The resource, [Could My Kid be the Bully: Four Steps to Changing the Cultural Narrative Around Bullying](#), is designed for parents, guardians, coaches, and other adults who work with young people, particularly youth athletes. Tangible recommendations that put bullying prevention into action are provided as part of the four steps summarized below.

- **Step 1: Examining Our Assumptions about Bullies**
We won't feel compelled to connect with an athlete who might be on the path to bullying if we don't first interrupt the assumptions we make, and recognize that there are reasons (not excuses, but reasons) behind bullying.
- **Step 2: Recognizing How Sport Culture Is a Perfect Environment for Bullying**
There is a fine line between peer influence and peer pressure; between gaining responsibility and taking advantage of unfair power dynamics; between playful team bonding and teasing; and between peer feedback and targeted criticism. Common elements of sport culture can cross quickly into harmful behavior.
- **Step 3: Learning the Warning Signs**
Warning signs of bullying are not indications of a ‘bad kid.’ These are signals that a child might have unmet needs that could lead to bullying. Bullying often masks pain. And while this isn't an excuse, it is an important clue.
- **Step 4: Recognizing How Sport Culture Is a Perfect Environment to STOP Bullying**

In sport, character building is not simply a byproduct. It's a fundamental component of sport culture, particularly in youth sport. This makes sport a perfect environment for directly intervening early in the behaviors of an athlete who is struggling.

The new resource builds on the Center's existing tools, including the [Bullying Prevention Handbook](#), [Bullying 101: Understanding and Responding](#), and the [Coaches' Bullying Behavior Discussion Guide](#). These resources and more can be found on the Center's [Prevent Bullying in Sport webpage](#).

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 well-being 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 and levies sanctions, including temporary and permanent bans from Olympic and Paralympic Sport.
- Delivers comprehensive abuse prevention education within and outside of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.
- Implements a comprehensive audit and compliance function over all National Governing Bodies (NGBs) within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement to ensure adherence to safety, abuse prevention, and accountability standards.

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), 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 in sport.

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 by someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. You can also leave a message by calling the Center at: 833-587-7233.

[RAINN's 24/7 online hotline](#) is available for crisis intervention, referrals, or emotional support at any time. You can also call RAINN at: 800-656-HOPE (4673).

The [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides 24/7 free and confidential support at 988lifeline.org or by calling 988.

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