

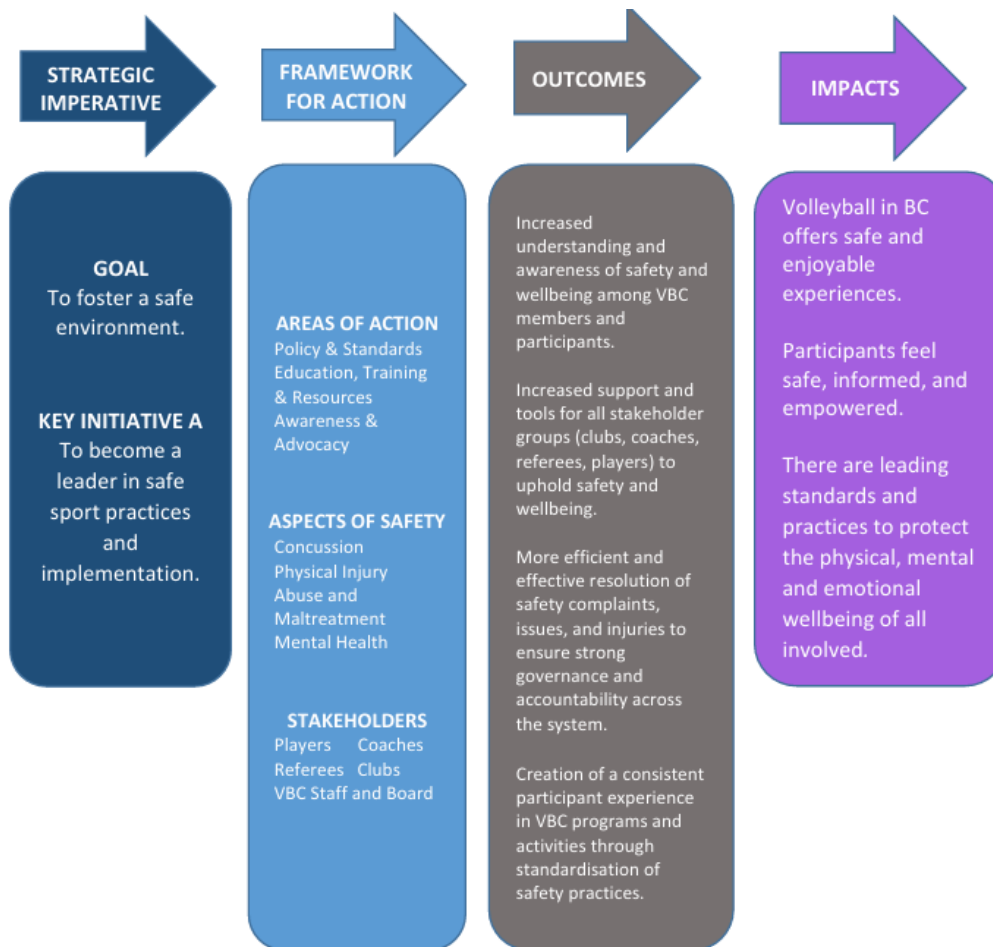


## SAFE SPORT ACTION PLAN 2022-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT REPORT

The Safe Sport Action Plan addressed issues and actions to promote safe sport across the 4 different aspects of safety and well-being listed below.

We developed the framework on the right to direct our work, focusing on 3 Areas of Action: Policy & Standards, Education, Training & Resources, and Awareness & Advocacy.

Concussion  
Physical Injury  
Abuse & Maltreatment  
Mental Health



In March 2022, we launched our Safe Sport Action Plan 2022-2025.

This work was in support of our Strategic Plan's goal of **"Fostering a Safe Environment"** in which *"there are leading standards and practices to protect the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of all involved."* The Plan was the result of extensive consultation with players, coaches, referees, and clubs about safety in volleyball in BC.

We have now concluded the 3-year span of this Safe Sport Action Plan. As part of our commitment to sharing with the volleyball community, this report summarises the achievements and impacts of the work undertaken to move the Plan forward.

It takes a community - and we are grateful for the support of our members, partners, Committees, Board, and staff who contributed to these accomplishments.

We particularly acknowledge the hard work and oversight of the Safe Sport Working Group. Thank you!

February 2025

## A. CONCUSSION

### WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Between 4-6% of our respondents said they had received a concussion or head injury while participating in volleyball which was relatively low compared with injury types.
- Coaches and Referees felt that they had the most amount of resources, support and knowledge about physical injury and concussion and head injury.
- Concussion incidence and mechanism among youth volleyball players (May 2017) - 57.1% of all concussions involved ball-to-head contact. Player-to-player contact and head-to-floor contact were less prevalent at 20.2% and 15.5%, respectively. In total, 61.6% of concussions occurred outside of competitive game play, in a more structured environment of practice or warm-up.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

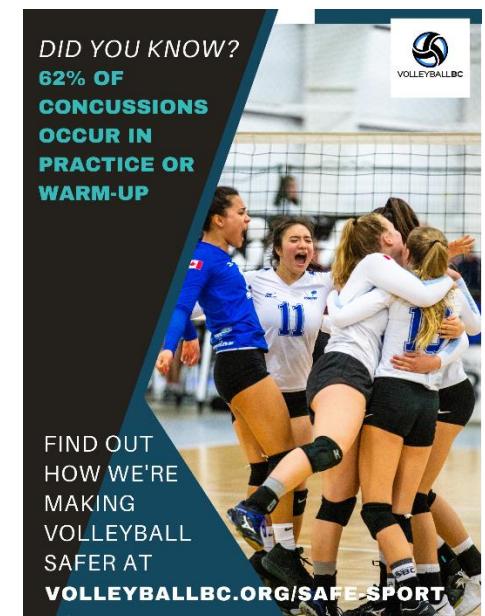
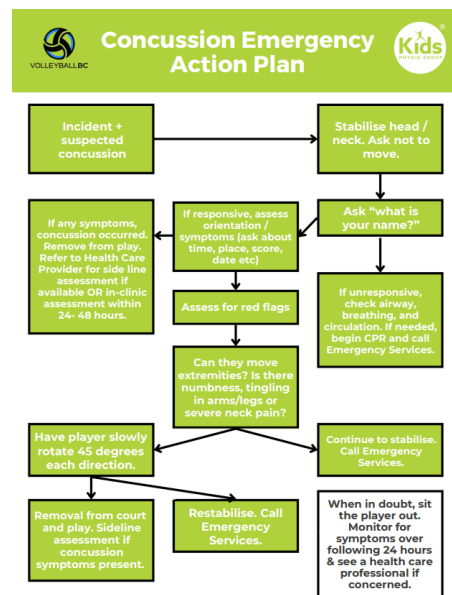
POLICY & STANDARDS	EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES	AWARENESS & ADVOCACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Promote a standard definition of concussion.</li><li>➤ Develop a Concussion Statement and protocols.</li><li>➤ Clarify roles and responsibilities for recognising and reporting concussion symptoms.</li><li>➤ Integrate concussion policies, procedures &amp; practices into all VBC programs and activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Embed concussion protocol into training of VBC coaches.</li><li>➤ Develop a Club Guide to best practice.</li><li>➤ Annual review of Canadian Harmonized Sport Concussion Protocol Checklist.</li><li>➤ Develop tailored Concussion Guides for different member groups.</li><li>➤ Promote and develop Return to Sport protocols.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Promote definition of concussion and the importance of the early detection of symptoms.</li><li>➤ Create a designated area on VBC website which features concussion education, awareness and resources.</li><li>➤ Promote 7 steps of Concussion Management.</li><li>➤ Build a resource bank of all current concussion resources.</li><li>➤ Ensure consistent signage and visuals in place at all VBC events.</li></ul>

## 2022-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Completed a review of best practices, resources, and tools on concussion in volleyball.
- ✓ Worked with Kids Physio Group to develop a definition of concussion and supporting materials including:
  - A [Concussion Statement and Protocol](#) for our clubs, coaches, parents, and any individual who interacts with athletes.
  - [Concussion Information Sheet](#) for parents and athletes.
  - Concussion [Emergency Action Plan](#) outlining steps and responsibilities in the event of a concussion.
  - [Pre-Season Concussion Education sheet](#) for athletes and parents.
- ✓ Developed [Return to Play Guidelines](#) to support careful recovery post-concussion.
- ✓ Created a [dedicated website page](#) on a new Safety Hub to share concussion education, awareness and resources.
- ✓ Created and shared “Did You Know?” posters and signage for Indoor Provincial Championships to raise awareness of concussion.
- ✓ Annually recognized and promoted Concussion Awareness Week using website, e-newsletter, and social media.
- ✓ Collated and monitored data about concussion and physical injury at Indoor Provincial Championships to track incidences in our community.
- ✓ Shared materials and resources with clubs, coaches, and referees to support their important roles in this area.

### PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Integration into VBC policies and procedures
- Training of VBC staff and coaches
- Monitoring & data collection within community
- Ongoing sharing of resources & best practices
- Promotion and advocacy



## B. PHYSICAL INJURY

### WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Physical injury was listed as the top risk perceived to individual safety by Players, Coaches, and Club Directors.
- Over 80% of respondents had experienced an injury during participation in volleyball. Most had experienced an ankle, shoulder or arm injury. Referees were the least likely to be injured.
- Coaches and Referees felt that they had the most amount of resources, support and knowledge about physical injury and concussion and head injury.
- In our Focus Groups, both Female and Male athletes identified physical injury prevention and recovery as the most pressing area for athlete safety. However, they also said that they felt that volleyball is meeting athlete needs well in this area.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

POLICY & STANDARDS	EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES	AWARENESS & ADVOCACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Establish clear explanations of physical injury in volleyball.</li><li>➤ Complete further analysis of physical safety in volleyball using recommended assessment tools.</li><li>➤ Identify and implement ways to more rigorously capture data on physical injury at VBC activities.</li><li>➤ Develop VBC policies, protocols and procedures for physical injury prevention and management.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Embed physical injury protocols and procedures into onboarding of VBC coaches.</li><li>➤ Support clubs in establishing protocols for injury prevention and management.</li><li>➤ Develop tailored Physical Injury Guides for specific members.</li><li>➤ Develop pre-season preparedness guide for participants.</li><li>➤ Facilitate access to additional training courses for our members.</li><li>➤ Identify appropriate training for VBC staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Develop a communications plan to promote physical injury awareness, prevention and management.</li><li>➤ Create a designated area on website which features physical injury awareness.</li><li>➤ Place visual reminders at all VBC events.</li><li>➤ Develop and share specific injury information for different ages / stages to all participant groups and gender variances.</li></ul>

## 2022-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Completed a review of best practices, resources, and tools on physical injuries in volleyball.
- ✓ Worked with Kids Physio Group to develop educational resources on physical injury including:
  - [Information sheets](#) on common volleyball injuries: Finger and Thumb Sprains, Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy, Patella Tendinopathy, ACL Tears, Ankle Sprains, Shoulder Dislocation, and Low Back Pain.
- ✓ Created a [dedicated website page](#) on a new Safety Hub to share physical injury education, awareness and resources.
- ✓ Created and shared “Did You Know?” posters and signage for Indoor Provincial Championships to raise awareness of physical injury.
- ✓ Annually recognized and promoted [National Injury Prevention Day](#) using website, e-newsletter, and social media.
- ✓ Collated and monitored data about physical injury at Indoor Provincial Championships to track incidences in our community.
- ✓ Shared materials and resources with clubs, coaches, and referees to support their important roles in this area.

### PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Creation of policies, protocols and procedures as best practice for our members, including club resources
- Integration into VBC policies and procedures
- Training of VBC staff and coaches
- Monitoring & data collection within community
- Ongoing sharing of resources & best practices
- Promotion and advocacy

### Common Volleyball Injuries FINGER AND THUMB SPRAINS

Finger and thumb sprains, prevalent among athletes, result from the injury of ligaments in these digits, often happening during actions like blocking or digging in sports. These injuries typically occur when fingers or thumbs make contact with a fast-moving ball. Among these incidents, the most frequent is the harm to ligaments situated at the base of the thumb, known as the 1st metacarpal phalangeal joint.

#### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Common symptoms include pain, swelling, bruising, and tenderness in the affected digit. These are typical markers of the injury and serve as signals of the trauma inflicted upon the ligaments in the fingers or thumb. The presence of these symptoms often accompanies the sprain, alerting individuals to the injury.

#### Note:

Every individual has different weaknesses & strengths. It is highly recommended to have an individualized, well-rounded strength training program to have appropriate loading progressions. Education and formation of such a program can be provided by a physical therapist/athletic trainer/kinesiologist.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**ANKLE SPRAINS,  
AND KNEE &  
SHOULDER  
INJURIES ARE THE  
MOST COMMON  
INJURIES**

FIND OUT  
HOW WE'RE  
MAKING  
VOLLEYBALL  
SAFER AT  
**VOLLEYBALLBC.ORG/SAFE-SPORT**



## C. ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

### WHAT WE LEARNED...

- 63% of respondents said that psychologically/emotionally harming behaviours are a problem in volleyball. 50% of respondents said that a negative focus on body image and weight is a problem in volleyball. 41-44% of Adult and Youth Players stated that behaviour that is physically harming is an issue compared with 58-59% of Coaches and Club Directors. 49% of respondents felt that bullying was a problem. 44% of all respondents felt that discriminatory remarks or behaviour are an issue in our sport.
- Male respondents were slightly more likely to say all 5 behaviours associated with Abuse and Maltreatment are an issue in our sport.
- Coaches, Club Directors, and Referees rated all 5 behaviours as more of a significant issue than Adult and Youth Players.
- Referees overwhelmingly selected verbal abuse, bullying and harassment as the biggest safety risk to their individual safety.
- Coaches and Referees indicated that mental health and abuse & maltreatment are areas where they have least resources, support and knowledge.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

POLICY & STANDARDS	EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES	AWARENESS & ADVOCACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish meaningful and clear definitions of abuse, maltreatment and appropriate/inappropriate behaviour in volleyball.</li> <li>➤ Define and communicate the roles, responsibilities and support of all volleyball participants in eliminating abuse and maltreatment.</li> <li>➤ Increase awareness and understanding of the Volleyball BC Code of Conduct and Ethics.</li> <li>➤ Develop and promote policies and procedures to encourage a shared understanding of appropriate behaviours and issue resolution.</li> <li>➤ Maintain clear, effective, and confidential reporting and resolution mechanisms.</li> <li>➤ Review the governance, relationships, and structures within the volleyball system to identify risks and opportunities.</li> <li>➤ Create additional and tailored standards, policies, and resources for different members within the volleyball system.</li> <li>➤ Educate and promote holistic development and standards for each age and stage in volleyball.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Embed safe sport training and education into all Volleyball BC programs and activities.</li> <li>➤ Develop and launch a Safe Sport Handbook for volleyball.</li> <li>➤ Support and monitor completion of safe sport requirements by all Positions In Authority.</li> <li>➤ Promote and support positive and appropriate coaching standards and behaviour.</li> <li>➤ Identify specific training and resources for referees to recognise and address abuse and maltreatment.</li> <li>➤ Create specific resources for parents in volleyball to support their understanding and role in promoting safe sport.</li> <li>➤ Develop club-specific toolkit to support implementation of safe sport practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and implement a communications plan to increase awareness of safe sport and resources.</li> <li>➤ Create an online resource hub with information, support and resources on abuse and maltreatment.</li> <li>➤ Deliver a youth-focused campaign for awareness and education around abuse and maltreatment.</li> <li>➤ Create tailored campaigns to target specific behaviours and/or groups in volleyball.</li> <li>➤ Promote holistic development and standards for each age and stage in volleyball.</li> </ul>

## 2022-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Developed and launched a [Safe Sport Handbook](#) for players, coaches and referees, with a revised version for volleyball clubs.
- ✓ Created a dedicated [Youth Handbook](#), a [Coach Guide to Safe Sport](#), and a [series of handouts](#) on different aspects of preventing maltreatment.
- ✓ Adopted and shared [specific policies](#) to address abuse and maltreatment, including Pan-Canadian suite of policies, Athlete Safety Policy, Referee Safety Policies, and Whistleblower Policy.
- ✓ Promotion and use of an Independent Third Party ([ITP Sport](#)) to handle all complaints and issues relating to abuse and maltreatment. Developed clear information for members about [how to file a complaint](#) in multiple languages.
- ✓ Member of viaSport BC's Safe Sport Advisory Group and Volleyball Canada's Safe Sport Working Group.
- ✓ Implemented and monitored completion of Person In Authority Checks for all coaches, administrators, managers, referees, and staff participating in club volleyball so to ensure safety of all participants
- ✓ Integrated training into onboarding of all VBC staff and Board with completion of [Commit 2 Kids training](#) and the [CAC Safe Sport module](#).
- ✓ Created a [dedicated website page](#) on a new Safety Hub to share information on abuse, maltreatment, and associated behaviours
- ✓ Created and shared "Did You Know?" posters and signage for Indoor Provincial Championships to raise awareness of abuse and maltreatment.
- ✓ Annually recognized and promoted [Pink Shirt Day/ #erasebullying](#), using website, e-newsletter, and social media.

### PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Creation of policies, protocols and procedures as best practice for our members, including club resources
- Integration of safety procedures and checklists into VBC staff training
- Monitoring & data collection within community
- Ongoing sharing of resources & best practices
- Promotion and advocacy



## D. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Fear of Failure and General Life Stress negatively impact Youth and Adult Players, Coaches and Referees, Males and Females.
- Concerns about Body Appearance was rated significantly higher by female than by male participants.
- Mental Exhaustion was the top factor listed by all respondents as being experienced during a volleyball season.
- Coaches and Referees indicated that mental health and abuse and maltreatment are the areas where they have the least resources, support and knowledge.
- Mental Health is a broad and complex term which was highlighted by the multiple different aspects that participants talked about. Further work is needed to better understand how we can better support and resource this area.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

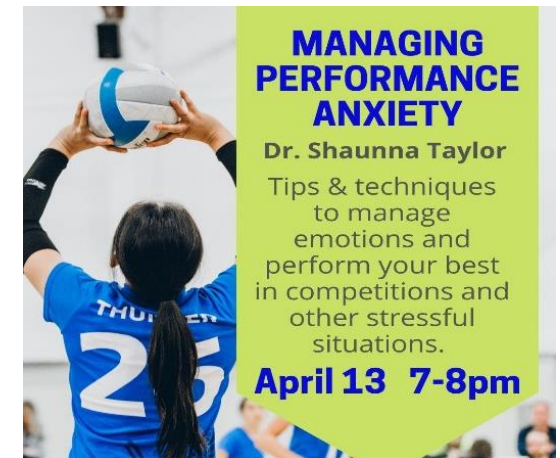
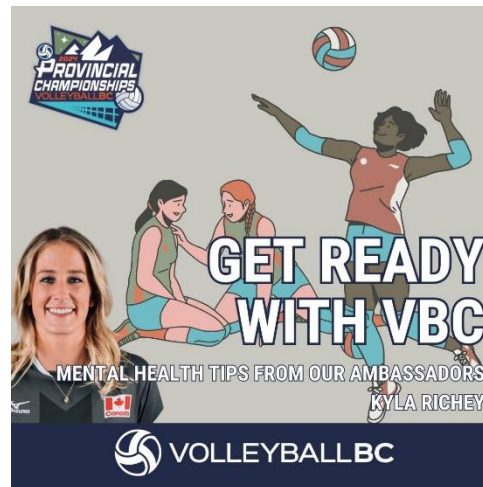
POLICY & STANDARDS	EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES	AWARENESS & ADVOCACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Establish a position statement with meaningful and clear definitions of mental health and well-being in volleyball</li><li>➤ Research further the mental health and well-being issues and needs of volleyball participants, particularly for males.</li><li>➤ Develop and promote policies and procedures to encourage a shared understanding of mental well-being and support for individuals.</li><li>➤ Create tailored standards, policies, and resources for different members within the volleyball system.</li><li>➤ Educate and communicate appropriate mental, social and emotional development for each age and stage in volleyball.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Produce a Guide to Mental Health and Well-being in volleyball</li><li>➤ Acknowledge and provide support for the top 5 issues impacting well-being in volleyball.</li><li>➤ Support coaches to champion mental health and well-being in their players, teams and themselves.</li><li>➤ Embed awareness and resources about mental health and well-being into all Volleyball BC programs and activities.</li><li>➤ Create and deliver a targeted campaign for positive body image and acceptance.</li><li>➤ Identify specific training and resources for referees to recognise and address mental health and well-being.</li><li>➤ Develop club-specific toolkit to support positive mental health.</li><li>➤ Create role- specific resources for parents in volleyball.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Develop and implement an annual communications plan to increase awareness of mental health and sport.</li><li>➤ Create an online resource hub with information, support and resources on mental health and well-being.</li><li>➤ Deliver a youth-focused campaign on mental health and well-being in volleyball.</li><li>➤ Create tailored campaigns to target specific mental health concerns and/or groups in volleyball</li></ul>

## 2022-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Launched [Mental Health Toolkit](#) based on 6 pillars with resources and tools to promote mental health and well-being within clubs and programs.
- ✓ Recruited and initiated a Mental Health Ambassadors program, featuring 4 well-known individuals in the volleyball community.
- ✓ Delivered a Mental Health Leadership Pilot Program with 8 organisations & 5 online sessions to encourage use of the Mental Health Toolkit.
- ✓ Created Mental Health Emergency Action Plan and supporting procedures for clubs, coaches, and leaders in the event of mental health situations.
- ✓ [Mental Wellness Webinar Series](#) held for 3 years covering key topics such as performance anxiety, managing team dynamics, body image, and other issues identified in the Annual Member Surveys. Included several dedicated webinars held for coaches and referees.
- ✓ Activated a [Buddy Check for Jesse](#) campaign during Provincial Championships to create awareness for mental health in sport.
- ✓ Created a dedicated [website page](#) on a new Safety Hub to share information on abuse, maltreatment, and associated behaviours
- ✓ Created and shared “Did You Know?” posters and signage for Indoor Provincial Championships to raise awareness of mental health and well-being.
- ✓ Annually promoted [Bell Let's Talk](#), [World Mental Health Day](#) and [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) in website, e-newsletter, and social media.

### PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Integration into VBC policies and procedures
- Training of VBC staff and coaches
- Monitoring & data collection within community
- Ongoing sharing of resources & best practices
- Promotion and advocacy



*What happens next?*

Over the last 3 years, we achieved the majority of the activities that we outlined in the Safe Sport Action Plan. However, safety still remains a priority and commitment for Volleyball BC.

In 2025 we will be developing a **new framework to integrate safety, diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility** across our work. Visit <https://volleyballbc.org/about/strategic-initiatives/> to see the new framework when it is launched.

- Volleyball BC