VOLLEYBALLBC

SAFE SPORT HANDBOOK

FOR PLAYERS, COACHES, REFEREES & CAREGIVERS

Useful information and practical tips for participating in safe volleyball experiences.

VOLLEYBALLBC

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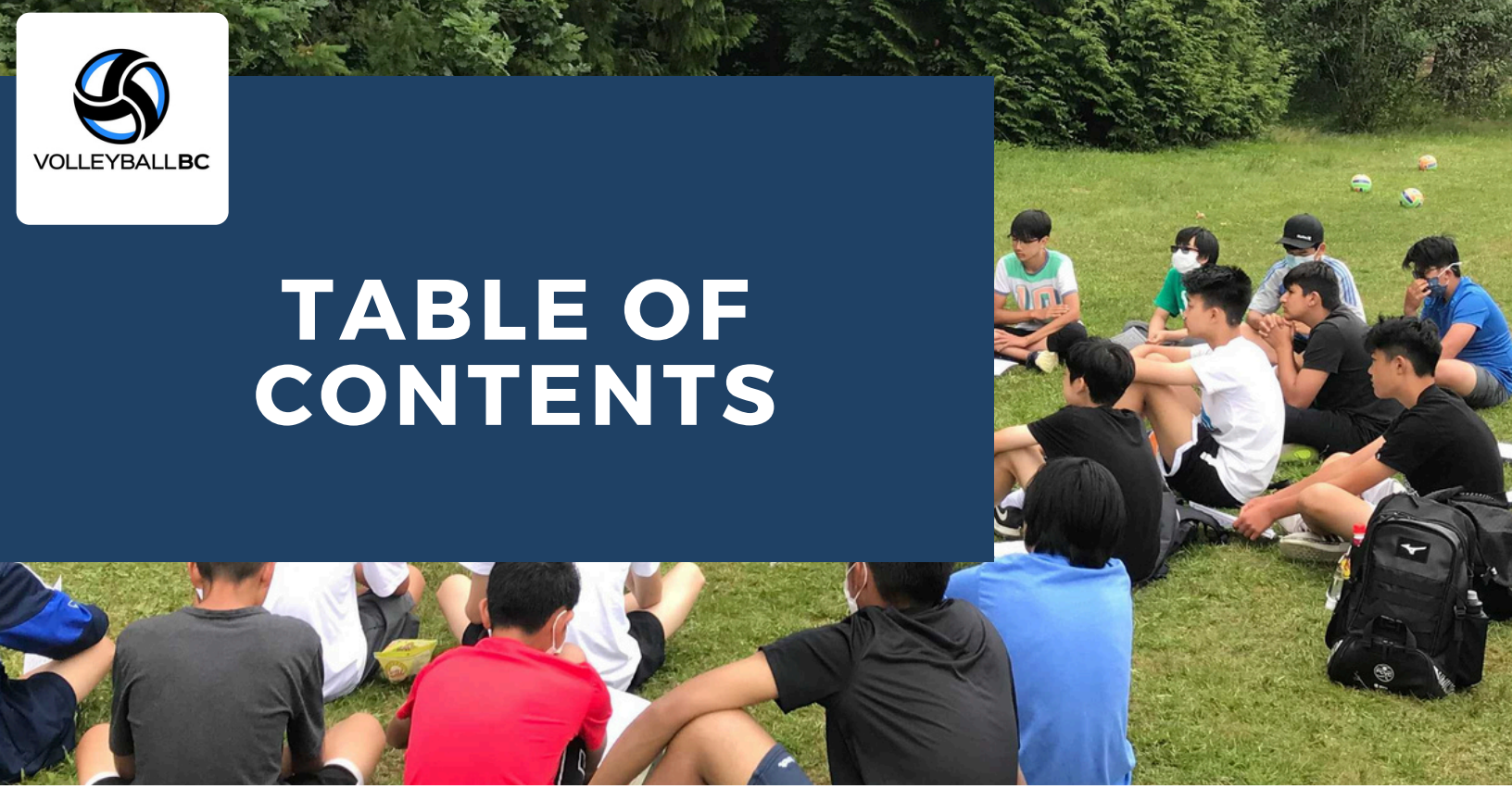

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INTRODUCTION

Sport has the power to positively change lives and build communities - but it can only do this when the experience places physical, social, and emotional well-being at the very core. Over the past years, it has become evident that the sport system does not always do this. The pursuit of excellence and desire to win can be at the detriment of an individual's safety and well-being with devastating and long lasting consequences.

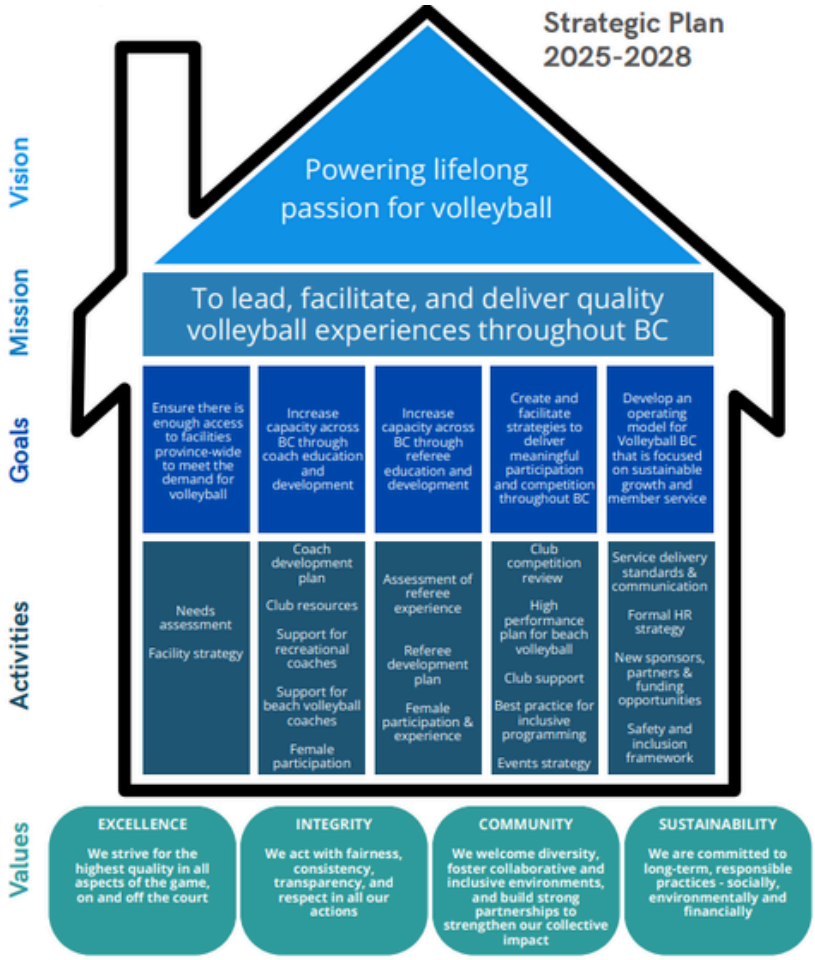
We want to be clear that safety is of the utmost importance to Volleyball BC and that we strive to ensure that all participants receive a safe and positive volleyball experience in British Columbia. Abuse, maltreatment, and unsafe practices have no place in our volleyball community.

What is Safe Sport?

"Safe Sport" is a term that is much used in sport and in the media but what does it actually mean?

The Coaching Association of Canada defines Safe Sport as "Our collective responsibility to create, foster and preserve sport environments that ensure positive, healthy and fulfilling experiences for all individuals. A safe sport environment is one in which all sport stakeholders recognize and report acts of maltreatment and prioritize the welfare, safety and rights of every person at all times." (2020).

Volleyball BC endorses this definition of Safe Sport.



Our dedication to safety is embedded in our **2025-2028 Strategic Plan** where our mission is to lead enjoyable and safe volleyball experiences. The importance of safety is reflected throughout our Vision, Mission, Goals, Values, and Key Initiatives.

Volleyball BC's Framework for Safety and Inclusion

Since 2021, Volleyball BC has embarked on a series of steps to assess best practice, identify issues and prioritise actions for safe sport. These included:

- Creating a Safe Sport Working Group
- Surveying our membership about their experiences
- Reviewing best practice and assessing priorities in our sport

As a result of this work, Volleyball BC has created a **Framework for Safety and Inclusion** to establish safe and welcoming volleyball experiences.

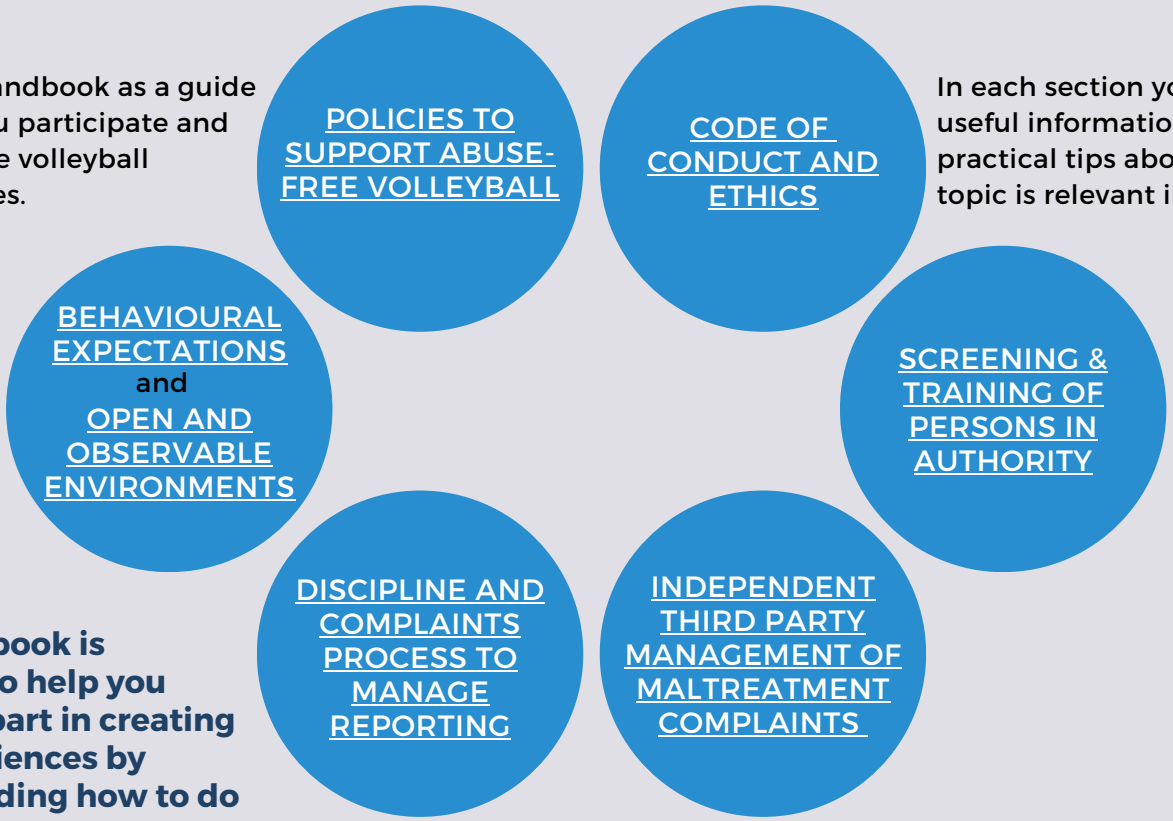
ASPECTS OF SAFETY	AREAS OF ACTION: POLICY & STANDARDS	EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES	AWARENESS & ADVOCACY
PHYSICAL INJURY CONCUSSION ABUSE & MALTREATMENT MENTAL HEALTH	SETTING AND UPHOLDING SAFETY STANDARDS Developing and communicating standards across all aspects of safety. CLEAR PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES Creating practical procedures and guidelines that can be implemented easily in all settings. Maintaining clear reporting mechanisms. ACCOUNTABILITY WHEN SAFETY IS NOT MET Enforcing standards and appropriate consequences when standards are not met.	TRAINING AND EDUCATION Training and education that is tailored to the needs of each role and supports stakeholders where they feel they are under-resourced. SUPPORTING A SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Continuously reviewing our physical environment and equipment needs. Promoting best practice in first aid, training, and resources to prevent injury. EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT Providing a variety of tools and resources for all our members. Signposting to support services outside of our sport when necessary.	RAISING THE PROFILE OF SAFETY Promoting the importance of safety and the resources and tools in place so that all members know about them and how to identify safety issues. BEING CLEAR ABOUT BOUNDARIES Understanding appropriate boundaries between all the different roles in our sport. Being clear about what is acceptable and what is not. PROMOTING SELF-ADVOCACY Ensuring that all participants feel able to speak up, speak out and ask for what they need.
	PLAYERS COACHES REFEREES CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS VOLLEYBALL BC		
	STAKEHOLDERS		

Effecting change and improving safety in volleyball requires all participants – players, coaches, referees, clubs – to be committed and accountable. The Framework for Safety and Inclusion outlines a framework for integrating safety and inclusion throughout our governance, operations and programming.
This Handbook is part of our commitment to sharing the work that we have done in these areas to ensure that everyone plays their role in creating safe volleyball experiences.

The Safe Sport Handbook

This Handbook outlines the main requirements and measures that Volleyball BC has in place to protect participants and respond to maltreatment and inappropriate behaviours. Each chapter of the handbook focuses on one of the areas outlined below:

Use the Handbook as a guide to help you participate and deliver safe volleyball experiences.



In each section you will find useful information and practical tips about how the topic is relevant in volleyball.

This Handbook is designed to help you play your part in creating safe experiences by understanding how to do the following:

PLAYERS

Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct and expectations around behaviour.

Understand what constitutes maltreatment and appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour.

Understand who you can share concerns with and how to report inappropriate behaviour or incidents.

Ensure that you are appropriately registered in a program with all emergency contact information.

Ask your club or program organiser if they have:

- Screening of Persons In Authority
- Complaint and reporting policy
- Safety policies and procedures, including the Open and Observable Environments rule.

COACHES

Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct and expectations around behaviour.

Understand what constitutes maltreatment and appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour. Clearly outline your expectations and team/ program rules around conduct with athletes you are coaching.

Ensure you have completed the Persons In Authority Checks.

Understand how to report inappropriate behaviour or incidents.

Ensure that you are aware of all safety policies and procedures, including the Open and Observable Environment rule and how to apply it in your coaching interactions.

REFEREES

Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct and expectations around behaviour.

Understand what constitutes maltreatment and appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour.

Ensure that you have completed all Persons In Authority screening checks.

Understand how to report inappropriate behaviour or incidents.

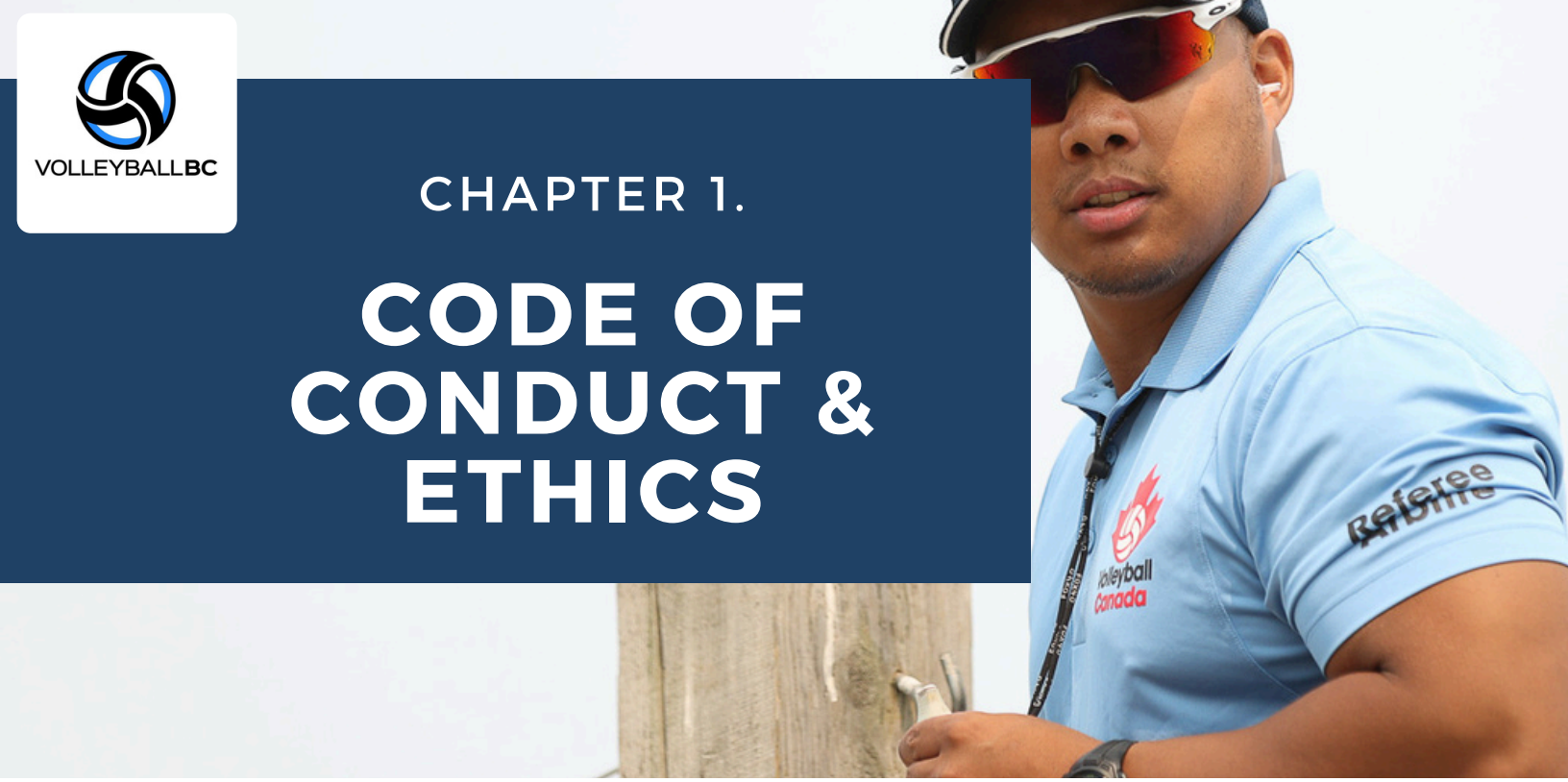
Ensure that you are appropriately registered in a program with all emergency contact information.

Ensure that you are aware of all safety policies and procedures, including the Open and Observable Environments rule and how to apply it in refereeing.

VOLLEYBALLBC

CHAPTER 1.

CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS



What is the Code of Conduct & Ethics?

The **Code of Conduct and Ethics** is a policy that governs the behaviour and conduct of all participants in Volleyball BC programs. When you register for Volleyball BC membership or programs, you are required to read and sign acknowledgement of the Code as part of the registration or membership process.

Volleyball BC and Volleyball Canada adopted the Code of Conduct and Ethics in 2020 as part of policies aimed to create a safe volleyball experience. The Code is based on and aligned with the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport and the BC Universal Code of Conduct.

Who does it apply to?

- All members and participants in Volleyball BC programs and activities. This includes athletes, coaches, referees, volunteers, administrators, parents or guardians, and spectators.
- Any volleyball club or organisation that is a member of Volleyball BC has agreed to uphold the Code of Conduct and Ethics. This means that the Code applies to their athletes, Board, staff, and volunteers too.
- Volleyball BC's and member club/organisation's Board members, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

Why is the Code of Conduct important?

For sport experiences to be positive they need to be safe. Volleyball BC is committed to creating sport environments that are free from all forms of harm including sexual, physical, mental, emotional and psychological. We support equal opportunity, prohibit discriminatory practices, and are committed to providing an environment in which all people are treated with respect and fairness. The Code of Conduct and Ethics supports this by:

- outlining responsibilities for everyone to contribute to safe and welcoming volleyball experiences.
- setting shared expectations about behavior and conduct.
- providing clear standards by which organisations and individuals can be held accountable, including through the Volleyball BC disciplinary and complaints process when necessary.

When does it apply?

The Code applies to all participants during business, activities, and events of Volleyball BC and its member clubs/organisations, including:

- Tryouts, training, and practices
- Competitions and tournaments
- Camps, clinics, and other programming activities
- Business operations and meetings
- Any travel representing Volleyball BC or the member club/organisation

The Code also applies to conduct outside of regular business, activities and events when this conduct is drawn to Volleyball BC's attention and we believe that it will reflect badly on our relationships or reputation.

What happens if someone breaks the Code of Conduct?

All participants and members are expected to behave in line with the Code of Conduct and Ethics. Depending on the situation or circumstances:

- You may be asked to leave a competition, activity, or program.
- A formal complaint may be made to Volleyball BC which will be treated in accordance with our **Discipline and Complaints Policy** If your behaviour is defined as abuse and maltreatment, the complaint will be transferred to our independent third party, **ITP Sport** to be handled.
- You may face sanctions in line with our Discipline and Complaints Policy including being fined, banned from activities, or suspended from membership either temporarily or permanently.
- Volleyball BC, Volleyball Canada, and the other Provincial/Territorial Volleyball Associations have agreed to a **Reciprocation Policy** which means that disciplinary sanctions are shared and upheld by all organisations.

What should I do if I experience or witness someone breaking the Code of Conduct?

An important part of eliminating abuse and maltreatment in volleyball is handling and reporting concerning behaviour or incidents when they occur. There are several options for reporting concerns about violations of the Code of Conduct.

1. Raise the concern with the program organiser or volleyball organisation – Talk to the on-site program organiser or to the main administrator for the volleyball club/organisation. Depending on the severity, they may be able to address and handle the situation internally.

2. Report the concern directly to ITP Sport
Contact 1-866-921-6714 or
https://app.integritycounts.ca/org/itpsport

Volleyball BC uses ITP Sport as an independent third-party to handle complaints that concern abuse and maltreatment. You can speak to someone confidentially and report any incidents directly to the helpline and they will provide you with advice and handle the complaint. If it is appropriate, they will also conduct an investigation into the complaint.

3. Report the concern to Volleyball BC
Contact reporting@volleyballbc.org or by completing the online incident form. We have a Discipline and Complaints process to address issues or behaviours that break our Code of Conduct. If a complaint is related to abuse, maltreatment, or suspected abuse, VBC will refer the complaint to ITP Sport or an independent case manager.

What does the Code of Conduct say?

Every individual has a responsibility to:
a) Maintain the policies, rules, and regulations of Volleyball BC and Volleyball Canada.

b) Support the dignity and self-esteem of other participants by:
i. Providing appropriate comments and avoiding public criticism
ii. Showing fair play, sport leadership, and ethical conduct;
iii. Acting to correct or prevent actions that are discriminatory;
iv. Treating people fairly and reasonably; and
v. Respecting the rules.

c) Avoid any actions that are abuse, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, or discrimination.

d) Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all participants.

e) Avoid non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs, and avoid associating with anyone who is sanctioned for doping.

f) Avoid using power or authority to coerce someone else into inappropriate activities.

g) Consume alcohol responsibly (if you are of legal age)

h) Avoid using recreational or illicit drugs while participating in Volleyball BC programs, activities, competitions, or sanctioned events.

i) Respect other people's property

j) Promote sport in a constructive and positive manner

k) Follow all federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and host country laws

l) Refrain from engaging in cheating or offering/receiving a bribe to manipulate the outcome of a competition.

m) Declare any ongoing criminal investigation, conviction, or existing bail conditions to Volleyball BC

In addition, specific participants have extra responsibilities that the Code of Conduct outlines...

COACHES

a) Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities that are suitable for the level of athletes

b) Communicate and cooperate with professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of athletes' medical and psychological treatments

c) Provide athletes (and parents/guardians) with info to be involved in decisions that affect them

d) Act in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person

e) Never provide or promote the use of drugs or performance-enhancing substances, or alcohol, cannabis, and/or tobacco by underage youth.

f) Never engage in a sexual or intimate relationship with an athlete of any age in which the coach is in a position of trust or authority;

g) Dress neatly and appropriately

PLAYERS

a) Report any medical issues that might limit their ability to travel, practice, or compete

b) Participate and appear on-time and prepared to participate to their best abilities

c) Respect rules and requirements regarding uniforms and equipment

d) Act in a sportsmanlike manner and avoid bad language, or gestures to other participants

e) Follow any policies, procedures, or rules outlined by coaches or managers.

f) Obey Volleyball BC's **Anti-Doping Policy**

REFEREES

a) Enforce and follow national and provincial rules and regulations

b) Act openly, fairly, professionally, properly, and in the best interests of Volleyball BC and Volleyball Canada.

c) Respect the confidentiality of sensitive issues, including forfeits, discipline, and specific information about individuals.

What are behaviours prohibited by the Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct states that all participants will avoid any actions that are abuse, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, or discrimination. It is a violation of the Code to engage in:

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT	Verbal, non-physical behaviour, or actions that harm an individual's sense of self-worth such as name-calling, shaming, or withholding attention.
PHYSICAL MALTREATMENT	Contact or non-contact behaviours that have the potential to cause physical harm including hitting, exercise as a punishment, or providing drugs and alcohol to minors
SEXUAL MALTREATMENT OR HARASSMENT	Unwanted activity, comments or behavior made to individuals because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or gender expression, including Criminal Code offenses or any comment or behavior of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or that would be objectively perceived as unwelcome by an outside observer.
GROOMING	Building a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person (or their families) so an individual can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. The process allows for inappropriate conduct to become normalized and can take place over a short or long period of time.
DISCRIMINATION	Treating someone differently on the basis of their race, nationality, religion, age, sex, gender, family status, or disability.
HARASSMENT	A series of upsetting comments or behaviour against someone which is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome, including isolating someone, hazing, or persistent unwelcome remarks.
ABUSE OF A VULNERABLE ADULT	A vulnerable adult is someone who because of a physical, emotional, or psychological condition is dependent on other persons for care and assistance in day-to-day living. Vulnerable adult abuse may be psychological, financial, or physical, and is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust.
CHILD ABUSE	A child is someone under the age of 19 years. Child abuse refers to violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust.

Check out the next section on Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours for more information and examples of different types of maltreatment, abuse and appropriate/inappropriate behaviour to ensure that we all have a common understanding of what is acceptable in volleyball.

Where can I find out more?

You can find a full copy of the Code of Conduct and Ethics on the Volleyball BC website at **www.volleyballbc.org/about**. The Code of Conduct and Ethics is part of a suite of policies that Volleyball BC has in place to address maltreatment in volleyball:

- **Abuse Policy**
- **Discipline and Complaints Policy**
- **Reciprocation Policy**
- **Screening Policy**

You will find more about these policies in the following chapters.

KEY CONCEPT: All clubs and organisations that are registered members of Volleyball BC sign to say that they will abide by these policies. Clubs and organisations may also have their own policies in place.

CHAPTER 2.

APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

Commitment Statement

Volleyball BC is committed to an environment free from abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of maltreatment or suspected maltreatment so that those matters can be immediately addressed. As part of our commitment to safe sport, all members and clubs are required to abide Volleyball BC's policies to address abuse and harassment:

- **Abuse Policy**
- **Code of Conduct and Ethics.** This is based on the Universal Code of Conduct to Address Maltreatment in Sport.

Some of the language in the policies can be challenging. This document explains different types of maltreatment and provides examples of appropriate/ inappropriate behaviour to ensure that we all have a common understanding of what is acceptable in volleyball.

What is maltreatment in sport?

Athletes at all levels deserve to train and compete in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Those who run sport are responsible for creating an athlete-focused environment where the health and wellbeing of participants are at the forefront. There have been many high profile examples in the media where this has not been the case but these are often extreme situations. Maltreatment can come in different forms - some behaviour may not meet the threshold of criminal activity but it still needs to be addressed and stopped.

The definitions and examples in this document are meant to be illustrative. There may be additional behaviours or examples outside of this list.

Who is at risk?

Volleyball BC's policies highlight two groups who are particularly vulnerable to maltreatment:

- **Children** – A child is someone under the age of 19 years. Child abuse refers to violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust.

- **Vulnerable Adults** - A vulnerable adult is someone who because of a physical, emotional, or psychological condition is dependent on other persons for care and assistance in day-to-day living. Vulnerable adult abuse may be psychological, financial, or physical, and is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust.

However, it is important to note that **maltreatment can happen to any participant at any age and in any role**. We are all at risk and must take actions to ensure that inappropriate behaviour does not happen.

TYPE OF MALTREATMENT	WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOURS ARE COVERED BY THIS?	WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE IN VOLLEYBALL?
Psychological or emotional maltreatment Verbal, non-physical behaviour, or actions that harm an individual's sense of self-worth. In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an individual when it is persistent, pervasive or patterned. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.	• Verbally attacking someone with personal criticism, body shaming, demeaning, or derogatory comments. • Use of rumours or false statements to diminish someone's reputation. • Physically aggressive behaviors, including throwing objects or hitting, striking or punching objects in the presence of others. • Withholding attention. • Deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore someone. • Pressuring someone to do something or pushing someone too hard without recognising their limitations. • Excluding or isolating someone from a group. • Use of degrading or shaming nicknames • Repeatedly mocking someone for poor performance • Threats of frightening and inappropriate repercussions • Acts that deny attention and support:	• Administrator shares or uses confidential sport information inappropriately. • Coach refuses to recognise an athlete's needs and insists on training despite complaints of injury, thirst, or feeling unwell. • Personal trainer frequently uses name-calling or sarcasm to "beat down" an athlete's self-esteem. • Athlete is embarrassed or humiliated by a teammate in front of the rest of the team. • Referee repeatedly mocks another referee for making the wrong calls. • Coach repeatedly tells an athlete they are not good enough to be on the team • Athlete angrily throws a volleyball at the wall when others on their team mess up a drill.
Physical maltreatment Contact or non-contact behaviours that have the potential to cause physical harm. Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity. Athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete—such as extreme disciplinary actions or punishment—is unacceptable. Physical maltreatment can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and restricted diet.	• Deliberately punching, kicking, beating, biting, or slapping someone or using an object to hit someone. • Isolating a person in a confined space. • Forcing a person to assume a painful stance or position for no purpose. • Use of exercise for the purposes of punishment. • Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep. • Providing alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age. • Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to someone, including providing performance-enhancing drugs. • Encouraging or knowingly permitting someone to return to play prematurely following any injury or after a concussion and without the clearance of a medical professional. • Encouraging an Athlete to perform a skill for which they are known to not be developmentally ready.	• Athlete over the legal age of drinking provides alcohol to another athlete who is not. • Referee allocator insists a referee return to work after hitting their head, despite medical advice advising rest. • Coach tells the team to run laps for 45 minutes without a break because of poor performance in a game. • Team Manager circulates a restrictive diet for all the team members so that they lose weight for an upcoming game.

TYPE OF MALTREATMENT	WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOURS ARE COVERED BY THIS?	WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE IN VOLLEYBALL?
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse **Sexual Harassment** is a series of upsetting comments or actions against someone because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or gender expression. It can also include making a sexual advance where the person making the advance is in a position of power over the other individual. **Sexual Abuse or exploitation** is unwanted sexual activity with the use of force, threats or taking advantage of individuals not being able to give consent. It may involve contact or non-contact, and may be in-person or online.	• Bragging about sexual ability. • Demanding hugs. • Display or distribution of sexually offensive material. • Sexist jokes. • Inquiries or comments about someone's sex life; • Persistent, unwanted attention after a consensual relationship ends. • Persistent unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, comments or propositions. • Persistent unwanted contact. • Sexual assault. • Sexually degrading words used to describe a person. • Threats, punishment, or denial of a benefit for refusing a sexual advance. • Unwelcome inquiries into or comments about someone's gender identity or physical appearance; • Examples of sexual abuse include inviting someone to touch or be touched sexually, making someone undress, intercourse or rape, exhibitionism, or involving someone in prostitution or pornography.	• Athlete takes a photo of another team mate while they are undressing in the change room and texts it to the rest of the team. • Male referee repeatedly tells a female referee that she is doing well "for a girl". • Assistant Coach repeatedly tells an athlete how good they look in the team uniform. • Team Manager singles out and hugs an athlete every time they meet. • Athlete asks for explicit details about a team mate's relationship with their girlfriend.
Grooming Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person (or their families) so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. It is often a slow gradual and escalating process that is very difficult to recognize. The process allows for inappropriate conduct to become normalized. It is often preceded by building confidence and comfort that an individual can be trusted with the care of the child. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time, from weeks to years	• Excessive discussions about the groomer's personal life. • Spending time with someone and/or their family outside of team activities. • Excessive or inappropriate gift-giving. • Socially isolating an athlete. • Restricting an athlete's privacy. • Providing drugs, alcohol or tobacco. • Becoming overly involved in an athlete's personal life • Displaying material of a sexual nature in the presence of someone. • Nudity. • Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities. • Putting the Person in Authority's needs above needs of an athlete	• Assistant Coach uses the same social media app, chat forum, or website as an athlete to communicate about non-volleyball topics outside of training. • Adult referee consistently asks for relationship advice from an underage referee. • Team Manager pays for an athlete and their family to go out for dinner each week. • Coach frequently pulls an athlete aside to enquire about non-volleyball related topics.

TYPE OF MALTREATMENT	WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOURS ARE COVERED BY THIS?	WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE IN VOLLEYBALL?
Neglect Failing to provide what someone needs for their physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. Neglect can be a lot of things which makes it hard to spot but it is often chronic and involves repeated incidents.	• Socially isolating a person repeatedly or for an extended period of time. • Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep. • Ignoring an injury. • Knowing about abuse of an athlete but failing to report it. • Persistently ignoring them • ignoring psychological needs or socially isolating a person repeatedly or for an extended period of time; • Arbitrarily or unreasonably denying feedback, training opportunities, support or attention for extended periods of time and/or asking others to do the same. • Never showing any emotions in interactions, also known as emotional neglect.	• Coach consistently excludes an athlete from playing time, even in practice. • Supervisor/Mentor arbitrarily withholds or refuses to give feedback on a referee's performance. • Personal trainer tells athlete to stay on their own in the gym until they have perfected a technique. • Team Manager is aware that an athlete is being abused by a member of the coaching staff but does not report it to the club or to Volleyball BC.
Harassment A series of upsetting comments or behaviour against an individual which is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome. Whether behaviour is harassing depends on the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behavior. Behaviour may not be harassment if it is merely rude, mean, or arises from conflict.	• Condescending or patronizing behaviour intended to undermine self-esteem and diminish performance. • Deliberately excluding or socially isolating a person from a group or team. • Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures. • Persistent sexual flirtations or invitations. • Hazing which is behaviour that is humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity expected of a junior-ranking person by a more senior person, which is required to be accepted as part of a team or group, • Persistent unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendo, or taunts. • Physical or sexual assault. • Practical jokes that endanger a person's safety, or may negatively affect performance. • Racial harassment, which includes racial slurs, jokes, name calling, or insulting behaviour. • Unwanted physical contact including touching, pinching, or kissing. • Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts.	• Team Captain insists that new players complete a task that is not associated with the volleyball team in order to be part of the group. • Referee makes deliberate decisions to penalise a player in retaliation against for previously reporting harassment to Volleyball BC. • Coach persistently calls an athlete by a nickname that is demeaning despite an athlete indicating that they are not comfortable with the situation.

What is the difference between maltreatment and appropriate behaviour?

We may have experienced some of the behaviours listed above – or we may have even spoken or behaved in one of the ways ourselves. So how do we know the difference between abuse and acceptable behaviour? Situations can be complex and difficult to assess. Here are some factors to consider when assessing a situation:

I**s the behaviour sustained?** An isolated incident of inappropriate behavior may occur when someone is under stress and reacts. They may apologise and never demonstrate the same behaviour again. Ongoing and repeated incidents of the same behaviour is not acceptable.

Is there uneven power? The relationship between an adult and child or between a coach and athlete is not an equal one. In both these situations, the adult or coach has more power or influence in the relationship and the child or athlete is potentially vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.

I**s the behaviour contextually appropriate?** Sometimes a coach or trainer may need to touch an athlete to demonstrate or correct a skill. In this context, physical touch may be appropriate. However, in other contexts – eg. in the changerooms or to compliment on appearance - physical touch may not be appropriate.

Does the behaviour have a negative impact? How is the behaviour perceived by the person receiving it? Behaviours that cause physical or psychological distress to an individual are not appropriate.

It is helpful to consider that it is the BEHAVIOUR that should be assessed and not the PERSON. This makes any conversations or discussions less confrontational.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON MALTREATMENT VERSUS DISCIPLINE

In an athlete-coach relationship, it can be particularly hard to recognise the difference between discipline and abuse. Harmful coaching can be difficult to assess, particularly if behaviour is positioned as essential for performance. So how do we tell the difference?

- Positive coaching focuses on critique of specific behaviour or skills – eg. spike, play – it should never criticise an individual personally.
-
- Coaching methods of skill enhancement, human development, physical conditioning or improving athletic performance that are professionally-accepted and part of the NCCP curriculum are not considered maltreatment or abuse even though they might be physically or emotionally demanding for an individual.

Setting boundaries

Setting boundaries is an important way to help differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Establishing boundaries respects personal space and ensures that relationships are safe and healthy. At the start of a volleyball season, use example scenarios like the ones below to discuss and set physical, emotional, and social boundaries that clearly articulate what is appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour. This discussion can take place within a team, between a coach, parent, and athlete, or within a work environment. Crossing the line into inappropriate behaviour or abuse can be prevented by developing and maintaining clear boundaries for relationships.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR
Coach asks athlete to re-enter game in conjunction with return to play guidance for injury – when athlete complains of discomfort, coach sits them for the rest of the game.	Coach orders players to re-enter games when they show signs of injury. An athlete's physical health and well-being take precedence over winning games.
Coach removes athlete from the starting line-up or game with a clear explanation of why. Removal for inappropriate behavior is different from removal for poor performance, and coaches need to be able to communicate that distinction clearly to team members.	Coach removes athlete from game or starting line up without explanation of why, leaving the athlete wondering whether it was because they are not good enough or made a mistake in the previous game.
Coach requires athletes to arrive early for the next practice to help set-up equipment. Teaching an athlete to respect the coach's time and that of others is discipline	Coach instructs team to run excessive laps following poor performance when they are already fatigued, particularly if temperatures are extreme. Over-exertion may cause physical harm to the young athlete's developing body.
Referee raises their voice as they disagree with another referee or a player. A raised voice may not be ideal but may be a normal reaction to a stressful situation under some circumstances.	Referee repeatedly shouts, berates, and verbally attacks other referees or players.
Referee mentor provides specific feedback on a referee's knowledge of the rules or calls during a game.	Referee mentor criticises the referee as a person, passing judgement on the individual's personality or intelligence.
Coach attends a sports award ceremony with their athletes.	Coach attends a social party with their athletes.
Trainer re-positions an athlete's body to improve their performance of a skill.	Trainer hugs an athlete despite the athlete indicating that they are uncomfortable.

Useful Resources

Sport Integrity Canada - **https://sportintegrity.ca/**

UK Child Protection in Sport Unit - **https://thecpsu.org.uk/**

US Center for Safe Sport - **https://uscenterforsafesport.org/**

Kids in the Know - A national, interactive safety education program that uses age-appropriate lessons on boundaries and healthy versus unhealthy behaviours in relationships.
Grades 7-8:
https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/healthy_relationships_grades7_8
High School Age:
https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/healthy_relationships_high_school

A Special Note for Parents and Caregivers

Sports programs make up the dynamic life of a child; one where they are often in the care of other adults. The majority of these activities and experiences are fun, positive, and help children learn and grow into healthy adults. However, parents and caregivers play an important role in protecting children from maltreatment and in holding sport organisations accountable.

What behaviour should I be concerned about?

- Communication with your child that is outside of the adult's role and is not occurring within the context of the sport experience. Eg. Making personal phone calls to your child.
- Inappropriate interactions with your child that go beyond their role in volleyball. Eg. offering unauthorised personal rides to your child
- Behaviour that would be concerning to anyone who witnessed it
- Behaviour that embarrasses, humiliates, or shames your child
- Physical contact with your child that makes her/him feel uncomfortable, violates reasonable boundaries, or is not appropriate for the context of the situation.
- Inappropriate boundaries with your child, sexualized behaviours (e.g. sexual talk, leering, flirting) or touching that make the child and/or others feel uncomfortable.

If you have concerns, talk to your volleyball club or program organiser.
See the chapter on reporting maltreatment for more options.

Make sure your volleyball club or organisation is committed to safe sport

As a parent/caregiver, you have the right to ask questions about what steps an organization takes to create a safe environment for children:

STEP 1: GET TO KNOW THE ORGANISATION

- What do you know about the organization's history, goals for children and philosophy?
- Have you toured the organization? What impression were you left with?
- Is the organization transparent around questions about safe sport?
- Does the organization have an open-door policy for addressing concerns?
- Is the organization part of a provincial or national governing body?

STEP 2: ASK QUESTIONS

- What is your screening process, beyond criminal record checks, for hiring staff and/ or volunteers?
- What type of training do your staff and/or volunteers receive on safe sport?
- Do you have a staff/volunteer code of conduct that outlines the expectation of boundaries between children and adults?
- What are your policies and procedures for reporting concerns or misconduct?
- How does your organization handle staff or volunteer misconduct?

(Info taken from Commit2Kids Guide for Parents)

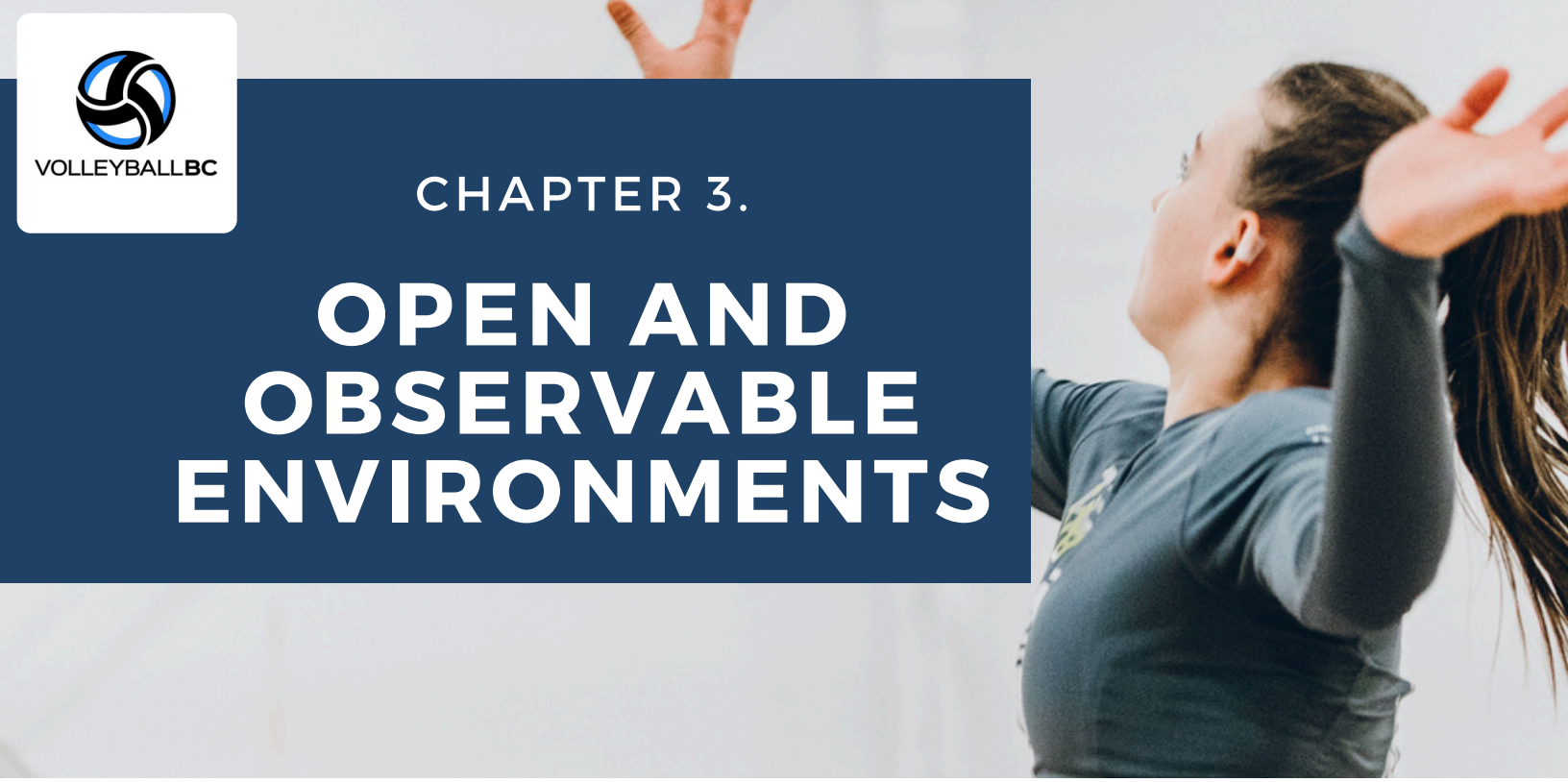
STEP 3: EXPLORE HOW RISK IS MANAGED

Ask specific questions about how risk is managed for activities that may include: •

- Transportation of children
- One-on-one time with children
- Changing and showering needs
- Overnight trips
- Communication with children outside of program activities (e.g. texting, emailing, social networking sites)
- Inquire about how the organization communicates issues or concerns to parents when an incident or situation takes place

STEP 4: STAY INVOLVED

- Teach your child about personal safety.
- Be present and involved in your child's activities. Pay attention to interactions between leaders and children.
- Check in with your child and create opportunities for her/him to share her/his feelings, stories, opinions, and perspective about experiences.
- Pay close attention to changes in your child's behaviour.
- Model appropriate boundaries between adults and children. Develop your child's sense of healthy boundaries by respecting your child's boundaries, stopping others who try to disrespect your child's boundaries, and correcting your child when s/he begins to disrespect others. •
- Get to know your child's friends and other parents from the organization.
- Pay attention and question inappropriate interactions between adults and children. Let the organization know about your concerns by reporting to them.



CHAPTER 3.

OPEN AND OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS

Volleyball BC is committed to a sport environment that is safe for all participants. There are many different situations that arise in volleyball including tryouts, practices, competitions, travel, and communication. An important part of creating a safe environment is setting shared expectations about how individuals should behave in these situations.

This document outlines the principles and recommendations that should be applied to ensure that everyone has a safe and welcoming experience.

Who is a Person In Authority?

A Person In Authority is anyone who holds a position of trust or authority because of the role that they have. Persons in Authority (PIA) may include coaches, managers, trainers, referee allocators or mentors, staff, and administrators. Because of their position, Persons In Authority have inherent power over participants and so must be careful not to abuse this, consciously or unconsciously. An example of this is the Coach-Athlete relationship where Coaches are in a powerful position to influence and direct Athletes.

KEY CONCEPT: OPEN & OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS

Open and observable interactions and communications are strongly recommended to foster safety, enhance protection, and help reduce vulnerability of both an athlete and Person In Authority. The Coaching Association of Canada's Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and safety-trained adults with a participant, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation.

Volleyball BC follows **"Open and Observable Environments"** which is Volleyball Canada's version of the Rule of Two. This involves making all efforts to avoid situations where a Person In Authority might be alone with a vulnerable person. The name refers to the fact that interactions between an individual and an individual who is in a position of trust/authority should be in an environment or space that is both "open" and "observable" to others.

OPEN ENVIRONMENT

An open environment is an environment that is not closed or concealed from others. Interactions should not take place behind closed doors or in secluded locations. Others should be aware the interaction is taking place

OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENT

An observable environment is a space where others can see or take note of the interaction.
This applies to both a physical space and a virtual/ electronic space.

When should Open and Observable Environments apply?

- All training and competitions, especially without a second Person In Authority present
- Meetings
- Medical treatments
- Travel to and from trainings, competitions, events, or activities
- Electronic communications

Before interacting with someone ask yourself:

- Is this an open interaction?
- Are we in a closed or secluded place?
- Who knows this meeting/interaction is taking place?
- Does the athlete -or individual in a position of lesser power- have an easy and accessible exit path?
- Is this interaction observable?
- Is anyone else with us?
- Can anyone see us?
- Can anyone hear us?

What does Open and Observable Environments look like in practice?

There are many different types of interactions and situations in volleyball. Here are some recommendations and best practice for applying the principle of Open and Observable Environments in different volleyball scenarios:

IN VOLLEYBALL TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS

- All training and competition environments must be open to observation. Look at all situations during training, competitions or other volleyball activities that may put yourself or others in a vulnerable position and consider ways to avoid or alter the environment to promote safety.
- Ensure that two PIA are always be present with someone, especially a minor, when in a potentially vulnerable situation such as in a locker room or meeting room.
- All one-on-one interactions between a PIA and an individual must take place within earshot and in view of a second PIA except for medical emergencies. One of the PIA should also be of the same gender identity as the athlete.
- Ask a screened volunteer, parent, or adult to step in and help if a second PIA is not available,
- For private conversations, use an open and observable environment such as in the corner of the gymnasium, in a café, in a glass-walled office, or outside the gymnasium in an open location. If the topic is sensitive in nature, you should include another coach, support staff member or parent in the meeting. A closed-door meeting can take place if a second PIA is present at all times.
- Interactions between a PIA and an individual should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the change room, meeting room, restroom, or changing area. Ensure that a second PIA is present for any necessary interaction that might be needed.
- Ensure that PIA are available outside a changing area, within earshot and able to enter the room or area if required, if they are not allowed to be in there.
- PIA must not change or shower in front of participants.
- PIA should only accompany a minor to the washroom if there is more than one. If the group has minors of mixed genders, there should be at least one PIA of each gender supervising the washroom visit.
- A PIA should never be alone with someone prior to or following a volleyball activity, unless the PIA is the individual's parent or guardian. If the athlete is the first athlete to arrive, the athlete's parent should remain until another athlete or PIA arrives. Similarly, if an athlete would potentially be alone with a PIA following a competition or practice, the PIA should ask another PIA (or a parent/guardian of another athlete) to stay until all the athletes have been picked up. If an adult is not available, then another athlete should be present to avoid the PIA being alone with a single athlete.
- Parents, guardians, and other caretakers should always be allowed to observe training sessions or practices
- Involve more than one PIA in selection decisions to limit the consolidation of power onto one individual.
- PIA must ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes. If you are giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual, it should always be doing so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority.

IN COMMUNICATIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

- Establish, monitor, and reinforce clear, appropriate, and consistent communication boundaries.
- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. For example, a good practice is to pre-establish a message group with coaches and support staff already included and provide this to athletes for sending communications to coaches. Group messages, group emails or team pages should be used as the regular method of communication.
- Only electronic platforms that allow open and transparent communication should be used. Direct Messaging on social platforms should not be used between a PIA and participant.
- If an individual sends a PIA a message directly, the PIA should include another individual in the response. The parent or guardian of minors should be included in any individual communications from PIA.
- PIA may only send individual texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individuals when necessary and only for the purpose of communicating information related to volleyball activity (e.g., non-personal information).
- Parents and guardians can request that their child not be contacted by PIA using any form of electronic communication and/or to request that certain information about their child is not distributed in any form of electronic communications.
- Ensure that the content of all electronic communication from PIA is professional in tone. There should be no communication about drugs or alcohol use or sexually-oriented conversation. needed.
- PIA are not permitted to ask individuals to keep a secret for them.
- A PIA should not become overly involved in an individual's personal life
- As part of the registration process or otherwise, participants – or parents/guardians for a minor - should sign a photo release form that describes how an athlete's image may be used.
- Photographs and video may only be taken in public view, must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the participants.
- Examples of photos that should be edited or deleted include:
  Images with misplaced apparel or underwear
  Suggestive or provocative poses
  Embarrassing images
- The use of any devices (including a cell phones) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility should be prohibited.
- A participant may not be photographed or filmed or have their image posted publicly or privately unless they have given their consent (or the parent/guardian's consent for a minor). If consent is given, it may be revoked at any time.

DURING TRAVEL FOR VOLLEYBALL

- Conduct Guidelines should be developed, reviewed, and signed by all individuals involved in team or group travel. This sets expectations and standards. If a participant breaches the Guidelines, the PIA is then able to put in place measures to safeguard and manage the situation.

- A PIA may not be alone in a car with a minor unless PIA is the minor's parent or guardian or there are at least two minors and written consent is obtained by parents/guardians. If a minor travelling alone with a PIA is absolutely necessary, written permission should be obtained from the parent/guardian, all relevant people should be told the expected departure/arrival times and the minor should travel in the back of the car.

- Mixed gender groups should be accompanied by at least one male and one female PIA. The profile of the travel will determine how many individuals are needed and their differing responsibilities.

- A PIA should not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with a participant they are coaching or supervising unless they are their parent or guardian.

- Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two PIA. One of the PIA must also be of the same gender identity as the participants.

- For overnight travel when participants share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate (e.g., within 2 years of age or both adults) and of the same gender identity.

- Participants may only share a hotel bed if they are of the same gender identity and with the explicit consent of the parent or guardian if they are minors.

- If participants are minors, they should only leave a travel group if there is a minimum of two individuals together and with the permission of the PIA leading the program.

- If homestays are being used, organisers should ensure that:
- All adult members of the host family are screened.
- Minors are placed with families where there is a minor of a similar age and, where possible, of the same sex. If there is more than one minor and they are different genders, both genders must be in the household
- Visiting minors have their own bedroom, although it is acceptable for them to share a bedroom with another person of similar age and of the same gender.
- Information about all practical aspects of the hosting arrangements are agreed and shared in advance with parents and guardians.

DURING PHYSICAL CONTACT

Some physical contact between PIA and participants may be necessary for various reasons including teaching a skill or tending to an injury. The following considerations should be taken:

- All physical interaction should be limited to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)

- A PIA should always clarify with a participant where and why any touch will occur. Verbal cues and explanations are encouraged to help educate participants on the difference between appropriate and inappropriate contact. The PIA must make clear that he/she is requesting to touch the athlete and not requiring the physical contact.

- Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the participants during a training session, is permitted.

- Hugging, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the PIA is not permitted. Some younger athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a PIA for various reasons (e.g., such as crying after a poor performance) but this physical contact should always be limited.

- While there are circumstances where one on one medical treatment may be necessary due to the injury or treatment type, medical staff should have their interactions take place in open and observable spaces when at all possible. A closed-door meeting should only be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that the door remains unlocked, another PIA is present at the facility and is aware that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the mental health care professional and/or care provider.

How should these recommendations be applied?

VOLLEYBALL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Develop and adopt written policies and procedures that outline expectations of how Open and Observable Environments should be maintained.
- Develop an Athlete Safety Policy that coaches, managers, and athletes sign to agree on shared standards of behaviour and conduct.
- Incorporate knowledge and training on upholding Open and Observable Environments as part of the on-boarding of staff and volunteers.
- Take appropriate action in all situations where an Open and Observable Environment was not maintained to improve and enforce standards.

PERSONS IN AUTHORITY

- Understand the concept of Open and Observable Environments and how to apply this in practice.
- Anticipate situations where Open and Observable Environments may need some planning ahead of time to implement and maintain.
- Set clear and appropriate boundaries that are clearly communicated with all participants (and parents/guardians in the case of minors).
- Be prepared to address and correct any unknowing breaches of an Open and Observable Environment by participants. For example, if an athlete sends a personal email to a coach, the coach should respond by copying in another PIA or the parents/guardians.
- Proactively report and address any situation where an Open and Observable Environment is not maintained, identifying actions to take to ensure that this is not replicated in the future. For example, if a referee supervisor ends up alone with a junior referee at the end of a game, they should proactively report this to the allocator/assigner to allow changes to sign-out policies.

PARTICIPANTS

- Understand the concept of Open and Observable Environments and how this should be applied in practice.
- Ask to see a volleyball club/organisation's policies or guidelines for safe interactions.
- Respect conduct and behavioural expectations designed to maintain Open and Observable Environments that are developed by a volleyball club/organisation or a PIA.
- Proactively report and address any situation where an Open and Observable Environment is not maintained, identifying actions to take to ensure that this is not replicated in the future. For example, if an athlete receives a personal email from a coach, the athlete should respond by copying another PIA and/or their parents/guardians if they are a minor.
- Formally document and report a PIA if they consistently breach practices of applying"Open and Observable Environment or their behaviour is concerning.

Where can I find out more?

Read Volleyball Canada's **Open and Observable Environments** handout.

CHAPTER 4.

SCREENING AND EDUCATION

Volleyball BC is committed to a sport environment that is safe for all participants. An important part of delivering safe volleyball is ensuring that the people who deliver the programs and events are properly recruited, screened, and trained in safe sport practices. This document outlines the requirements that Volleyball BC has for all Persons In Authority involved in delivering our sport.

Who is a Person In Authority?

A Person In Authority is anyone who holds a position of trust or authority because of the role that they have. Persons in Authority (PIA) may include coaches, managers, trainers, referee allocators or mentors, staff, and administrators. Because of their position, Persons In Authority have inherent power over participants and so must be careful not to abuse this, consciously or unconsciously. Examples of Persons In Authority and their inherent power over participants include:

- Coach-Athlete relationship where coaches are in a powerful position to influence and direct athletes.
- Mentor- Referee relationship where a senior referee is advising, supporting, and overseeing more junior referees.
- Board members or administrators who have authority to allocate resources, hire staff, and influence programs.

It is important that all PIA are properly selected, screened, and trained so that we ensure that the right people are in place and that they have the right support to deliver volleyball safely.

What is the Person In Authority Check?

1. CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

Volleyball BC requires all PIA to provide a Criminal Record Check every 3 years. This is typically in the form of an Enhanced Police Information Check (E-PIC) which involves a criminal record check plus a search of local police information.
For some lower risk roles, this requirement may be waived or for some higher risk roles, we may require a more detailed Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC). Our **Screening Policy** outlines the criteria for different guidelines.

2. SCREENING DISCLOSURE FORM

Volleyball BC requires all PIA to complete a Screening Disclosure Form every year. This is typically done at the point of registration as a coach, referee, or other specific membership categories.
The Screening Disclosure Form asks a series of questions about whether an individual has been convicted of a crime, sanctioned by a governance body, or has any pending charges. This is kept on file.

3. CAC SAFE SPORT MODULE

The Coaches Association of Canada (CAC) has a **free training module** that covers important information about preventing maltreatment and abuse in sport. It ensures that PIA understand their role and responsibility in creating safe sport experiences. Volleyball BC requires all PIA to complete the CAC Safe Sport Module every 3 years (or when it gets updated).

Who has to complete the Persons In Authority Check?

Volleyball BC requires the Persons In Authority Check as part of the registration process in these membership categories:

- Club Executive / Board member
- Club Staff and any staff listed on a team roster
- Club Personnel or Volunteer
- Competitive Coach
- Recreational Coach
- Referee (all levels)
- Volleyball BC Board, staff, and contractors

Member clubs and individuals are not considered In Good Standing and are not covered by Volleyball BC insurance until they have completed the Person In Authority Check. Volleyball BC conducts random checks - any PIA without the appropriate requirements will face sanctions which may include fines and suspension of participation.

If you are participating in a Volleyball BC program or belong to a club that is a member of Volleyball BC, all PIA that are registered in the categories above must have completed the Check.

VOLLEYBALL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Develop and adopt Volleyball BC's screening policy and identify any additional requirements that you want for Persons In Authority.
- Ensure that all registered PIA have completed the Persons In Authority Check so that you are In Good Standing and have valid insurance. Volleyball BC relies on the support of member clubs and organisations to communicate and promote the importance of these requirements. Do not let any requirements lapse for your PIAs or you are not considered In Good Standing and may face sanctions by Volleyball BC.
- Incorporate knowledge of and training in the Persons In Authority Check as part of on-boarding your Board, staff, and volunteers. Make it standard practice.

PERSONS IN AUTHORITY

- Understand the requirements for the Persons In Authority Check and how to complete them.
- Proactively plan time to complete the Persons In Authority Check before your role commences. Do not let any requirements lapse or you are not considered In Good Standing and may face sanctions by Volleyball BC.

PARTICIPANTS

- Ask to see your volleyball club/organisation's policies or guidelines for screening.
- Ask if a PIA has completed their Persons In Authority Check.

VOLLEYBALLBC

CHAPTER 5.

REPORTING MALTREATMENT

An important part of eliminating abuse and maltreatment in volleyball is handling and reporting concerning behaviour or incidents when they occur. Too often in sport we have accepted or perpetuated inappropriate behaviour as being part of the culture. But times are changing and for good reason. As more people speak up and more examples of abuse and maltreatment are shared, we are able to change the culture and ensure that all volleyball programs are participant-centred with safety and well-being as priorities.

Volleyball BC is committed to providing a safe, effective, and supportive process for reporting maltreatment, abuse, or inappropriate behaviour. This document reviews what to do if you experience concerning behaviour within a volleyball program. It also provides tips for disclosing and reporting incidents, and outlines additional resources.

Our Commitment (from our Abuse Policy)

Volleyball Canada and Volleyball BC have zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Individuals are required to report abuse or suspected abuse to Volleyball Canada or to VBC so that those matters can be addressed in an expeditious manner.

Volleyball Canada and Volleyball BC will share all decisions regarding abuse with one another. All information shared will be in compliance with Volleyball Canada and/or Volleyball BC's Privacy Policy and will be subject to applicable privacy laws and regulations.

The policies of Volleyball Canada and Volleyball BC require that complaints, including those related to harassment, discrimination, and abuse, must be handled by an Independent Third Party.

Volleyball Canada and Volleyball BC pledge not to dismiss, penalize, discipline, or retaliate or discriminate against any person who discloses information or submits, in good faith, a report concerning abuse.

Concerns about welfare or safety may come to light in a variety of ways in volleyball:

- You may experience abuse, maltreatment, or inappropriate behaviour as a participant in a program
- You may observe or hear something concerning in a program.
- You may see or receive something inappropriate or abusive online.
- Information may be received from outside of the volleyball community (eg from the police) to indicate that an individual involved may represent a risk to others.
- Concerning information may come to light during the recruitment or screening process for coaches, referees, or volunteers.
- Someone may choose to disclose abuse, maltreatment, or inappropriate behaviour during a volleyball program. A well-run sports event or program with trustworthy and approachable people in charge may provide just the opportunity or trigger for someone to tell about worries they may have, either in their sport or in their family/community.

What are signs to look for?

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT	SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR OR POOR PRACTICE
IMMEDIATE SIGNS • Loses enthusiasm for sport, even for competition • Doesn't want to practice, or skips out on practice without an explanation • Stops trying in practice or competition, perhaps in hopes of getting kicked off the team • Performance declines • Avoids contact with a particular individual, such as a coach, assistant coach, or athletic trainer • Changes from outgoing to reserved, depressed and withdrawn • Has a sudden mood change, such as a violent emotional outburst **LONG-TERM SIGNS** • Poor self-esteem • Trust issues • Anxiety • Feelings of isolation • Depression • Self-destruction • Substance abuse • Disordered eating Keep in mind that these behaviors individually do not necessarily indicate a person has been abused. But if several of these behaviors are present, there is probably something going on that is making the individual reluctant to participate in their sport. If you have observed these behaviors, open up a conversation to find out what may be going on.	Poor practice or inappropriate behaviour refers to behaviour from a coach, volunteer or member of staff that causes a participant distress or harm but might not meet the threshold of abuse. Inappropriate behaviour can be subtle or happen over a long period of time, making it less noticeable and difficult to decide whether it's something that needs to be addressed. Some examples of what inappropriate behaviour or poor practice might look like are: • Pushing someone to train or perform on an injury or whilst unwell • Shouting, berating or humiliating someone • Not providing adequate or safe equipment or spaces for participants to use • Pressuring someone to drastically change their diet, lose or make weight, or follow an unhealthy diet plan • Coaching with alcohol or marijuana on the breath • Setting unrealistic expectations for someone • Failing to safely supervise or support someone As a general rule, if an individual is distressed, in physical pain or in danger, these kinds of practices are not acceptable. An individual should also never feel coerced by someone such as being pushed harder to perform. Although they may not cross the line into abuse, these are examples of poor practice and should be reported and addressed before further harm is caused.

Reporting inappropriate behaviour creates accountability so proper action can be taken and expectations can be re-established. It holds adults interacting with minors to a high standard. It may also prevent participants from experiencing abuse by potentially disrupting an unhealthy situation.

KEY POINT: Preventing abuse or maltreatment is the responsibility of everyone

All club, school or sport event organisers have an ongoing commitment to the safety and protection of participants in sport. The welfare of participants is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to preventing abuse. Reporting information about potential abuse or maltreatment is beneficial in many ways:

- Organisations or authorities like child welfare or police can determine whether it is necessary to investigate the allegations
- Parents or guardians can proactively take steps to protect her/his child (in the case of a minor).
- Reporting concerns helps everyone understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in sport.
- Reporting may disrupt or prevent existing or future abuse from occurring.
- If a person learns about past child sexual abuse that is no longer occurring – it is still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those other children may be at risk.
- Flagging the concerning behaviour to the volleyball club or organization should trigger a review of the activities in an effort to correct and stop the possible misconduct. It will also allow the organization to address any behaviour that is not consistent with its policies and procedures.

Why is it important to report maltreatment or abuse?

KEY POINT: Reporting abuse is a legal and ethical responsibility, especially if a minor is involved

Reporting knowledge about potential child abuse is not a personal decision, it is mandatory under the law.

When a person becomes aware that a child may be or has been abused, there is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action. The legal responsibility comes from child welfare legislation. The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is or might be at risk must report it to someone:

- If the information relates to potential abuse of a child by the child's parent or guardian, the person who becomes aware of the information must report it to child welfare or police.
- If the concern involves potential abuse of a child by any other person, the individual who becomes aware of it must report it to the child's parent or guardian and may also be obligated to report it to child welfare and/ or police.

KEY POINT: People are responsible for reporting concerns, not proving abuse.

How do I report abuse, maltreatment, or inappropriate behaviour?

If you are a victim, witness, or trusted confidante of someone who has experienced abuse or maltreatment in volleyball, follow these steps to report and ensure that the situation is addressed. You may not need to follow every part of the process if the concern is resolved at an earlier stage.

Is the individual in immediate danger or are they injured?

If yes, call the emergency services or police.

- The welfare and safety of the individual is the main priority. It is not up to you to decide whether or not someone has been abused but to report concerns and ensure immediate safety.
- If the individual requires immediate medical attention, arrange this and ensure that medic or police is informed that there may be a concern about abuse, maltreatment, or child protection.

If no, report the concern

1. Raise the concern with the program organiser or volleyball organisation – Talk to the on-site program organiser or to the main administrator for the volleyball club/organisation. Depending on the severity, they may be able to address and handle the situation internally. Volleyball clubs that are members of Volleyball BC are obliged to refer more serious or complex complaints related to abuse and maltreatment to the Abuse-Free Sport program.

2. Report the concern directly to ITP Sport

Contact 1-866-921-6714 or www.integritycounts.ca

Volleyball BC uses ITP Sport as an independent third-party to handle complaints that concern abuse and maltreatment. You can speak to someone confidentially and report any incidents directly to the helpline and they will provide you with advice and handle the complaint. If it is appropriate, they will also conduct an investigation into the complaint.

3. Report the concern to Volleyball BC

CONTACT DETAILS: reporting@volleyballbc.org or by completing the online incident form. We have a process in place outlined in our Discipline and Complaints Policy to address issues or behaviours that contravene our Code of Conduct. A complaint must be signed and in writing and must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the alleged incident. If a complaint is related to abuse, maltreatment, or suspected abuse, VBC will refer the complaint to ITP Sport to handle independently

Ensure you keep a record of your concern and how you reported it.

- Write down all the details or keep copies of all communication about the incident.
- Volleyball BC pledges that there will be no recrimination, dismissal, discipline, or penalization of individuals who submit a report concerning abuse and maltreatment.
- The confidentiality and privacy of individuals should be respected at all times. Do not share information about the incident or behaviour with anyone other than those immediately involved.
- If you do not believe that a situation has been appropriately addressed, Volleyball BC has an **Appeal Policy**
-

How should I handle concerning behaviours that happen to others?

IF SOMEONE TELLS YOU THEY HAVE BEEN MALTREATED OR ABUSED

If someone tells you that he or she is being maltreated or abused:

- React calmly so as not to worry, alarm or deter them. Keep the pace slow and calm.
- Tell them that you care about them and that their safety is the most important concern.
- Reassure them you are glad that they told you.
- **Don't promise to keep it to yourself** – explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to someone trusted to deal with it appropriately.
- Listen to what the person says and take it seriously. Do not make judgements or commitments. Provide positive feedback for the sharing of the experience.
- Only ask questions if you need to clarify what the person is telling you. Do not ask for explicit details if they aren't relevant. Do not ask leading questions where you pre-suppose the answer, eg "They hit you, didn't they?"
- Thank them for sharing and tell them you want to help. Encourage them to call the Abuse Free Sport Program or request permission for you to call them.
- Tell them that confidentiality is important and not to share freely with others.
- If appropriate ask about their state of mind and support network. Do not allow the person to leave if they are upset or very emotional.
- Do not notify the complainant without the express consent of the individual or allow the complainant to have contact with the individual without a safety plan.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether someone is being maltreated or abused. However, it is your responsibility to act on your concerns. Make a detailed record of what you have seen or heard and report the situation to the appropriate person or organisation.

IF YOU SEE OR HEAR CONCERNING BEHAVIOUR

You may witness behaviour that troubles you when you are participating or watching volleyball. You may even be an employee or volunteer at the organisation.

A **bystander** is a person who observes an action, event or behaviour like bullying or harassment. Bystanders can often experience feelings like helplessness, fear and worry and may even feel unsure if they should interfere, particularly if there are other people around. Taking action as a bystander (if it's safe to do so) can be a way to try to stop the behaviour, show solidarity with the person who's experiencing bullying, encourage others to disapprove of the situation and prevent future incidents. If intervening isn't safe, the bystander should document what happened, when, and who was present, so it can be reported.

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing by staff or volunteers, within their organisation. Whistleblowing can involve sharing potentially vital information about health and safety risks and the behaviour or attitude of someone that is concerning.

As a bystander or as a whistleblower, it is essential that concerns are reported and acted upon as soon as possible. When pursuing a concern:

- Keep calm
- Consider risks and next steps
- Let the facts do the talking – don't make up allegations
- Don't pursue the allegation yourself
- Remember that you're a witness

What information should I report?

- The name of the individual about whom there are concerns, noting any disability or special needs (eg communication/language) they may have or whether they are a minor.
- The nature of the concern, suspicion or allegation.
- A description of any visible injury or other physical or behavioural indicators, taking care to be as accurate as you can.
- The individual's account of what has happened (whether they are the person to whom it happened or the person reporting it)
- Dates, times and any other factual information, including details of the person suspected or alleged to have harmed the individual.
- The distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay.

Reporting Peer-To-Peer Incidents

Peer to peer incidents are situations where maltreatment or inappropriate behaviour occurs between two people on the same team or in the same group. This may include bullying, harassment, sharing of images without consent, or any other type of maltreatment. It can be especially hard to come forward and report behaviours if they are among your teammates because:

- You may not want to get into trouble.
- You may feel ashamed.
- You may fear retaliation or making things worse if someone finds out.
- You may have also engaged in inappropriate or concerning behaviours and be concerned about getting into trouble.

Check out our tips below if you are in this situation...

TIPS FOR REPORTING PEER-TO-PEER INCIDENTS HAPPENING TO YOU

Family members can offer you guidance, support and be an important advocate when you are going through a difficult time. While it may be difficult to tell your parents or another safe adult about what is happening, even when you know you need to, it is important. Remember, it's your parent's job to help keep you safe so while they may be upset, they should also be concerned about what has happened and help you figure out how to deal with it.

In some situations, there may be reasons why talking to a parent may not be an option. In those situations, speak with another safe adult like a coach or relative about what's happening.

Here are some suggestions about how to let your parents/a safe adult know what's happening:

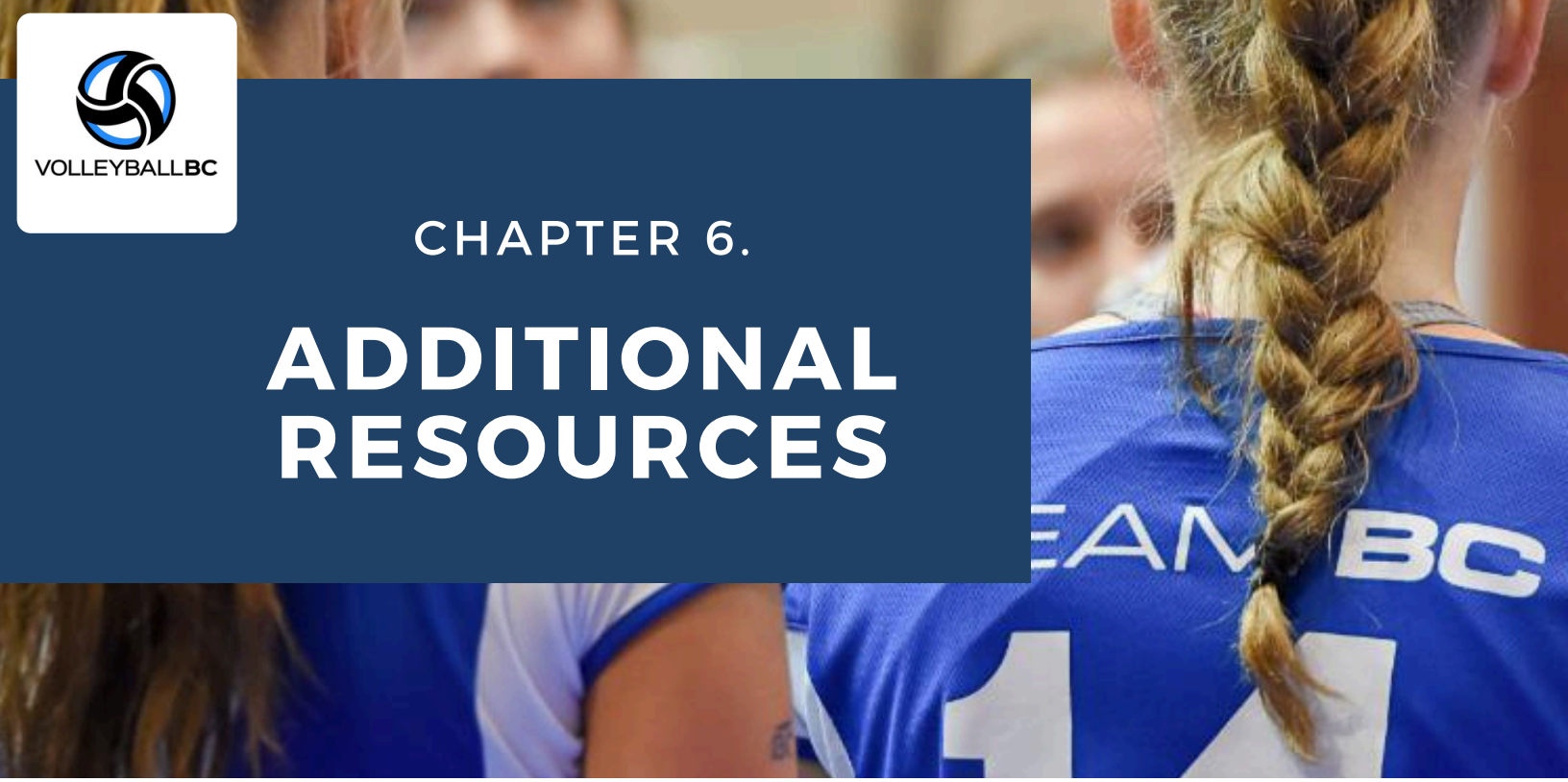
- **Write a note or an email** to your parent/a safe adult explaining what's happening and asking for their help.
- **Have a friend or a safe adult present with you** while you speak with your parents about what happened.
- **Have a safe adult (coach) speak with your parents on your behalf.** This can give your parents time to process the information without you being in front of them.
- **It may also be helpful to practice** what you are going to say before approaching your parents/a safe adult. You can make notes about what you want to say and discuss with a friend. This may help you figure out how to approach your parents/a safe adult and their possible reaction.

If you aren't able to identify a safe adult to talk to, contact a crisis line like Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) or find a counsellor who may be able to help you make decisions about what to do next.

TIPS FOR BYSTANDERS AND SUPPORTING A TEAMMATE

A **bystander** is a person who observes an action, event or behaviour like bullying or harassment. Being a bystander can be tough. Bystanders can often experience feelings like helplessness, fear and worry and may even feel unsure if they should interfere, particularly if there are other people around. Taking action as a bystander (if it's safe to do so) can be a way to try to stop the behaviour, show solidarity with the person who's experiencing bullying, encourage others to disapprove of the situation and prevent future incidents.

- **Reach out:** Making an effort to be there for the person who's experiencing bullying can go a long way. You can approach them and ask if they're OK, remind them that the situation is not their fault and offer to try and get help together. This could involve moving away from the person who's bullying in the moment or contacting a safe adult, too.
- **Don't take it personally**: don't get upset if the person isn't ready to talk about it. Knowing that you care may be enough for now.
- **Be a team:** offer to help your team-mate to speak to a safe adult (a parent/caregiver, your coach.) when they're ready. Don't push the person. You can also give your friend Kids Help Phone's number and offer to call a counsellor together.
- **Take care of yourself:** being a good friend can be challenging and you may need support. Try to think of a safe adult you can speak to about your feelings such as a coach or parent/caregiver.
- **Go to a safe adult:** if you're concerned about someone's safety and well-being, it's important to involve a safe adult such as the coach, your teacher, or parents. If someone is in immediate danger, you can contact the emergency services in your area for help.



CHAPTER 6.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Volleyball BC Resources

Visit www.volleyballbc.org/safe-sport for more information about what we are doing to address concussion, injury, abuse and maltreatment, and mental health in volleyball.

Educational Resources

viaSport BC
- https://www.viasport.ca/safe-sport

Canadian Sport Integrity Program
- https://sportintegrity.ca/

UK Child Protection in Sport Unit
- https://thecpsu.org.uk/

US Center for Safe Sport -
- https://uscenterforsafesport.org/

Commit 2 Kids - Keeping kids safe in sport
- https://commit2kids.ca/en/#keeping-kids-safe-in-sport

Kids in the Know - A national, interactive safety education program that uses age-appropriate lessons on boundaries and healthy versus unhealthy behaviours in relationships.
- Grades 7-8: https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/healthy_relationships_grades7_8
- High School Age: https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/healthy_relationships_high_school

Coaching Association of Canada -
- https://safesport.coach.ca/

Reporting maltreatment in volleyball

- **911** - If an individual is in immediate danger or seriously injured.
- **Your program organiser or volleyball organisation, including Volleyball BC** – Talk to the on-site program organiser or to the main administrator for the volleyball club/organisation. Depending on the severity, they may be able to address and handle the situation internally. Volleyball BC and clubs that are members of Volleyball BC are obliged to refer more serious or complex complaints related to abuse and maltreatment to the ITP Sport to ensure that they are appropriately handled.
- **Report the concern directly to ITP Sport** - Contact 1-866-921-6714 or www.integritycounts.ca Volleyball BC uses ITP Sport as an independent third-party to handle complaints that concern abuse and maltreatment. You can speak to someone confidentially and report any incidents directly to the helpline and they will provide you with advice and handle the complaint. If it is appropriate, they will also conduct an investigation into the complaint. .

Support services

- **Canada Suicide Prevention Service** - 24/7/365, in French and English. Call 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645 (4 p.m. - midnight Eastern Time, standard messaging rates apply)
- **Crisis Centre BC** - 24/7 support in over 140 languages using a language service. Call 310-6789 or 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE), or one of the regional support lines listed on their website.
- **Kids Help Phone** - 24/7 free support for children and youth across Canada by phone (1-800-668-6868), online chat, text (text CONNECT to 686868), or Facebook Messenger (account name Kids Help Phone). If you identify as Indigenous, you can ask to be connected with a First Nations, Inuk or Métis crisis responder (if one's available) by messaging FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, or METIS to 686868 or through Facebook Messenger.
- **2-1-1** - 211 is Canada's primary source of information for government and community-based, non-clinical health and social services. The free and confidential service can be accessed 24 hours a day, in more than 150 languages, by phone, chat, text, and web.
- **B.C. Helpline for Children** – a confidential toll-free phone line for children and youth wanting to talk to someone – is 310-1234 (no area code required)
- **The Foundry** - Health and wellness resources, services, and supports for people aged 12 to 24, online and through integrated service centres in communities around B.C.
- **VictimLinkBC** – a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone and online service available across B.C. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week which provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.
- **KUU-US Crisis Response Service** - 1-800-588-8717 for crisis support for Indigenous people in B.C.
- **Trans Lifeline Canada** - Peer support, run by and for trans people, offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis. 1-877-330-6366
- **Qmunity** - B.C.'s queer, trans, and two-spirit resource centre