

Violence and neglect in a sports environment. What are we talking about?



Violence

Violence means any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property.

In a sports or leisure environment, this violence can be demonstrated by a person in authority (e.g., coach), peers (teammates, adversaries), parents, managers, team representatives, spectators, a member of the medical or support team (example: physical preparer, massage therapist, etc.). It can occur in locker rooms or showers, on the field during a game or a training session, at a coach's house or, during competitions, sports initiations or travel.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when any person (it can be a person who takes care of you, such as: coach, therapist, volunteer, etc.) uses physical force to hurt or injure you or another young person. It can also involve the use of inappropriate training methods which risk leading to worsening an injury. This type of violence is often the most visible!

Physical abuse also occurs when a person is subject to physical violence, which may or may not leave marks, or is subject to unreasonable educational methods by one or both parents or any other person involved in the field.

Examples of physical abuse in a sports environment:

- Pushing, shaking or striking an athlete.
- Forcing an athlete to train in spite of injuries known to the coach.
- Pinching the athlete.
- Inflicting extra training sessions which lead to exhaustion or which make the athlete sick.
- Asking the athlete to perform moves or technical skills too difficult for their capability, requests which could have negative impacts on the athlete's health.

Negligence

1 When the child's parents or the person having custody of the child do not meet the child's basic needs, fail to give the child the care required for the child's physical or mental health, or fail to provide the child with the appropriate supervision or support.

2 When a person does not act with the same prudence that a reasonable person would under the same circumstances.

Examples of neglect in a sports or leisure-related environment:

- Asking a participant or a person involved in the field, to drop out or take a break from school, to train rather than go to school outside of scheduled events (e.g., competitions, sports/study program).
- Knowing that a participant or a person involved in the field is not receiving the care required by the state of their mental and physical health and not intervening. Knowing that a young person is practicing self-destructive behaviours (eating disorder or using doping substances) and not intervening.
- Knowing that a participant or a person involved in sports is or has been the victim of physical, psychological or sexual violence and not doing anything to protect that person.



50% of athletes report having experienced bullying/physical violence*

Don't take any situation lightly or brush it off
Need help? 1-833-245-HELP (4357)

