

# Welcome to the AGF SafeSport Webinar



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June 20, 2018

# Agenda

1. Importance of SafeSport & AGF's Role
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Athlete Maltreatment



# SafeSport

Olympic community's initiative to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport for athletes of all ages. Combines efforts of both researchers & practitioners.



# AGF SafeSport Main Objectives

1. Create SAFE environments
2. Educate to prevent
3. Strengthen Policies & Reporting procedures



## Direction from GCG

Athlete's longevity in sport and their performance is  
a *by-product* of their **wholistic wellness**



# Sexual Abuse

## Warning signs & What to do if you suspect it



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Det. Adena Warren  
Calgary Police Service

## Legal Terms Used:

- Assault
- Sexual Assault
- Sexual Interference
- Exploitation
- Invitation to touching
- Abuse – Physical, Emotional, Neglect
- Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act

## Role of Law Enforcement

- Mandated reporting of Abuse and Maltreatment
- What happens when a complaint is made to police?
- Charges – only laid after enough evidence collected that it's beyond reasonable doubt
- Up to 18 months until trial
- Conviction – occurs at end of trial
- Media Ban – in effect when victim is a child

## Profile of Sexual Abusers

- Red flags are normal to miss
- Narcissists
- In position of power
- Adolescent abusers make up 30% of perpetrators
- Never just *assume* someone is trustworthy
- Creates wall of protection
- Always has seemingly good reason for doing what they're doing

## Warning Signs of Grooming

- What is Grooming?
- Often first to arrive, last to leave
- Befriends many kids
- Will groom everyone around (parents included), then hone in on victim
- Might be harder on victim with expectations, then offer special treatment
- Looks for opportunities to isolate victim
- Multiple **red flags** = time to take action!

## Understanding “ How did I miss this?”

- Master manipulators know how to work the system
- It is common that people miss red flags
- Be aware – don’t be Paranoid
- Key is to **ALWAYS** have checks and balances
- No Statue of Limitations on Sexual Assault in Canada

# Athlete Maltreatment



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Ellen MacPherson  
Dir. SafeSport GCG



# What is Maltreatment?

“Volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injury and/or psychological harm against the child” (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007)

## Key Definitional Features of Maltreatment

- Preventative approach
- Intentions of the adult are irrelevant
- Pattern of behaviour required



# How does Maltreatment Occur?

- Maltreatment occurs in relationships of unequal power
- Process of grooming occurs
- In the initial phases of grooming, behaviours are normalized/accepted

## Types of Maltreatment

- Sexual
- Emotional
- Physical
- Neglect



# Emotional Maltreatment

- Caregiver's failure to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment
- Examples include: yelling, demeaning, degrading, belittling, creating culture of fear, humiliating comments
- Stand-alone form of maltreatment and part of all other forms (sexual & physical abuse, neglect)



# Physical Maltreatment

- Contact or non-contact behavior that can cause physical harm to an athlete
- Examples include:
  - Stretching to the point of injury
  - Hitting an athlete with sports equipment
  - Returning to play prematurely
  - Excessive repetition of skill to the point of injury
  - Excessive exercise as a form of punishment

# Neglect

- Acts of omission
- Examples include:
  - Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep
  - Ignoring an injury or athlete's report of pain
  - Knowing about abuse but failing to report
  - Denial of non-sport, developmentally valuable experiences



# Effects of Maltreatment on Athlete

- Self-esteem issues
- Low mood
- Poor body image
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Difficulty with trust in relationships
- Reduced enjoyment
- Decreased motivation
- Impaired focus
- Drop-out from sport



# Why is sport vulnerable to instances of maltreatment?

- Access
- Unquestioned power and authority of those in position of trust
- Socialization of key stakeholders
- Criminal record checks are limited
- Winning at all costs mentality
- Uncertainty about when to report and who to report to

## **KEY MESSAGES**

**Safe Sport must address all forms of maltreatment**

**&**

**Safe Sport is everyone's responsibility**



# Safeguarding Caring for Kids

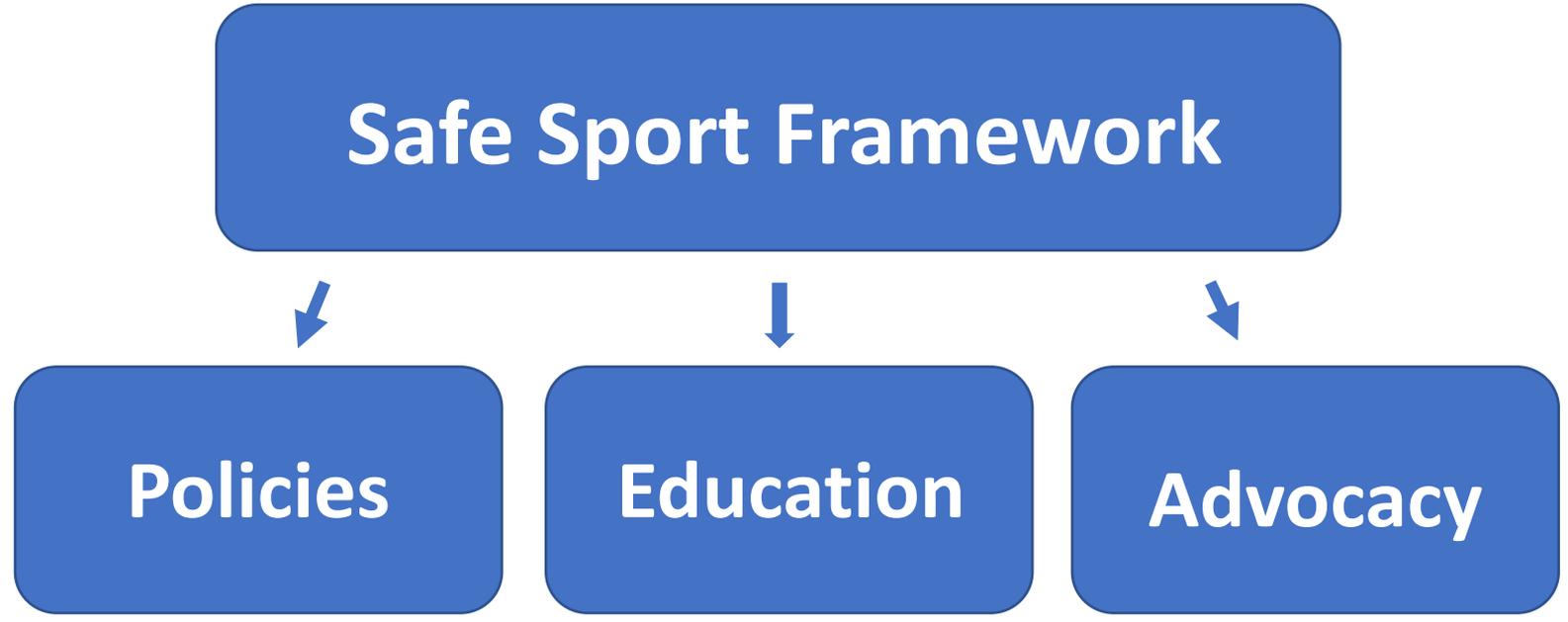
- Understand needs and interests of the athlete and commit to efforts to optimize their welfare and development
- Relationships with athletes are cooperative and collaborative
- Emphasis of approach:
  - Promotion of care: optimal development, health & well-being
  - Anticipate potential issues/obstacles to positive environment
  - Address potential issues with stakeholders & create solutions



- 5x Olympic Medalist
- 3x World All-Around Champion
- 4x USA All-Around Champion



# GCG Preliminary Framework for SafeSport



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# Our Collective Responsibility



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## What can AGF do?

- Develop tools and resources  
<https://www.abgym.ab.ca>
- Create guidelines and policies
- Educate all members
- Handle complaints and concerns
- Enhance support for coaches who are already embracing athlete well-being as top priority!

## Changes to AGF Reporting

- Information and instructions available at [www.abgym.ab.ca](http://www.abgym.ab.ca)
- Report a concern and/or violation
- Multiple options for who handles concern
- Anonymous
- What happens when concern is received?
- Mandatory reporting

# AGF SafeSport Resources

- Local Authorities
- Respect In Sport Resource Line
- Kids Help Phone
- Bystander education



## What can Clubs do?

- **NO Opportunity & ZERO Tolerance**
- Established standards of acceptable behavior
- Screening policies
- Educate everyone
- Internal process for reporting concerns
- Do not accept **Willful Blindness**
- **No retaliation** for good faith reporting

## What can Parents & Coaches do?

- Talk to your kids...a lot!
- Help child find balance between respecting an adult & using their voice.
- Adolescence often are most vulnerable.
- Stay on top their social media and texts to ensure appropriate interaction.
- Voice your concerns through communication channels.

**NEVER**



**1 Adult**  
**1 Athlete**

**OKAY**



**1 AGF Certified Adult**  
(see back for details)  
**2 Athletes** if aged 12 and over  
**3+ Athletes** if under the age of 12

**BEST**



**2 AGF Certified Adults**  
(see back for details)  
**1+ Athletes**

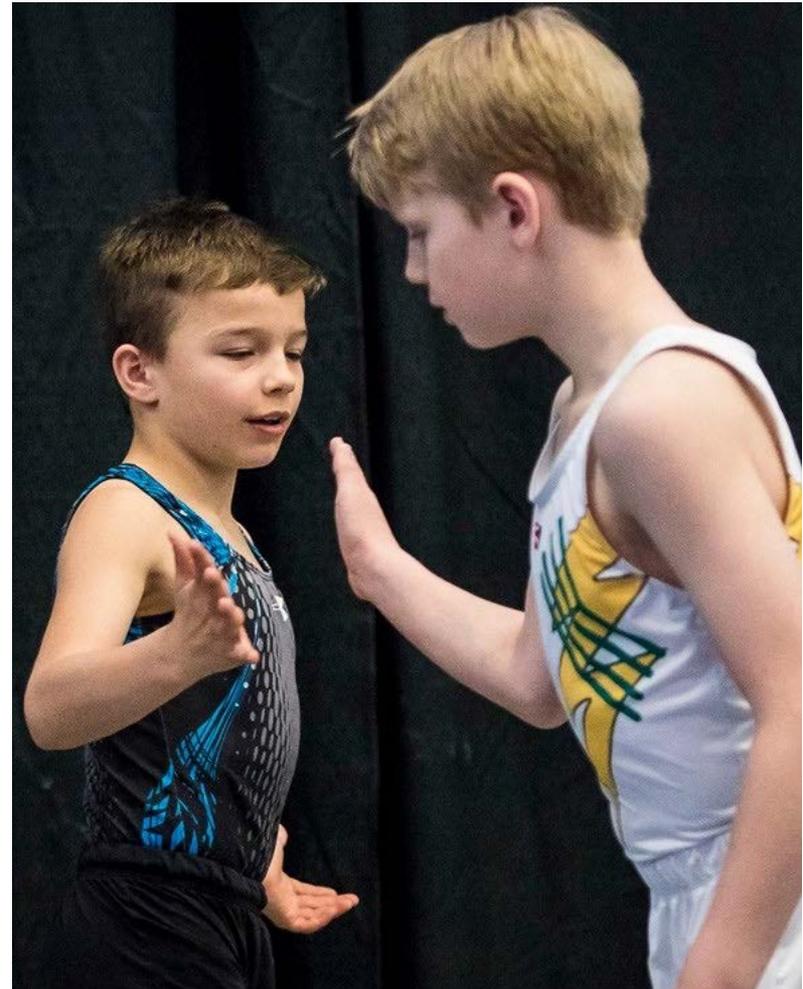
# Delicate Balance

**Strive for Excellence**



**Domination**

# Joy in the Journey!



Please message your questions  
before you exit this session or  
email them to  
**[safesport@abgym.ab.ca](mailto:safesport@abgym.ab.ca)**