

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ATHLETES' COUNCIL

SAFE SPORT

IF IT FEELS WRONG, IT IS WRONG!

The following table is from the [Emotional & Physical Abuse & Misconduct Toolkit](#) created by the [U.S. Center for Safesport](#) to help you identify what a healthy environment looks like.

Safe & Effective Environment	Ineffective Environment with Misconduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based in respect• Builds self-esteem• Supports athletes in reaching their goals• Enhances team performance• Helps athletes understand consequences of actions• Shows how to correct harmful or unproductive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploits power differences• Emotionally and/or physically harms athletes• Tears down self-esteem• Can lead to athletes leaving sport• Causes changes through fear, not learning• Suggests winning is more important than athlete well-being.

How do you identify acceptable and unacceptable behavior? When do you reach out to an adult to ask for help and guidance? Below is information from [Safe4Athletes](#) to further help with these questions.

No Bullying, Emotional or Verbal Abuse Allowed!

- When an adult or another athlete who is bigger, stronger or older tries to make you do something wrong, makes you feel worthless or makes fun of you in order to embarrass you or make you feel bad.
- When someone yells at you, calls you names or swears at you.
- When someone pushes, shoves, punches, pinches or hurts you in any way.
- When someone tries to make you feel like you are a bad person.
- When someone repeatedly attempts to control your personal or social life.

No Sexual Abuse!

- Sexual contact, sexual attention, and any other behavior with sexual overtones that make you uncomfortable and you do not want to have happen.
- Sex jokes, sexual cartoons or photos.
- If someone touches you inappropriately, tries to pinch, fondle or kiss you.
- Someone talking to you about sex, asking you to have sex, asking you to touch them or kiss them.
- Someone talks about your body or your dress or calls you "hot".
- Emails, text messages or uses social media to talk about sex.

No Hazing, Initiation Rituals, or Physical Punishment!

- No team is allowed to have an initiation ritual or make you think that you have to do something embarrassing to be accepted on the team
- Some examples of activities that ARE NOT ALLOWED:
 - pressuring you to drink alcohol, take drugs, or eat or drink something you don't want to.
 - giving you any substance for the purpose of improving performance
 - making you shave any area of your body or take off clothes or show body parts
 - making you dress up and look silly.
 - forcing you to do 100 sit-ups or run laps or do hard physical activity as punishment.
 - asking you to perform a physical activity that is clearly beyond your ability and may cause injury.

No Romantic or Dating Relationships with Coaches!

- Your coach must treat every athlete equally and should not be spending time alone with any athlete.
- The coach is your teacher and romantic relationships are NOT OK.

Physical Contact!

A coach must always ask for permission prior to any touching of an athlete. The following situations are generally accepted unless “you” the athlete feels uncomfortable:

- When the coaches ask for permission to put a body part in a correct mechanical position or correct physical form;
- A “high five” or pat on the head or back when congratulating an athlete for a good performance.
- “spotting” or any protective coaching intended to reduce the risk of practicing or performing a skill that may cause harm with “spotting” techniques explained to the athletes beforehand.
- In general, if a coach or anyone else touching you makes you feel uncomfortable for any reason, it is okay for you to ask the person to stop and such physical contact must stop immediately no matter what the reason.

IF IT FEELS WRONG, IT IS WRONG!

If you need safe sport support:

The Canadian Sport Helpline
1-888-839-7678
info@abuse-free-sport.ca
<https://abuse-free-sport.ca/>

If you would like to connect with the Athletes' Council for questions, ideas, or to support initiatives, please contact:

Oklend LLakaj
ollakaj@ontariovolleyball.org