



EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Effective Date: November 20, 2023

Online Training and Assessment

[Keeping Girls in Sport](#) was created to help everyone who coaches girls understand how girls develop physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. When we understand how and why girls play, we can help every young athlete stay in sport, reach their potential, and remain active long after the competitions end, with a goal of becoming the next generation of inspiring female coaches and role models. This online training includes the following elements:

- The Evolving Story of Girls in Sport
- Why Girls Aren't Participating in Sport and Activity
- Mechanic, Energetic and Relationship Injuries and Prevention
- How to Create Safe, Strong, Supportive Environments
- Why Girls Quit Sport
- Keeping Girls Healthy
- Key Themes for Keeping Girls in Sport
- Coaching Elements + Keeping Sport Fun and Engaging

[The Gender Equity Self-Assessment Tool](#) for Sport Clubs and Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations is a practical tool designed to help sport and physical activity organizations assess whether their programs, services, and facilities meet a satisfactory standard of gender equity. Results will help organizations identify areas where they can focus their efforts to strengthen their engagement of women and girls as participants and leaders.⁴

Sexual Orientation

New data show that homophobia is still alive and well in Canadian sports (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport and Physical Activity (Canadian Women & Sport), 2019). The study, which is the first of its kind, suggests anti-gay attitudes are deterring young people from being active in some athletic fields. The survey, called Out on the Fields, was conducted online in six English-speaking countries — U.S., U.K., Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Australia — and promoted through a coalition of sporting organizations. Of the 9,500 participants, 75 per cent were LGBT. The data show that 81% of the Canadians surveyed witnessed or experienced homophobia in sports, while 84% of gay men and 88% of lesbians polled faced slurs in sports. In addition, 86% of Canadian gay youth and 89% of lesbian youth responded that they were not open about their sexuality with their teammates. Of the Canadian participants, 66% said they would feel unsafe in spectator areas if they were open about their sexuality.⁵

Does not tolerate discrimination. Immediately report the discrimination incidents to [redacted] A complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a [redacted] official or employee but must be followed up in writing (letter and/or email). [redacted] should be submitted to [redacted] via [redacted] [info@\[redacted\]](mailto:info@[redacted])

⁴ Canadian Women and Sport - The Gender Equity Self-Assessment Tool

⁵ Canada Soccer – Guide to Accessibility and Inclusion

Mental Health

Mental health is different from the absence of mental illness and is integral to our overall health. Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their own community. Good mental health buffers us from the stresses and hardships that are part of life for us all and can help to reduce the risk of developing mental health conditions. Even when someone develops a mental health condition, they can nevertheless experience good mental health, and this can contribute to their journey of recovery.⁶

Signs & Symptoms

Many children and youth will exhibit different moods, thoughts and behaviours at various times that can be part of normal childhood development. These include:

- getting significantly lower marks in school
- avoiding friends and family
- having frequent outbursts of anger
- changes to sleeping or eating habits
- acting out or rebelling against authority
- drinking a lot and/or using drugs
- not doing the things he or she used to enjoy
- worrying constantly
- experiencing frequent mood swings
- not concerned with his or her appearance
- obsessed with his or her weight
- lacking energy or motivation
- increased risk-taking behaviour
- feeling very down

But these characteristics and behaviours may be signs of an underlying mental health concern or disorder if they:

- are intense
- persist over long periods of time
- are inappropriate for the child's age
- interfere with the child's life

Some of the most common disorders among children and youth include:

- anxiety
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — also known as attention deficit disorder (ADD)
- depression and other mood disorders
- schizophrenia
- eating disorders⁷

⁶ Canada Soccer – Guide to Accessibility and Inclusion

⁷ Canadian Mental Health Association - Child and Youth Mental Health: Signs and Symptoms

Religion

The relationship between sports and religion can sometimes be challenging, but as with other considerations for creating accessible, inclusive, and welcoming environments, organizations should adapt their practices and programs to consider different religious beliefs. While sport can be a positive vehicle to overcome religious intolerance, insensitivities to accommodating religious diversity may discourage people from taking part in sport.

Insensitivities and areas of accommodation may include but is not limited to:

- training or playing days that conflict with religious observation;
- not providing a place or appropriate environment for observation or prayer;
- fasting and perceived effects on performance;
- other dietary requirements;
- conforming to a dress code;
- providing only communal change rooms;
- gender mixing at practices, games, and/or team transport; and/or,
- tolerance or appropriateness of sponsors or advertising logos on team uniforms that contradict religious observation (e.g. gambling, loan companies, alcohol).

While the issue of inclusion of certain people or lifestyles that other people claim to find offensive based on religion remains fluid, there are still many steps that sports can take to create a more tolerant, encouraging, and accommodating environment for people with different religious beliefs. Examples include:

- setting aside a quiet, demarcated space as a prayer area or religious observation area;
- allowing players to take breaks during practice for religious observation;
- creating set time for single gender practices or “closed to public” matches;
- accommodating dress codes in team uniforms; and/or
- making wet towels available for fasting players to cool down on hot game days when they are unable to drink water.

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