

# Practices and Initiatives for Safe Sport

**Marie-Claude Asselin**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Webinar**  
February 23, 2021

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada

**Canada**



# Presentation Plan

1. Principles of Behavior Management
2. Policy Writing Essentials
3. Particularities of Safe Sport
4. SDRCC Initiatives to Support Safe Sport
5. Everyone's Business
6. Questions

# Problem Statement

**“Due to a lack of fair and consistent policies, or to the improper administration of those policies, athletes and other participants in sport are being disciplined, harassed and denied opportunities without proper recourse to a hearing or appeal.”**

Report of the Work Group  
to the Secretary of State (Amateur Sport)  
May 2000

Code of Ethics Trickles Down to Enforcing  
Sanctions

**Code  
of  
Ethics**

**Code of Conduct**

**Disciplinary Measures**

**Enforcing Sanctions**

# What's the difference???

## Code of Ethics

- ▶ Ethical Foundations
- ▶ General Principles
- ▶ Value-Based
- ▶ Higher End
- ▶ “Fuzzy”

## Code of Conduct

- ▶ Extension of Code of Ethics
- ▶ Translates Values into Actions
- ▶ Behavior-Based
- ▶ More Concrete

Disciplinary measures should be  
based on a legal power



Have a **solid** Code of Conduct

# Policy Writing

## The Essentials

---

# Policy: Scope of Application

- Who is subject to it?

- Coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers, athletes, parents?

- Who is protected by it? 

- When are these behaviors prohibited?

- Field of play, change rooms, parking lot, during travel to and from events, social events, on social media, all the time?

- Who has the authority to determine or sanction?

- Investigator, disciplinary committee, Board of Directors?

# Setting out the Standard of Behavior

## Positive:

### Expectations, Model Behavior

- ▶ “Failure” is a Breach
- ▶ Deviations:
  - One-time may = sanction
  - Repeat offense = sanction
  - Slips may be forgiven
- ▶ More flexibility or discretion

## Negative:

### “Thou Shall Not”

- ▶ “Doing” is a Breach
- ▶ Deviations:
  - One-time = sanction
  - No matter circumstances
  - Obligation to sanction
- ▶ Less flexibility or discretion

# Checklist for Good Policy Writing

- ✓ Clear and simple language (easily understood by members)
- ✓ Concise vocabulary (no misinterpretation)
- ✓ Completeness (no gaps)
- ✓ Internal & External Consistency (no contradictions, compliant with and complementary to other policies)
- ✓ Authority (who can decide, grant exceptions, amend, etc.)
- ✓ Validated by a good lawyer

# The Code of Conduct Establishes:

- ▶ The Expected & Prohibited Behavior
- ▶ The Potential Consequences of Breaches

# The Disciplinary Policy Establishes:

- ▶ The Process to Follow to Deal with Alleged Breaches
- ▶ Who has the Authority to Impose a Sanction
- ▶ Guidelines for a Fair and Timely Process

**\*\*OUR NEXT WEBINAR\*\***

# Dealing with Breaches

## Informal Approach:

- ▶ A verbal comment
- ▶ A discussion with the member
- ▶ A written warning

## Formal Approach:

- ▶ Sanctions
- ▶ Disciplinary process
- ▶ Respecting rules of natural justice

# Classification of Breaches

<b><i>Serious</i></b>	<b><i>Formal Approach*</i></b>	<b><i>Formal Approach</i></b>	<b><i>Formal Approach with Permanent Consequence</i></b>
<b><i>Minor</i></b>	<b><i>Informal Approach</i></b>	<b><i>Informal Approach with Written Notice</i></b>	<b><i>Formal Approach</i></b>
	<b><i>First Breach</i></b>	<b><i>Second Breach</i></b>	<b><i>Third Breach</i></b>

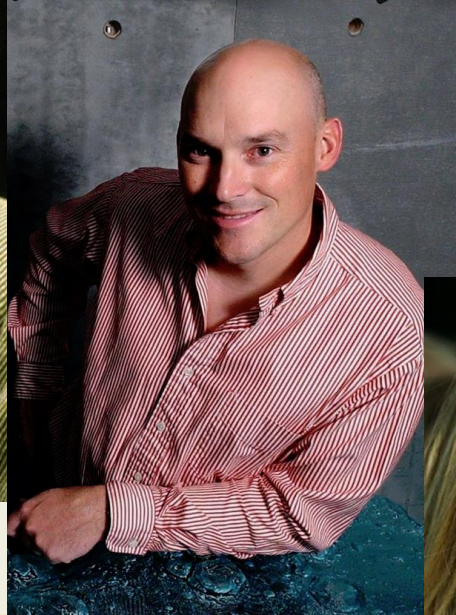
\* **Egregious behavior** may warrant **permanent consequences** on the **first breach**.

# Harassment and Abuse :

## Particularities

---

# What do these people have in common?



**Poll #1**



# What predators and abusers can look like...

- ▶ Well educated
- ▶ Well spoken
- ▶ Friendly
- ▶ Helpful
- ▶ Competent
- ▶ Good with kids

# So, how can you tell them apart?

## Recognize “Grooming”

Grooming is a process used by an individual to prepare a child, and significant adults around the child, in order to abuse the child.

**Access and Control / Opportunity**

**Environment**

**Child**

**Source:** Canadian Centre for Child Protection

# High Risk Behaviors

- Consistently crossing boundaries, sexual or not
- Resisting policy compliance (transporting, inviting to their house, communicating, socializing, partying with youth)
- Spending most of their free time with youth
- Difficulty with self-control
- Emotionally needy



Meeting the  
Needs of the  
Child, not of  
the Adult

**Source:** Canadian Centre for  
Child Protection

# The Hot Spots

- Locker rooms
- Showers
- Changing areas
- Transportation
- Away tournaments /competitions
- Extended stays
- Parties/alcohol consumption



Rule of Two  
(or “Open and  
Observable”)

**Source:** Canadian Centre for  
Child Protection

You need to protect children and youth in your sport organizations from predators.

Because they “look” for organizations that do not, in order to access victims.

# Commit to Kids Program Kit

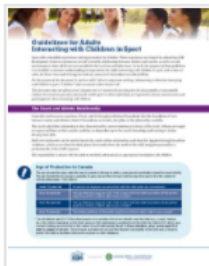


## French version

The Commit to Kids program is a step-by-step program to help prevent sexual abuse from happening within child-serving organizations. The kit includes the Commit to Kids manual, a video CD (training video, sample code of conduct, sample policies and procedures) and a steps for reporting inappropriate conduct and steps for reporting child abuse card.

**\$75.00**

**Source:** Canadian Centre for Child Protection, *Commit to Kids Program*



## Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Children in Sport

(For Sport Organizations and Parents)

 **DOWNLOAD**



## Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

(For Parents)

 **DOWNLOAD**



## Travel Guidelines to Help Protect Children in Sport

(For Sport Organizations)

 **DOWNLOAD**



## Steps to Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

(For Sport Organizations)

 **DOWNLOAD**



## Steps to Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

(For Sport Organizations)

 **DOWNLOAD**



## Resource Supplement for Travel Guidelines to Help Protect Children in Sport

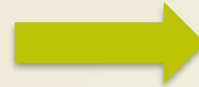
(For Sport Organizations)

 **DOWNLOAD**

**Source:** Canadian Centre for Child Protection, *Commit to Kids Program*

# Emotional and Psychological Abuse

- Purposeful Isolation / Neglect
- Name Calling
- Body Shaming
- Belittling
- Jokes about Appearance, Faith, Lifestyle
- Threats of Violence



They also leave  
lasting scars

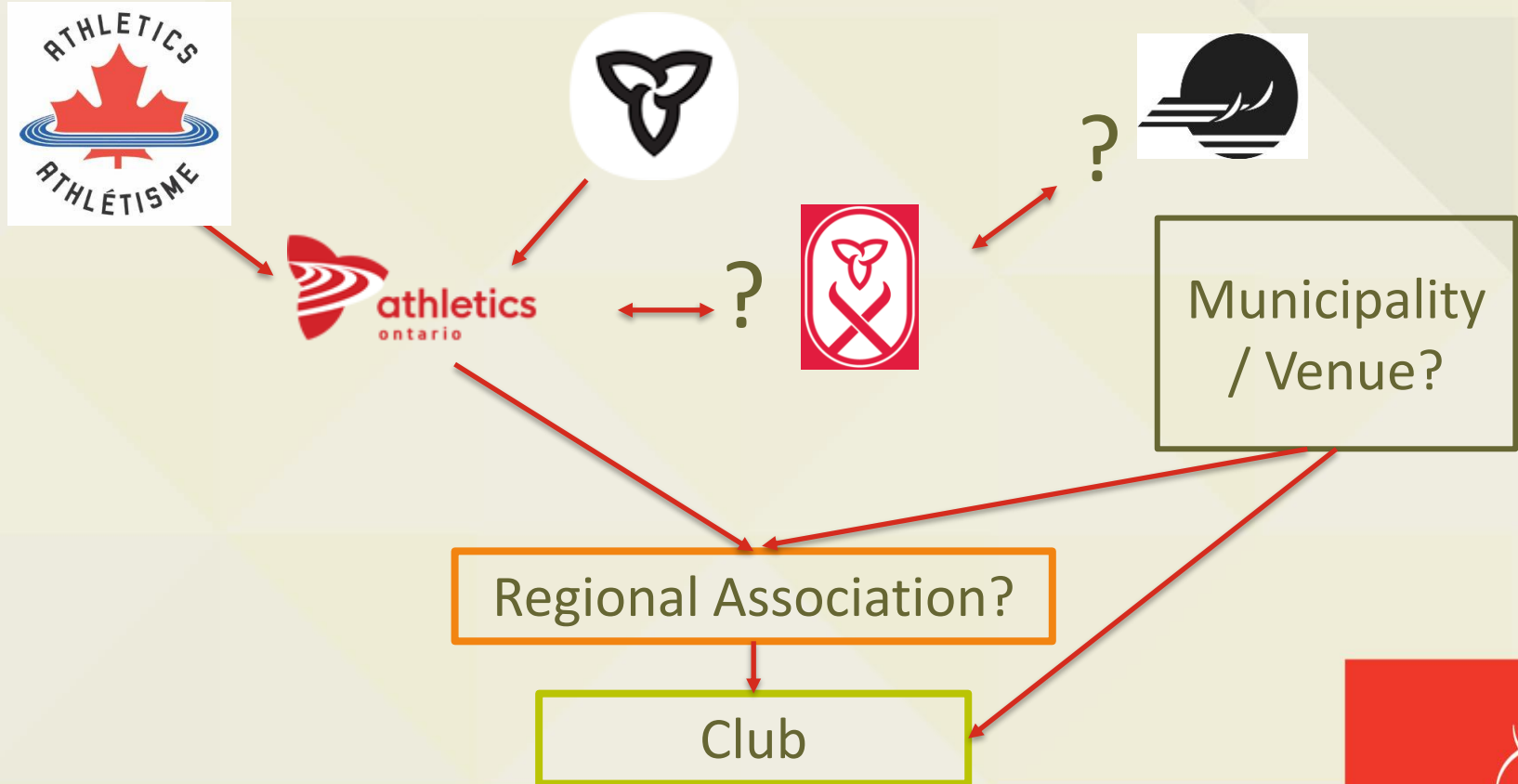
# Be Sensitive to Power Imbalances

- **Authority-Based Relationship**: by virtue of an ascribed position of authority;
- **Dependency-Based Relationship**: dependent for a sense of security, safety, trust, and fulfillment of needs - sometimes due to physical or intellectual capacity;
- **Peer-to-Peer Relationship**: **power** may be derived from seniority, ability, physical size, public profile or gender, etc.

# Reporting Complaints and Investigations

- ▶ Independent & Confidential (anonymous?) Reporting
- ▶ Preliminary Screening (admissibility)
- ▶ Preliminary Assessment (risk mitigation, next steps)
- ▶ Qualified & Independent Investigators
- ▶ Clearly Defined Scope of Investigator's Mandate

# Multiple Jurisdictions / Levels



When the alleged behavior is  
criminal...

what is the role of the sport  
sector?

Poll #2

When alleged behavior is criminal...  
what is the role of sport?



Criminal	Civil	Professional
Prison	Money	License

# Safe Sport Considerations

- **Prior Criminal Convictions**

- Are they automatically recognized? For what? In what context?

- **Provisional Measures**

- How to protect the complainant and other potential victims?
  - Can respondent challenge the provisional measures?

# SDRCC Safe Sport Initiatives

## Supporting the Sport Community

---

SINCE MARCH 2019



**Confidential / anonymous / independent / bilingual**

**Operators = sport psychology and counseling**

**REFERRALS ONLY** (to police, child protection, sport organization, etc.)

SINCE DECEMBER 2018



Selected / **credentials** validated

Received orientation on **context of federated sports**

Preliminary Assessments & Full Investigations

Investigation Guidelines and **sample** mandate agreement

**Remuneration** Policy

SINCE OCTOBER 2017

# EARLY RESOLUTION FACILITATION

---

Informal session with **professional third party neutral**

Attempts to resolve issues by **mutual agreement**

**Avoid costly and lengthy** hearing process

NSO third party referrals for safe sport: all settled **but one**

Fee-for-service but **affordable** (time-limited)

SINCE FEBRUARY 2018

# CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

---

For **internal** disciplinary or appeal processes

Affordable rate (**50\$**/hour – no typo!)

**Free** use of SDRCC's proprietary Case Management Portal

Professional case managers as soon as **panel appointed**

documents and correspondence management,  
scheduling, logistics of hearing, note taking, etc.

SINCE JANUARY 2021

# SAFEGUARDING TRIBUNAL

---

Rules to protect **vulnerable** parties and witnesses

Testimonial accommodations

**Fair process** for the accused

Arbitrators with experience in **human rights, criminal law, family law and workplace harassment**

Fee-for-service (single professional arbitrator)

SINCE JULY 2020

# ABUSE-FREE-SPORT.CA

---

Home of the Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit

Profile and role of an **independent third-party**

Links to **education** programs

Links to resources (prevention, international, **mental health & victim support, legal aid**)

IN DEVELOPMENT  
(soon on [abuse-free-sport.ca](https://abuse-free-sport.ca)!)

# COMPLAINTS PROCESS GUIDANCE

---

Framework to **assess risks** of a reported incident

Decision-making **guidance** based on sets of circumstances

Criteria to **categorize behaviors** on a spectrum

Informed choice of **appropriate resolution process** (informal vs. formal)

## Poll # 3

Which of those services currently offered by the SDRCC are you most likely to use in delivering your safe sport program?

(check as many as you want)

# Reinforcing the Message

*“an ounce of prevention...”*

# Education, Awareness and Buy-In

- ▶ Inform New Members of Code of Conduct
  - Orientation and training (Respect in Sport, CAC, etc.)
  - Buy-in and sign-off\*
- ▶ Frequency of “reminders”

\* “I acknowledge to have read, to have understood and to agree to [...]”

# Everyone's Business

**Administrators**

Policy / Risk Management

**High Performance Staff and Coaches**

Positive Training Environments

**Health Professionals**

Health before Performance

**Officials**

Zero Tolerance in Rule Enforcement

**Volunteers**

Eyes and Ears / Watchdogs

**Athletes**

Care for Teammates / Speak up

**Parents**

Ask Questions / Choose Wisely

# Questions?

## Next webinar:

- Wednesday April 7, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Respecting Members' Rights in Disciplinary Processes

.....

[www.sdrcc.ca](http://www.sdrcc.ca)

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada 