



**Fair Play Means Safety For All
OMHA Prevention Services**

A Parents' & Guardians' Guide To Understanding Bullying, Harassment & Abuse

Courtesy of Hockey Canada Safety For All 2005-2006

What does safety for my child mean?



We all want our children to be safe - keeping them safe means putting the **child's best interests first**. In sports this means ensuring that the young player is treated with respect and integrity - emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically, culturally, and spiritually.

What is Hockey Canada's Mission?

The mission of Hockey Canada is to lead, develop, and promote positive hockey experiences. The well being of its participants are the primary importance. This includes, among other things, a shared responsibility with parents and guardians to nurture the physical and emotional well being of its participants.

Recognizing Bullying, Harassment & Abuse

When is my Child Unsafe?

Young people are unsafe when someone uses his or her power or position to harm them either emotionally, physically and/or sexually. These types of violence can be bullying, harassment or abuse. It can happen between peers, between younger and older youth or between adults and youth.

Bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is intentionally hurting someone in order to insult, humiliate, degrade or exclude him or her. Basically it is "mean" behavior. It involves three groups of people: The bullies, the bullied and the bystanders. Hurtful actions may be:

Physical (used most often by boys)

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Grabbing
- Shoving
- Spitting on
- Beating others up
- Damaging or stealing another person's property

Verbal

- Name-calling
- Hurtful teasing
- Humiliating
- Threatening someone
- Degrading behaviors
- In notes or in person
- May have happen over the phone
- Through text messaging or chat rooms

Relational (used most often by girls)

- Making others look foolish
- Excluding peers
- Spreading gossip or rumors
- This may happen in person, over the phone or through the computer

What is the Role of Bystanders?

Bystanders play a key role in the bullying world. Their reaction or lack of reaction often influences the outcome of the interaction:

- A passive response gives the bullies a theatre to cause hurt and a sense of reinforcement as there is no opposition.
- A supportive response gives the bullies positive attention, alignment, power and social status. The bystanders may also increase their own social status.
- A negative response supports the person being bullied and may stop the bullying; it may also put the bystander at risk to become the next victim.

Bullying is not....

Conflict between friends

An argument between people of equal power

Normal relational development challenges

Bullying is....

Hurting behaviors based on oppression and "meanness"

Based on power differentials

Intense and long in duration

A "one-time" event (usually)
Friendly teasing that all parties are
enjoying
Something people grow out of
Accidental

Repeated over time (generally)
Oppressive - Isolates victims
Caused by many factors and behavioral
challenges
Intentionally harmful

Harassment

What is Harassment?

Harassment is offensive behavior - emotional, physical, and/or sexual - that involves discrimination against a person because of their race, national or ethnic origin, age, colour, religion, family status, sexual orientation, sex/gender, disability, marital status, or pardoned conviction. It is a HUMAN RIGHT issue.

Harassment may be a single event or a pattern of mistreatment. It may be directed at an individual or group through the development of a "chilly" or "hostile" environment.

Harassment occurs when someone attempts to negatively control, influence or embarrass another person based on a prohibited ground of discrimination. Examples include displays of favoritism or dis-favoritism, subtle put downs or ostracism.

What is Criminal Harassment?

Criminal harassment-often known as stalking-involves following another person; monitoring them or someone close to them, or their home; contacting them repeatedly against their wishes or threatening them. For a charge or criminal harassment to be laid, the victim must have reason to fear for his/her safety (or the safety of someone else) and the perpetrator must know-or could reasonably be expected to know- that the victim is fearful (Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2001). Criminal charges may also be laid in harassment cases if a person has been physically or sexually assaulted.

What are the Most Common Types of Harassment?

The most common types of harassment are harassment based on race, disability and sexual harassment.

What is Racism?

Racism is when people are treated differently because of their colour, racial or ethnic background. Examples include racist names, treating someone as inferior or second-rate, leaving someone out or blaming problems on them because of their religion, skin colour, or country of origin.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior of a sexual or gender nature that negatively affects the person or the environment. Examples are questions about

one's sex life, sexual staring, sexual comments, unwanted touching, insults about sexual orientation and sexual assault.

What Determines if Harassment has Occurred?

Dealing with harassment can sometimes be difficult as what is viewed as harassment by one person may be viewed as a "joke" by another person. But it is the **impact** of the behavior on the victim that is the most critical issue, **not the intention** of the person who harasses.

Abuse

What is Abuse?

Abuse is when a young person (age defined by Provincial/Territorial Child Protection Acts) needs protection from a person they trust and/or are dependent upon. This is a PROTECTION issue. The person in power may be hurting them in a number of ways.

- Emotional abuse: a chronic attack on a child's self esteem that is psychologically damaging by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. It can take many forms such as terrorizing, degrading and rejecting but it is NOT simply:
 - Benching a player for disciplinary reasons
 - Cutting a player from a team after tryouts
 - Refusing to transfer a player
 - Limiting ice time
 - Telling instructions from the bench

These are not protection issues

- Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or youth. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, striking, shoving, grabbing, hazing or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.
- Neglect is the chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diet, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air.

This may occur in hockey when injuries are not adequately treated, players are made to play with injuries, equipment is inadequate or unsafe, or road trips are not properly supervised.

- Sexual abuse is when a young person is used by an older child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. These are two categories:

Contact

Touched and fondled in sexual areas

Forced to touch another person's sexual areas

Kissed or held in a sexual manner

Kissed or held in sexual manner

Forced to perform oral sex

Vaginal or anal intercourse

Vaginal or anal penetration with object or finger

Sexually oriented hazing

Non Contact

Obscene calls/remarks on a computer, cell phone or in notes

Voyeurism

Shown pornography

Forced to watch sexual acts

Sexually intrusive questions or comments

Indecent exposure

Forced to pose for sexual photographs or videos

Forced to self masturbate

Forced to watch others masturbate

Hazing

What is Hazing?

Hazing is a humiliating and degrading initiation rite in which a player is forced to participate in order to be accepted. Hockey Canada takes a strong stand as it relates to initiations and hazing of players. Hazing is against Hockey Canada's regulation R4: *Any player, team official, executive member of a team, club association or any other Hockey Canada member having participated in or condoned any incidents of hazing shall be subject to a suspension for a period of not less than one year. Notwithstanding the prescribed minimum suspension of one (1) year, in the event that the Branch would consider that such suspension would create undue hardship, given the circumstances, it may impose a lesser penalty, if it has received approval from the Hockey Canada Officers.*

Recognizing Vulnerable Situations

How do I know when my child is being bullied, harassed or abused?

- Listen to them
- Believe them
- Observe them
- Watch their interactions with others
- Be aware of sudden changes in their behaviour and/or anger in them
- Question unexplained bruises, marks on their faces, back, thighs, upper arms, heads, buttocks, genital areas

Who Would Hurt My Child?

Unfortunately, it is usually someone both you and your child know and who misuses his/her power over your child. This may be a peer, a young person, or an adult.

Who are Sexual Offenders?

Sexual offenders are/can be:

- Most often male but may be female
- Heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual
- An older child, adolescent or adult
- Found in all levels of society and in all cultures
- Either infrequent offenders or pedophiles who are fixated on children as sexual objects
- Prone to rationalize and minimize their abusive behaviour

Where is my child most at risk of being bullied, harassed or abused?

Basically your child is most vulnerable when:

- He/she is alone with another person - this could be in the arena, dressing room, car, bus, home, office, outside - anywhere!
- In a group setting where there is inadequate supervision.

Recognizing Coping Mechanisms

How do children and youth cope with the trauma of bullying, harassment and abuse?

- Some pretend it never happened.
- Others convince themselves that it wasn't so terrible.
- Many find excuses as to why it happened.
- Some blame themselves
- Some develop physiological defenses - headaches, body pains and illnesses.
- Others escape through drugs, alcohol, food or sex.
- A few try to hide from their pain by being perfect.
- Some try suicide.

Why do Kids not Tell?

They may:

- Be frightened.
- Believe they are responsible.
- Not want to get the perpetrator into trouble.
- Be embarrassed and ashamed.
- Think no-one will believe them.
- Worry that they will not be allowed to play hockey.

Identifying Parents' & Guardians' Role

What do I do if a child or youth tells me he/she is being harmed?

Follow "HEARD"

H - Hear what they are saying and not saying

- Listen to your child's fears about the situation.

E - Empathize with them

A- Affirm

- Identify vulnerable situations and be there to protect your child.

R- Repot/Refer

- If it is mild bullying or harassment, try to resolve the situation informally.
- If it is moderate or serious bullying or harassment, refer the complaint as specified in your organization's policy.
- If it is Criminal Harassment, the police must be informed.
- If it is abuse refer immediately to your Provincial/Territorial Child Protection Agency or Police.
- Keep it confidential; do not get caught in the "rumour mill".

D - Document the situation and your response; determine the support your child needs.

What do I do if I suspect my child is being harmed?

Follow "**DARE**"

D- Document your observations

- Record behaviours, dates, times and people involved.

A - Affirm the child's situation

- Identify vulnerable situations and be there to observe and protect your child.
- Seek advice or information from a knowledgeable person.
- Tell your child your concerns.
- Listen to your child's fears about the situation.

R - Report/Refer if your suspicions are strong

- If it is mild bullying or harassment, try to resolve the situation informally.
- If it is moderate or serious bullying or harassment, refer the complaint as specified in your organization's policy.
- If it is Criminal Harassment, the police must be informed.
- If it is abuse refer immediately to your Provincial/Territorial Child Protection Agency or Police.
- Keep it confidential; do not get caught in the "rumour mill"

DON'T:

- React with shock, horror or disbelief - even though you may feel like it.

- Promise to keep a secret - you are legally bound to report if it is a protection or criminal issue
- Promise "everything will be fine" - there are many problems to resolve, it will take time
- Assume the child or youth hates the person hurting them - there may be conflicting feelings
- Put the responsibility of reporting on someone else - they may not do it.
- Press the child or youth for details - the matter may go to court, so it is important that evidence is not contaminated.

How do I protect my child or youth against hazing?

- Talk with him/her about hazing; discuss peer pressure.
- Explain that he/she does not have to submit to hazing.
- Know regulation R4 of the Hockey Canada Constitution, By-Laws & Regulations
- Report incidents.

Recognizing Responsibilities

How can I contribute to ensuring safe environments for young people?

Your contribution is key to meeting this goal:

- Ensure your own behavior models respects and integrity towards coaches, officials, participants, and other parents.
- Understand the issues and become knowledgeable; read all the Speck Out Materials.
- Know and support your Association's policies and procedures.
- Attend a Speck Out: It's More Than Just a Game workshop.
- Act when you see a bullying, harassment or abusive situation.
- Speak Out and promote safe environments.

What is my responsibility in responding to bullying and harassing behavior?

Hockey Canada is committed to providing safe environments for everyone involved with the game. This is particularly important for young participants. Safe environment need to be the goal of everyone. This means that harassment and bullying will be stopped immediately with the victim's well-being given priority. Therefore it is everyone's responsibility to:

- Intervene with low-level mediation for mild bullying and harassment situations
- Report to hockey administration serious bullying and harassment situations
- Ensure that criminal harassment cases are reported to police
- Report criminal behavior such as assault to police

What is my legal responsibility in reporting abuse?

As Canadians it is our legal responsibility to report the abuse and neglect of children and youth. Consequently, it is the policy of Hockey Canada that any Hockey Canada

personnel (part-time and full-time staff, volunteer, participant, team official, on ice official) or Hockey Canada partner (parent, guardian) who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant is, or may be suffering, or may have suffered from emotional, physical abuse and neglect and/or sexual abuse, shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the local child protection agency and/or the local police detachment. Across Canada, a person is considered a child up to the age of 16 to 19 years depending on provincial and territorial legislation.

When I report, what questions will be asked?

- The Child's name, address, age, sex and birth date
- Parents'/guardians' names and addresses
- The name and address of alleged offender
- Details of the incident(s) that prompted your report
- Your name and address

What happens when a report is made?

- A social worker or police officer will decide if an investigation is needed.
- If the child is "at risk" and needs protection an investigation is started as soon as possible
- An experienced interviewer will conduct the interview.
- The primary concern is safety of the child.
- The social worker and/or police officer will decide what further action is required.

Why don't people report?

They don't report because they:

- Are unaware of the reporting laws and policies.
- Believe that they can take care of the problem themselves - it's their own business!
- Are fearful of retaliation from the abuser - or are friends with the abuser.
- Find it hard to believe.
- Assume someone else will make a report.
- Don't want "to tell" on someone.
- Want to protect their child from questions and embarrassment.
- Are not sure where or how to make a report.
- Just want it "all to go away".
- Forget that the child's best interest is the priority.

Do children ever make false allegations?

Yes, sometimes it happens. Some of the research shows that about 8% of disclosures are false. Most of the false allegations by children are encouraged by adults - e.g. custody cases, others have been by adolescents who wanted "to get even". It is

important to reinforce the truth - false allegations are devastating to the person accused.

Proactive Roles

How do I keep my child safe?

There are five essentials to keeping your child safe.

1. Communication

- Listen, talk, believe and reassure your child.
- Provide opportunities for conversations with your child.
- Be open to any questions; nothing is off limits.
- Be open to discussing difficult subjects such as sexuality.
- Develop frank and open communication with the coaches.
- If you have concerns, communicate them to the appropriate persons.
- If you see or hear bullying, harassing or abusive behaviour, **Speak Out!**

2. Knowledge

- Make your child aware of vulnerable situations in a matter-of-fact way.
- Review your club's bullying, harassment and abuse policy and procedures.
- Be aware of your clubs screening and selection process for staff and volunteers.
- Get to know the adults who are interacting with your child.
- Discuss with the coaches their expectations and the setting of boundaries: Physical, sexual and social.

3. Skills

- Teach your child specific ways to handle difficult situations.
- Help your child define their personal boundaries.
- Teach your child how to be assertive when their boundaries are crossed.

4. Build a safety plan

- Develop check-ins, contingency plans, family codes.
- Attend practices and games.
- Be wary of regular private closed practices.
- Be concerned of time spent alone with older youth and adults beyond training and game times.

5. Advocate

- You are your child's strongest supporter.
- Evaluate situations according to the "**best interest of your child**".

What is Hockey Canada's role in promoting safety for my child?

Protecting participants from all forms of bullying, harassment, and abuse whether emotional, physical or sexual, is an important element of safety. Hockey Canada considers any form of bullying, harassment, or abuse to be unacceptable and will do all it can to prevent this intolerable social problem. To this end, Hockey Canada will promote awareness of all forms of bullying, harassment, and abuse by providing educational materials and programs for participants, parents, volunteers and staff members.

What is Hockey Canada's policy on preventing bullying, harassment and abuse?

It is the policy of Hockey Canada that there shall be no bullying, harassment, and abuse whether physical, emotional or sexual of any participant in any of its programs. Hockey Canada expects every parent, volunteer and staff member to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its participants and protect them from any form of violence.

Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Abuse Resources:

Since 1997, Hockey Canada has produced a number of resources for distribution through its member Branches to educate the membership and provide direction regarding the prevention of all forms of bullying, harassment and abuse.

The Speak Out campaign includes:

- "Speak Out!" brochures for players.
- "Speak Out!" "bench" posters and "bullying" posters.
- "Speak Out!" video.
- "Speak Out!...Act Now!" A Guide to Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Harassment for Clubs and Associations.
- "Fair Play Means Safety for All: A Guide to Understanding Bullying/Harassment and Abuse For Parents and Guardians"
- Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy/ Recognition and Prevention of Bullying/Harassment Policy.
- Forms for coach/volunteer application and police record checks.

