



SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION IN YOUTH ADAPTIVE SPORTS



Resource for Action



Sexual Abuse Prevention in Youth Adaptive Sports Resource for Action

A Roadmap to Purpose-Built Prevention Programming

Developed By:

Sportable Richmond Adaptive Sports and Recreation (Sportable)

Laura Bennett, Chief Operating Officer

Quillin Musgrave, Chief Consultant

Funded By:

Virginia Department of Health Office of Family Health Services, Injury and Violence Prevention Program (VDH IVPP)

Maria Altonen, Rape Prevention and Education Director

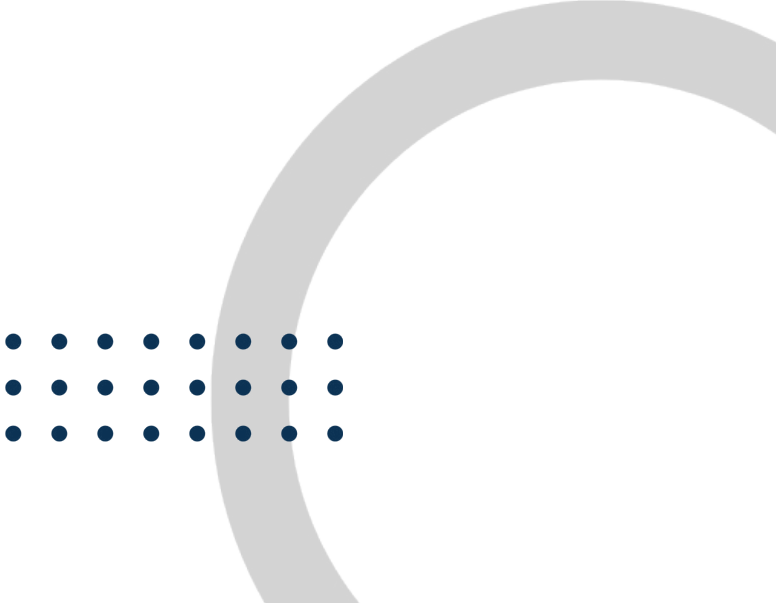
2024



CONTENTS



- Acknowledgements 6
- Overview 7
- Initial Investigation and Organizational Readiness 11
- Prevention Programming, Adaptation, Pilot 14
- Policies, Procedures, Training 24
- Stakeholder Involvement 25
- Conclusion 27
- Resources 30







ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This project and resource was developed with funding, guidance, and encouragement from the Virginia Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention, led by Rape Prevention & Education Director Maria Altonen. We are grateful to the contractors, coaches, athletes, parents, and members of the Sportable Prevention Team for their wisdom, subject matter expertise, and time. Special thanks to Derek Hoot, Mandy Marchiano, Megan Anderson, Brandon Rush, Tyler Rowe, Michelle Page and Hannah Smith – your contributions and deep commitment to this project were invaluable. We also thank Shelley Sowers for her design and formatting expertise. Finally, none of this work would be possible without the tireless dedication and passion of the Sportable staff.

About Sportable

Sportable Richmond Adaptive Sports and Recreation (Sportable) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Richmond, Virginia providing adaptive sport, recreation, and wellness to people with physical disabilities and visual impairments. www.sportable.org





OVERVIEW

This resource provides a roadmap to building a strategic, evidence-based, and inclusive Sexual Abuse Prevention Program for **adaptive youth sports**¹ (recreational and competitive sports for people with disabilities) and will benefit anyone interested in preventing sexual abuse, but will be of special interest to adaptive sports and recreation organizations, county parks and recreation departments, disability community service providers, state agencies involved with the disability community, physical education teachers, parents/caregivers of children with disabilities, and people with disabilities who are or will become self-advocates.

Modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Resources for Action², this resource offers select **strategies and resources** to help communities prioritize abuse prevention in youth adaptive sports, rooted in evidence-based programs. Presented as a roadmap, this document shares how one adaptive sports and recreation organization is transforming abuse prevention and how you can too.

This resource will address:

1. Strategy: direction to prevent sexual abuse in youth adaptive sports
2. Approach: programs, policies, and practices to advance our strategy
3. Evaluation: effectiveness of the approach and lessons learned for future work

A note about violence prevention: the CDC considers violence a public health crisis, and has an entire website dedicated to the topic and all its facets: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html>. While this document will not tackle the underlying principles of prevention, it is recommended to review the CDC materials to gain insight and broaden understanding of prevention, especially the Social Ecological Model (SEM) which considers the complex interplay between the individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that cause violence. **We can't prevent violence if we don't understand what causes it.**

¹ Youth = under age 18

² While this Resource for Action is modeled after the CDC's template, it is not affiliated with the CDC.



URGENT NEED TO NARROW THE GAP



Children with disabilities are 3-5 times more likely than children without disabilities to be victims of sexual abuse

While there are many resources for sexual abuse prevention in traditional youth sports and recreation, that is not the case for adaptive sports. The gap in resources and attention directed towards preventing sexual abuse in youth adaptive sports is especially concerning because evidence shows **children with disabilities are 3-5 times more likely than children without disabilities** to be victims of sexual abuse, and the likelihood is even higher for children with intellectual disabilities.^{3,4}

³ Vera Institute of Justice <https://www.vera.org/publications/sexual-abuse-of-children-with-disabilities-a-national-snapshot>

⁴ Statistically, regardless of disability status, girls and women are overwhelmingly more likely to be victims of sexual abuse, though boys and men are also abused. Statistics show boys and men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of sexual abuse. See National Center for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.



INCREASED RISK & HIGHER PREVALENCE

There are many reasons for the increased risk and higher prevalence of sexual abuse in the disability community including:

- > Social isolation
- > Lack of access to sexual health education (priority issue: consent)
- > Lack of control over healthcare, education, and social lives
- > Lack of privacy and autonomy and need for support by others/high degree of physical intrusion as a way of life
- > Unequal treatment by law enforcement and healthcare providers
- > Limited representation, lack of positive peer role modeling shown in media and offered in community spaces
- > Harmful myths/stereotypes about people with disabilities (e.g., they are asexual, unable to participate in healthy sexual relationships)
- > Multi-system failures including screening staff/volunteers; recognizing and responding to abuse; having clear policies, procedures, education and training; and creating safe, open environments and cultures

For all of these reasons and more, children with disabilities are less likely to disclose if they have been abused. If they do report, evidence shows they are less likely than their non-disabled peers to be taken seriously. The need to work with individuals, communities, and systems to narrow the gap in sexual abuse prevention resources and strategies for youth with disabilities is urgent. Adaptive sport can and should be a catalyst for preventing sexual violence. Sportable's journey can show you how.

Adaptive sports can and should be a catalyst for preventing sexual violence. Sportable's journey can show you how.



sportable
USA

“

“It is critical that we provide a place to talk about these topics in the context of disability where young athletes with disabilities don’t feel singled out.”

- Derek Hoot, Sportable Coach & Consultant

INITIAL INVESTIGATION & ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

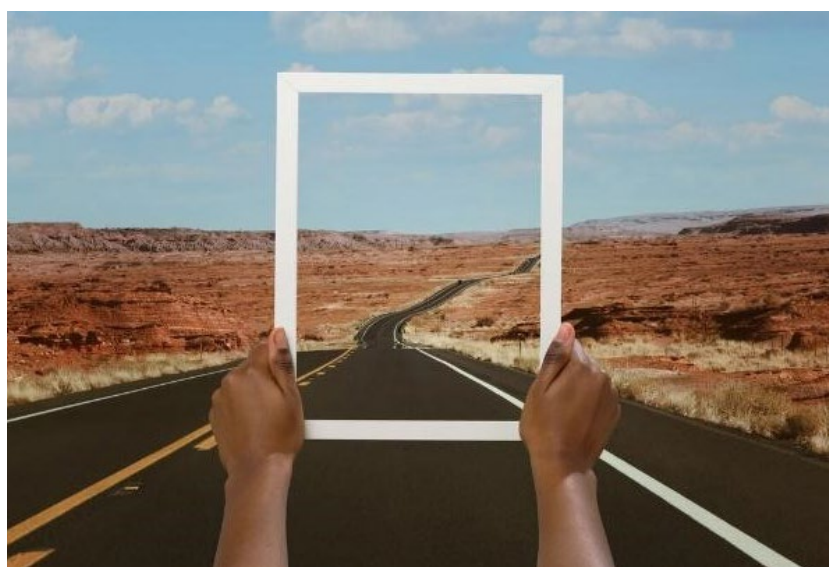
While Sportable has always prioritized athlete safety, a proactive, prevention-focused strategy was lacking. Through a multi-year grant from the Virginia Department of Health Office of Family Health Services, Injury and Violence Prevention Program (VDH IVPP), Sportable was able to systematically strengthen protections for adaptive athletes by updating policies, procedures, and training; ensuring formal and frequent engagement with stakeholders; piloting groundbreaking prevention programming for adaptive youth athletes with the coach-athlete relationship at the center; and providing technical assistance (TA) to peers to replicate the work.

Long-Term Goals

- Build a culture of abuse prevention across the adaptive sports field in Virginia (and beyond)
- Ensure all Sportable youth have the tools and knowledge to enjoy safe and healthy relationships across their lifespan

Short-Term Goals

- Address gaps in organizational policies, procedures, and training for staff, coaches, and volunteers for both prevention and intervention
- Adapt and launch evidence-based abuse prevention curricula with youth adaptive sports teams at Sportable
- Build local/regional relationships to share knowledge gained from the process and inform organizational development across the adaptive sports field in Virginia (and beyond)





THE RIGHT PEOPLE

To accomplish these goals, we needed to get ready, beginning with the right people and the right tools. Working with athletes and coaches with disabilities would be essential to the project's success, and Sportable was fortunate to contract with three such individuals, led by a contractor with abuse prevention and grant management expertise. Sportable leadership rounded out this core team, which would be supplemented by a Prevention Team made up of 30 individual stakeholders including athletes, parents, volunteers, coaches, community partners, a local sexual/domestic violence program, peer organizations, additional people with lived experience, staff, and more. The Prevention Team met quarterly with attendance averaging 17 per meeting.

Once we had a diverse, qualified group of people dedicated to the project, we needed to get and stay organized. Relying on traditional project management tools and a shared commitment to the work, we mapped out our plan which started with reviewing Sportable's existing policies and training protocols. We also analyzed external policies and protocols to inform our work, including resources from SafeSport, Move United, International Safeguards for Children in Sport, and Sport New Zealand.

Using a self-audit tool from International Safeguards for Children in Sport, a gap analysis was conducted to document and plan for areas to address including

policies, procedures, risk management, reporting and response systems, appropriate/inappropriate behaviors, communication, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation. The results of this self-audit were shared with Sportable leadership and VDH as part of our commitment to accountability and transparency throughout this project.





THE RIGHT TOOLS



Sportable Violence Prevention Staff & Coaches Survey

Sportable received grant funding from the Virginia Department of Health to review current and develop new policies and procedures related to sexual abuse* prevention and response within Sportable's programming. This survey will help the team working on this project assess Sportable's current organizational culture and capacity to effectively prevent and respond to sexual abuse with a focus on protecting youth athletes.

Your answers will be collected anonymously, and a report of the data collected will be provided to Sportable as part of this process.

Our next step was to hear from our community: athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, board members, and staff. *What did they know about Sportable's current abuse prevention efforts? What did they think about our culture and how it connected to athlete safety? Did they want to see us do more to protect athletes and did they want to help?*

These questions and more made up a series of audience-specific surveys which were supplemented with 24 one-on-one interviews. The qualitative data garnered from these surveys, interviews, and conversations with the Prevention Team **informed the entire project** from policy to curricula content. Without listening to and acting on feedback from our stakeholders, the entire project would have been little more than a checked box.

This information-gathering phase culminated in two reports which included analysis of the data and recommendations (one based on the surveys, and one based on the interviews). These reports were shared with leadership, staff, board members, and the Prevention Team.

We had the people, the tools, and the information. With this foundation in place, **it was time to act.**

PREVENTION PROGRAMMING, ADAPTATION, PILOT



Evidence-based programs to prevent sexual abuse against youth athletes with disabilities are scarce. (If you need proof, try googling it)! Typical youth sports have a few more choices, most notably Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes As Leaders. Coaching Boys Into Men is the only evidence-based program endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It trains and motivates male high school coaches to teach young male athletes (12+) about healthy relationship skills, mental health practices, and that violence never equals strength. Athletes as Leaders is a collaboration with Coaching Boys Into Men and focuses on female coaches and female athletes in

high school. It trains and motivates female high school coaches to teach young female athletes about health and safety, inclusion, consent, gender and racial equity, and youth leadership.

Both programs were designed to leverage the coaching relationship, with data showing coaches are an integral and influential part of a young athlete's life, setting the tone for the team's culture, which in turn influences athletic departments and ultimately the community and beyond. Both programs are internationally recognized, well-researched prevention programs.



Both programs excluded youth athletes with disabilities.





“

This work is important and I'm glad there is passion and intention around this. It is crucial for the development of our athletes.

- Desiree Miller, Paralympian & USA Women's Wheelchair Basketball Assistant Coach

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROJECT



For many reasons, not the least of which is the increased risk of people with disabilities becoming victims of sexual abuse and the need for representation of the vibrant, growing community of adaptive athletes, Sportable and VDH decided these programs needed to adapt, launching the first-of-its kind project.

The core team, which included coaches and athletes with disabilities, familiarized themselves with both programs (which included hundreds of pages of curricula and materials) and began making edits to include youth with disabilities. However, something wasn't clicking. **This work needed more than simple edits** – it needed to be overhauled to include the real-life experiences of youth with disabilities.

Over several months, with on-going input from the Prevention Team, the team created original content including new topics, lessons, activities, resources, and coach's training, all geared towards adaptive sports. Topics new to Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders included anxiety around surgeries, bathroom issues, bullying around a disability type, unique consent issues (e.g., transfers to sports chairs), and physiological impairments.

Both programs were further adapted for time. Instead of 12 sessions consisting of 15-20 minute lessons, we shortened it to 10 sessions consisting of 10 minute lessons. This was a necessary adaptation – unlike typical youth sports, adapted sports programs do not occur in a school setting,

with multi-day practices, filled with dozens of youth around the same age. Instead, adaptive sports are often mixed genders and ages with smaller numbers of athletes, happening once a week in the season. We did not want to encroach too much on the youth team's practice time and adjusted accordingly.

Another adaptation Sportable made was developing a new "aged-down" version of the program – both Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders were intended for older youth and we didn't want to exclude youth under 12. Referred to as a Youth Leadership program, this age-appropriate program consisted of 10-minute experiential lessons addressing topics like consent, positive self-identity, teamwork, role models with disabilities, and more.



ADAPTIVE CURRICULA IS READY



Once we were comfortable the adapted curricula was ready, youth basketball was selected for the pilot and the coaches and staff involved received intense training from the primary contractor to deliver the programs. Next, we needed to explain the project to the parents of the athletes. In addition to a detailed *Dear Parent* letter, we also discussed the programs with parents during a pre-season meeting.

The team was divided into Young Leaders (under 13); Coaching Boys Into Men (players who identified as male who were over 13; program delivered by male coach); and Athletes as Leaders (players who identified as female who were over 13; delivered by female coach). Every team member was asked to complete a pre-survey specific to their program. The pre-surveys were not modified from their original form, something we will address in lessons learned.



“

This project is a game-changer for young people with disabilities. This program helps athletes develop the self-confidence and leadership skills they need to be successful in the future. Thinking back, I know my teammates and I would have benefited from a program like this.

- Hannah Smith, Sportable Athlete & Intern

REPRESENTATION & MEANINGFUL ROLE MODELS

Of critical importance, the pilot was delivered by coaches with disabilities.

Coaches were supported throughout the pilots with weekly check-ins from project staff and the Prevention Team continued to provide input.

Youth were supported by the coaches and staff throughout and provided with a discrete, pocket-sized resource offering contacts and support options with QR codes to digital access.



NOT WITHOUT CHALLENGES

The pilot was not without challenges. Several youth struggled to comprehend the pre-survey questions; sometimes there were only a handful of kids; sometimes we needed to cancel; in the beginning, the youth weren't engaging in conversations as much as they did later in the pilot. When the numbers were small and the topics aligned, boys and girls were combined into one group. The combined groups were a success from the coaches and staff perspectives.



EVALUATION

Once the 10 lessons were complete, the youth were given a post-survey and the coaches were interviewed by the primary contractor to share their experiences and provide anecdotal evidence about how the youth participated.

The interviews were critical to learn new ways to make the materials more meaningful to the athletes and develop strategies to assist future coaches who will pilot the next iteration of the curricula.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to inform an evaluation report submitted to VDH; monitoring and evaluation are critical components of effective prevention programming. We will use this data to inform future pilots and iterations of the curricula.



LESSONS LEARNED & FUTURE PLANS

Adapt the pre and post survey tools to reflect the adapted, disability-specific and age appropriate curricula. The tools were not modified from their original state and were not appropriate for Sportable’s adapted curricula, or for some of the team’s comprehension levels, and the results are therefore inconclusive. Anecdotal evidence from coaches demonstrated that the athletes were understanding the concepts during discussions and understood the importance of exploring these topics. The greatest finding was that the athletes seemed to appreciate having a safe space to talk about some of the disability-related content that was added to the curriculum. This will be more heavily featured in future iterations of the curriculum and the pre/post surveys.

Communicate clearly and often. Though the pilot was supported by parents/caregivers, some had not read the *Dear Parent* letter or attended the pre-season meeting. It was necessary for us to ensure each parent/caregiver understood the purpose of the pilot, the content, and how it could benefit their child. Additionally, the *Dear Parent* letter linked to the websites of the original curricula when it should have provided more details on the adapted version.

Combine Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders into one, gender-neutral program and conduct several pilots to evaluate. This is necessary to:

- Include non-binary athletes
- Increase the number of athletes participating in the lessons
- Promote difficult conversations across genders to facilitate peer learning, empathy, and dispel the stereotypes that lead to a culture which tolerates abuse
- Innovate the long-standing curricula

Engage adaptive physical education teachers to offer curricula in schools; include homeschooled youth in this outreach.

Increase public awareness across the country to spread the word and promote replication.

Engage more local sexual and domestic violence programs to increase their understanding and ability to serve people with disabilities.

Expand Technical Assistance to new partners serving youth athletes.

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair tied back, smiling broadly. She is wearing a dark blue sports jersey with orange and white trim and the number 5. The background is a blurred blue stadium setting.

“

Having a program like Athletes As Leaders when I was younger would have helped me as an athlete with a disability to feel more comfortable, safe, and empowered regarding my own body. I'm grateful for this project and I'm positive it will have a lasting impact on current and future athletes with disabilities to prevent abuse and keep their safety the number one priority.

- Mandy Marchiano, Sportable Board Member and Athlete

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND TRAINING



While the pilot was happening, we continued finalizing our policies, procedures, and training materials. The following were either created or refined to reflect our new proactive, prevention-based approach vs. a reactive/intervention-based approach:

- > Code of Conduct for athletes, staff, and volunteers
- > Public facing Incident Reporting Form
- > Webpage dedicated to abuse prevention
- > Staff, coach, and volunteer training requirements and monitoring/enforcement protocols with annual refreshers
- > Volunteer manual with accompanying video summarizing abuse prevention expectations
- > Athlete Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy/Handbook with clear reporting protocols
- > Key staff certified as Adaptive Sports Abuse Prevention (ASAP) trainers
- > Background check requirements for adult athletes in program spaces with youth under 18



Athlete Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT



Collaboration is vital in prevention work and this project was no exception. The list of stakeholders who made and will continue to make Sportable's abuse prevention initiatives effective include:



- > Athletes, parents/caregivers, coaches, volunteers, staff, and board members
- > The Virginia Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention
- > Futures Without Violence (Coaching Boys Into Men developer and collaborator)
- > Sportable's Prevention Team
- > Hanover Safe Place (local sexual and domestic violence program)
- > The "Technical Assistance" Team: Beyond Boundaries and Jacob's Chance. These recurring work sessions generated rich, meaningful discussions and peer support which will continue to strengthen protections and amplify prevention programming across Virginia. Recipients of the TA developed organizational policies and procedures, surveyed their stakeholders, and created a strategic plan focused on prevention.
- > Impact Boston (ASAP curricula developer and collaborator)
- > Move United
- > National Wheelchair Basketball Association



“

This project has provided a valuable platform for youth adaptive athletes to engage in meaningful conversations about their life experiences, reflect on challenging situations, and identify opportunities for growth and improvement moving forward.

- Brandon Rush, Sportable Coach

CONCLUSION

Adaptive sports can and should play a central role in preventing the sexual abuse of youth with disabilities who are at higher risk of abuse than their non-disabled peers. The relationship between a coach and athlete is characterized by mentorship and influence – this is especially impactful when youth with disabilities interact with coaches with disabilities – **representation matters.**



Sportable’s collaboration with VDH serves as a model for adaptive sports organizations across Virginia and the country. Joined with the foundational elements of policies, procedures, training, and collaboration, adaptive sports organizations can leverage the coach-athlete relationship to create an effective, purpose-built prevention program which **does so much more than check a box.**

The strategies, approaches, and potential outcomes outlined in this resource are summarized below. These strategies and approaches are intended to work in combination and reinforce each other to prevent the abuse of youth with disabilities in a comprehensive, long-term way.⁵

STRATEGY	APPROACH⁶	POTENTIAL OUTCOMES⁷
Create Safe Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing clear policies, procedures, and training protocols and monitoring compliance Assessing and modifying physical and social environments Creating an organizational culture of accountability and transparency where athlete safety is the top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in perceived tolerance of sexual harassment and violence Reduction of sexual abuse Increase in feeling of safety
Promote Social Norms to Protect Against Violence & Teach Skills to Prevent Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilizing boys/men as allies Empowerment-based education (e.g., consent, bullying, healthy relationships, mental health addressed in gender-segregated or gender-inclusive curricula) Training females/people of other genders as leaders and providing leadership opportunities Dismantling stereotypes (e.g., beauty, disability) Promoting respect and healthy boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in belief that sexual violence in any form is acceptable (even harassment and online abuse) Reduction in peer support for violence Increase in favorable beliefs towards women and girls Reduction in perpetration of sexual violence Reduction in negative bystander behavior Increase in recognition of abuse Reduction in bullying Increase in knowledge of gender norms and equity Increase in leadership skills for girls and women
Train Peer Organizations to Develop Prevention Programs & Continue Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering technical assistance (TA) to other disability service providers to establish their own abuse prevention (vs. compliance-driven) programs Collaborating with TA recipients to provide mutual peer support and maximize protections for disability community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in indicators of community connectedness Increase and reduction across potential outcomes as other organizations implement prevention program
Support Victims/Survivors to Lessen Harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening culture to demonstrate through action that the organization listens and takes reports seriously Providing resources to victims/resources and partnering with local sexual/domestic violence organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in short and long-term effects of sexual abuse Improvement in access to services for survivors of sexual abuse

⁵ David-Ferdon, C., Vivolo-Kantor, A. M., Dahlberg, L. L., Marshall, K. J., Rainford, N. & Hall, J. E. (2016). Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action: A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁶ Adapted in part from: Basile, K.C., DeGue, S., Jones, K., Freire, K., Dills, J., Smith, S.G., Raiford, J.L. (2016). Sexual Violence Prevention Resource for Action: A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁷ The Resources included at the end of this document offer additional reading on the evidence supporting these potential outcomes and prevention research in general.





RESOURCES

- **Stakeholder Surveys - Parent/Caregiver and Volunteer**
- **Sample Training Excerpt: Coaching Boys Into Men**
- **Sample Training Excerpt: Athletes as Leaders**
- **Mini Prevention Plan**
- **Dear Parent Letter**
- **Pocket Guide Resources and Contacts**
- **Volunteer Abuse Prevention Video**
- **Recommended Reading and Viewing**



QUICK LINKS

- [Self-Audit Template from International Safeguards for Children in Sport](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Organizational Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Training Video](#)

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY - PARENT/ CAREGIVER

PARENT/CAREGIVER SURVEY

1. Are you a parent/guardian/caregiver of a Sportable athlete?
Yes, No
2. How long have you been engaged with Sportable as a caregiver of a Sportable athlete?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4-6 years
 - d. More than 6 years

Organizational Culture

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no knowledge and 10 is detailed knowledge, how much do Sportable staff in general know about sexual abuse prevention and response?
Likert scale 1-10, Unsure
4. Is the organizational power and decision-making centralized at Sportable or is power shared and leadership accountable to an engaged staff, Board, and community?
Likert scale
5. Is it appropriate for staff, coaches, and volunteers to engage with athletes through social media, text, or other forms of communication outside regular Sportable communications?
Yes, No, Unsure
6. In general, do you think the organization does enough to protect their athletes from sexual abuse? Why or why not?
What more do you think could be done?
Open-ended

Training

7. Have you received specific training regarding sexual abuse or harassment in adaptive sports while participating with Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.



8. Have you received any training on sexual abuse prevention provided by Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.
9. Have you received any training on sexual abuse prevention outside of your involvement with Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.
10. Would you be interested in receiving education on sexual abuse prevention and response in your role as a caregiver to a Sportable athlete?
Yes, No, Unsure

Policy

11. Were you ever asked to sign documents acknowledging policies and procedures related to sexual abuse?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, what were those documents?
12. Are the policies & procedures for reporting and responding to an incident of sexual abuse clear and specific?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, how so?
13. If you had questions about Sportable's policies & procedures related to sexual abuse, to whom would you direct those questions?
Open-ended
14. Are you familiar with Virginia code that identifies administrators, coaches, volunteers, and other staff working in a youth sports or recreation organization as mandated reporters of abuse of minors?
Yes, No, Unsure
15. Do you understand what will happen if you share about an experience of sexual abuse to a mandated reporter in Virginia?
Yes, No, Unsure

Response

16. If the athlete under your care experienced and/or observed sexual abuse in any form while participating in Sportable programming, would you feel confident in reporting the incident to Sportable staff?
Likert scale from 1 - I would not feel confident to 10 - I would feel very confident
17. If the athlete under your care shared an experience of sexual abuse in any form while participating in Sportable programming, would you be able to offer support and resources?
Likert scale from 1 - I would not be able to 10 - I would be quite able
18. If the athlete under your care shared an experience of sexual abuse in any form while participating in Sportable programming, what would you do?
Open-ended
19. To whom at Sportable should reports of sexual abuse be referred?
Open-ended
20. Do you believe that a report of sexual abuse would be taken seriously by Sportable leadership?
Likert scale from 1 - A report would not be taken seriously to 10 - A report would be taken very seriously

Personal Accountability

21. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not enthusiastic and 10 is very supportive, how interested are you in working to address sexual abuse prevention and response in the Sportable community?
Likert scale 1-10
22. What resources or support might you need to be able to address sexual abuse if experienced/witnessed by the athlete in your care in the future?
Open-ended
23. Is there anything you would like Sportable to know related to the subject matter of this survey?
Open-ended



STAKEHOLDER SURVEY - VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER SURVEY

1. Are you currently a volunteer for Sportable?
Yes, No
2. Do you regularly engage in physical contact with Sportable athletes as part of your volunteer duties (e.g., assisting with transfers, taping an athlete's hands or other body parts, supporting an athlete in the pool, physical contact within sport drills or play, etc.)?
Yes, No, Unsure
3. How long have you been volunteering with Sportable?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4-6 years
 - d. More than 6 years

Organizational Culture

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no knowledge and 10 is detailed knowledge, how much do Sportable staff in general know about sexual abuse prevention and response?
Likert scale 1-10, Unsure
5. Is the organizational power and decision-making centralized at Sportable or is power shared and leadership accountable to an engaged staff, Board, and community?
Likert scale
6. Is it appropriate for volunteers and coaches to engage with minor athletes through social media, text, or other forms of communication outside regular Sportable communications?
Yes, No, Unsure
7. In general, do you think the organization does enough to protect their athletes from sexual abuse? Why or why not?
What more do you think could be done?
Open-ended



Training

8. Have you received specific training regarding sexual abuse or harassment in adaptive sports while volunteer with Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.
9. Have you received any training on sexual abuse prevention provided by Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.
10. Have you received any training on sexual abuse prevention outside of your involvement with Sportable?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, please describe the training you received.
11. Would you be interested in receiving education on sexual abuse prevention and response in your role as a Sportable volunteer?
Yes, No, Unsure

Policy

12. Were you ever asked to sign documents acknowledging policies and procedures related to sexual abuse?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, what were those documents?
13. Are the policies & procedures for reporting and responding to an incident of sexual abuse clear and specific?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, how so?
14. If you had questions about Sportable's policies & procedures related to sexual abuse, to whom would you direct those questions?
Open-ended
15. Are you familiar with Virginia code that identifies administrators, coaches, volunteers, and other staff working in a youth sports or recreation organization as mandated reporters of abuse of minors?
Yes, No, Unsure
16. Do you understand the requirements of being a mandated reporter in Virginia?
Yes, No, Unsure - If yes, how were you made to understand the requirements?

Response

17. If you experienced and/or observed sexual abuse in any form in your capacity as a Sportable volunteer, would you feel comfortable in reporting the incident to Sportable leadership?
Likert scale from 1 - I would not feel comfortable to 10 - I would feel very comfortable
18. If a colleague or athlete shared an experience of sexual abuse in any form while participating in Sportable programming, would you be able to offer support and resources?
Likert scale from 1 - I would not be able to 10 - I would be quite capable
19. If an athlete shared an experience of sexual abuse in any form that occurred while participating in Sportable programming, what would you do?
Open-ended
20. To whom at Sportable should reports of sexual abuse be referred?
Open-ended
21. Do you believe that a report of sexual abuse would be taken seriously by Sportable leadership?
Likert scale from 1 - A report would not be taken seriously to 10 - A report would be taken very seriously

Personal Accountability

22. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not enthusiastic and 10 is very supportive, how interested are you in working to address sexual abuse prevention and response in the Sportable community?
Likert scale 1-10
23. What resources or support might you need to be able to address sexual abuse if experienced/witnessed in the future?
Open-ended
24. Is there anything you would like Sportable to know related to the subject matter of this survey?
Open-ended

TRAINING EXCERPT: COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

ADAPTED CURRICULA & COACHES TRAINING

To request more information about the adapted version of Coaching Boys Into Men, as well as the accompanying Coaches Training, please email info@sportable.org.

A sample lesson is included below.

Understanding Consent

This training will help athletes:

1. Define consent.
2. Understand the importance and benefits of consent in sexual and non-sexual relationships.
3. Understand that they must give consent to be transferred between their everyday chairs and their sports chairs or for any other interaction that requires physical contact in supporting an athlete in any way.
4. Understand that being asked for and giving consent is an opportunity to determine if something can be done independently.

Warm Up

Today, we're going to discuss an essential aspect of respectful and healthy relationships: consent. Whether in friendships or sexual relationships, communication on what's OK and not OK is really important. Often, people think the topic of consent is difficult, uncomfortable, or confusing. I'm here to talk with you to add some clarity and emphasize how respecting your wishes and that of a partner/boyfriend/girlfriend helps ensure safety and joy for you and any others involved. (*Ask the youth how they refer to their dating partners and use that language.*)

It is also important to think about consent in other aspects of our lives. Often, adaptive athletes who use wheelchairs need to transfer from their everyday chair to a sports chair in order to participate in sports. Transferring is a life skill used often outside of sports: to get in and out of cars, to get into desks at school, booths at restaurants, even getting onto the toilet requires a transfer of sorts. For more physically able athletes, this transfer process is done independently - the athlete simply picks themselves up and pulls their whole body weight into the sports chair. However, athletes with different levels of ability may need assistance to transfer. Sometimes athletes may fall or may use different adaptive equipment to participate in their sport. Volunteers and other adults may try to intervene and assist athletes without asking for consent. This reduces an athlete's opportunity to



gain independence and diminishes your bodily autonomy. We are encouraging you to express your needs and be clear about what's ok and not ok with all the people involved in your athletic and personal lives.

Although you may require assistance, it is important for volunteers to ask how you want to be supported:

1. This gives you a chance at attempting to transfer yourself, get yourself into your adaptive equipment, pick yourself up after a fall, etc, if it appears you can safely try. Independence is always encouraged.
2. This allows you to decide how the support process will go, even if you will ultimately need help.

Show video from Rooted in Rights Consent and [Kids with Disabilities](#) (3 minutes 53 seconds).

Ask the Players

- What does consent mean? Why is it important?
- How do you determine if there is consent in a situation? (Note: Share the F.R.I.E.S acronym here - see below "Discussion Points")
- What might make consent unclear in a sexual situation or in a situation where someone is providing physical support to an athlete with a disability?
- How often do you "transfer" in and out of your chair in your daily life, and do you do it with or without assistance?
- Have you ever had someone transfer you without your permission? How did it feel?
- What support might you need in being able to interrupt someone who hasn't asked for consent before providing physical aid?

Discussion Points

Consent is about communicating openly how you feel and listening actively to your partner, whether that be while making plans, holding hands, or having sex.

Think of consent and its benefits, not as an obstacle. Talking about desires and concerns will help you feel more comfortable, and more connected.

It's OK to feel insecure or awkward, but that's never an excuse to act without consent.

Remember what consent means using the acronym F.R.I.E.S.:

- Freely-Given: There is no fear of judgment or retaliation. NO means NO.
- Reversible: Because you kissed yesterday doesn't automatically mean that's OK today.
- Informed: Making sure someone has all the relevant information to/before consent.
- Enthusiastic: YES means YES. Ask how things feel for you and your partner.
- Specific: Consenting to one action (kissing) doesn't mean consent to another (sex).
- Be sure there's clear permission every time. When in doubt, check in with the other person.
- Some example situations to consider whether F.R.I.E.S exists include:
- When you are thinking of being physically or sexually intimate with someone.
- Seeing a friend flirting with someone who is drunk.
- Being asked to skip classes (to spend time together).
- Transferring is an important life skill, and getting from your everyday chair into your sports chair is an opportunity to practice it with no consequences - if you do not successfully transfer, a volunteer can help.
- Being able to give and receive consent in all kinds of interactions takes practice. If you speak up and a volunteer doesn't respect your wishes, let a coach or Sportable staff member know so that we can reinforce expectations around consent and respect.

Wrap Up

Consent is a critical part of all relationships, including those here at Sportable. It's important to learn how to ask for and give consent and how to set limits and say no when you don't want to consent to something. This is something that gets a little easier with time and experience and you can always come to me or another coach or Sportable staff member if you have questions about developing this skill.



TRAINING EXCERPT: ATHLETES AS LEADERS

ADAPTED CURRICULA & COACHES TRAINING

To request more information about the adapted version of Athletes as Leaders, as well as the accompanying Coaches Training, please email info@sportable.org.

A sample lesson is included below.

Respecting Physiological Impairments

Guidance for Facilitators: To do our best work in ensuring we respect all people, we need to continue to learn to respect the differences that make each of us unique. This team is made up of athletes with different kinds of physical disabilities and this session focuses on a few different aspects of physiological impairment.

Key Messages to Introduce in Discussion:

- We can understand some of the physiological impairments some disabled people experience may not be the same impairments we experience ourselves. This means respecting issues that come with disability like accidental spitting, losing track of thought, and incontinence.
- It is important to have tools to discuss accidents and be sensitive to teammate's feelings.
- It is helpful to have a mature vocabulary around instances.

Prep Before Session:

Make sure you have:

- Group agreements to refer to during "Warm Up" (only if needed)
- Ball to throw during discussion or alternate plan as designed in first session

Warm Up

Welcome! Last session, we talked about unpacking society's beauty standards. Today, we are going to talk about respecting each other's bodies. Let's start with some common symptoms disabled people experience. In adaptive sports, especially in athletes with partial or full paralysis, it is not uncommon for players of all ages to have accidents before they make it to the bathroom. In medical terms, we call this incontinence. Some of us might have regular schedules and diets that help us control our bodies better. But, no plan is perfect, and accidents happen. This is a totally normal occurrence, and while it may sound funny, it can be embarrassing and upsetting. I want you to know that you can report accidents privately to a coach and let us



know whether you can go to the bathroom and take care of the situation alone, or whether you need to call a parent. It is also important that you encourage each other to privately disclose that information to coaching staff, rather than “outing” them to the team and further embarrassing them.

Additionally, as people with disabilities, we may experience accidental spitting when talking, involuntary spasms or tics in language or movement, trouble remembering talking points, and other symptoms of our impairments. We also know that no two people experience their disability the same way, even with a shared diagnosis. As we’ve talked about in previous sessions, it is our job to unlearn harmful behaviors, and to allow each of us to handle symptoms our bodies experience in our own way while maintaining privacy and dignity for everyone around us.

Work Out

Discussion Questions (8 minutes) [You can break into small groups for the “work out” discussion if you have a large group.]

What could you do if you think your teammate has had an accident? [encourage youth to let their teammate handle the situation instead of calling attention to it, ask if their teammate needs any help from them or aides]

Does anyone know how you should address aides or medical alert animals our teammates may work with? [medical alert animals should be ignored, avoid eye contact with them, you can ask your teammate at an appropriate time if their animal is allowed to “visit” but that answer is allowed to be no; assume that if someone does not introduce their aide or caretaker, you shouldn’t interact with them except to clarify an interpretation]

What should you do if you see a teammate need help doing something like transferring to their sports chair or tying their shoe? [stress that we should always ask people’s consent and if they need help, especially when it comes to touching their body. This can include giving hugs]

How can we make space for all of us to be welcome in all the ways our disabilities show up at practice and in games?

Talking Points [You may choose to share all talking points, or only those that have not been discussed already by the athletes. Main points are highlighted for easy facilitation]

- **Having accidents at practice is not uncommon.** Paralysis and partial paralysis can affect the bowels and bladder causing digestive and urinary issues that can result in accidents.
- **Each person with a disability experiences their disability uniquely.** Even two athletes who have the same disability may have different levels of functionality
- **Volunteers should NOT be helping minors take care of accident-related issues.** If a volunteer asks to help you take care of an accident, let the coaching staff know immediately.
- **So here is a challenge for you...** Each of us experiences our disabilities in unique ways. Let’s all find ways to be supportive of each other as we navigate the different physiological impairments we face.
- **As student athletes and leaders...** It is our responsibility to help create a community where people can be in their bodies exactly as they are.

Cool Down

Wrap Up Today’s Discussion

Learning about how we manage our bodies is a big part of being an athlete. This also helps us learn how to ask for support and reduces opportunities for bullying and shaming others. It is up to all of us to respect each other and be kind when our disabilities show up in different ways, whether it be incontinence, involuntary spasms, or any other thing we can think of. We are here for each other as a team and the coaches are here for you too!



MINI PREVENTION PLAN

ABUSE PREVENTION PLAN

Dates:

Organization Name:

Key Contact(s):

Organization Description & Mission:

Description of existing abuse prevention measures in place, check all that apply:

- Commitment of leadership
- Code of Conduct
- Background checks
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Staff responsible for implementation of plan and ongoing monitoring
- Policies/procedures
- Training
- Reporting process
- Partnerships, collaborations with peers
- System for monitoring compliance and progress of this plan
- Commitment to ongoing prevention work including professional development

If any of the boxes above are not checked or were not fully addressed in the last year, address in annual goals below:

20XX Goals

- > Engage more stakeholders with surveys and meetings to ensure their voices are heard and reflected in policy and practice
- > Build on policies and procedures to fully address prevention initiatives
- > Train program participants and volunteers
- > Continue partnerships and collaboration with ABC and expand to others
- > Increase public awareness through education, community engagement, and outreach
- > ADD GOALS HERE – EDIT ABOVE GOALS AS NEEDED



DEAR PARENT LETTER

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We have a groundbreaking new partnership with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) benefiting both our athletes and the entire adaptive sports community. Through this partnership, we are able to offer two new programs that promote healthy relationships, empowerment, and creating safer spaces for athletes with disabilities. We want to be clear: this is not because of any individual concern or incident at Sportable - it is part of our commitment to uphold a culture of safety and belonging for all of our athletes which includes becoming more proactive in preventing sexual harassment and assault, regardless of where it happens.

These new programs are built into our regular seasons and are geared towards youth athletes to help bolster their confidence, leadership skills, and independence - all of which play a role in the prevention of abuse. Your child and their team members will have the opportunity to participate in these programs this season during which they will receive brief, weekly sessions led by our coaches with support from staff and peer mentors.

As most of Sportable's teams are co-ed, the teams will be divided by gender and will experience either Coaching Boys

Into Men or Athletes as Leaders - both are internationally recognized and evidence-based. Coaching Boys Into Men in association with Athletes As Leaders has been noted in the World Health Organization's INSPIRE Handbook: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children as a promising approach that reduces violence against children. While this is impressive, neither curriculum has ever been formally adapted for youth with disabilities. And that's where our partnership with VDH comes in - working with our own coaches and athletes, we have customized the curricula to focus solely on the experiences of athletes with disabilities. This is important for both inclusion and prevention - youth with disabilities are far more likely to be sexually abused. We want to give our youth athletes tools, resources, and knowledge to change these statistics.

The Opportunity for Girls:

- Curriculum: "Athletes As Leaders"
- How it works: Coaches and mentors will facilitate 10 sessions with athletes (15 minutes per session). Coaches will receive expert training to support the program.
- Topics include: leadership development, mental health, relationship abuse and healthy relationships, self-image, supporting other athletes, challenging harmful gender stereotypes, consent specific to children with dis-

abilities (transfers, volunteer assistance, speaking up for bodily autonomy).

For more information, visit:

AthletesAsLeaders.org

The Opportunity for Boys:

- Curriculum: "Coaching Boys Into Men"
- How it works: Coaches and mentors will facilitate 10 sessions with athletes (15 minutes per session). Coaches will receive training to support the program.
- Topics include: mental health, relationship abuse and healthy relationships, respect, conflict and communication, consent specific to children with disabilities (transfers, volunteer assistance, speaking up for bodily autonomy), gender equity.

For more information, visit:

CoachesCorner.org

Thank you for supporting Sportable athletes to promote healthy relationships and become leaders in their community. Please note these new programs were created in collaboration with our coaches, athletes, parents, volunteers, and community partners.

If you have any questions about your Sportable athlete participating in this program, please contact your child's head coach and/or Sportable Program Coordinator.

POCKET GUIDE RESOURCES & CONTACTS

This was printed the size of a business card and is foldable and discreet. It was handed out at youth practices and community events.

WE CAN CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES.

This pocket-sized resource is packed with essential contacts and helpline numbers.

If needed, empower yourself with the knowledge to take action and seek help.

CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT REPORT

SPORTABLE.ORG

SPORTABLE

ON-THE GO 24/7 SUPPORT GUIDE

SPORTABLE CONTACTS

LAURA BENNETT
Chief Operating Officer
540.872.6203
laura@sportable.org

TYLER ROWE
Program Coordinator
757.660.0008
tyler@sportable.org

HANNAH SMITH
Athlete Engagement Intern and Sportable Athlete
804.551.8838
hannah@sportable.org

24/7 FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HELP

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Text or call 988
988lifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Text START to 88788
Call 800-799-7233
thehotline.org/get-help/

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance
Text 804-793-9999
Call 800-838-8238
vsdvaalliance.org/get-help-ayuda/resources

Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741741
crisistextline.org

List of additional resources:
connectsafely.org/resources-for-youth-in-crisis



VOLUNTEER ABUSE PREVENTION VIDEO

> Click on image to access the Volunteer Abuse Prevention Video (5 minutes)

Abuse Prevention Training; Conduct Guidelines
How do these Guidelines affect transfers?

Keep interactions observable & interruptible

- 1 Always ask for consent and respect "No."
- 2 Rely on the athlete's instructions

For more information on transfers, watch our volunteer training video on transfers located at sportable.org/volunteer/program-volunteering.

RECOMMENDED READING AND VIEWING

- > [Coaching Boys Into Men](#)
- > [Athletes as Leaders](#)
- > [Sportable & National Wheelchair Basketball Association Webinar on Abuse Prevention in Adaptive Sport](#)
- > [IMACT Webinar on Creating Organizational Policies on Abuse Prevention in Adaptive Sport](#)
- > [Centers for Disease Control Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures](#)
- > [Centers for Disease Control Prevention Violence Prevention Strategies](#)
- > [Using Carrots Not Sticks to Cultivate a Culture of Safeguarding in Sports](#)
- > [Move United Sport Protection Policy](#)
- > [International Safeguards for Children in Sport](#)
- > [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)





This project is important for youth growing up with disabilities. Having adults that have lived these shared experiences leading the discussions makes a big impact. Looking back at myself growing up with a disability, I wish I had some of the knowledge we are bringing to these kids.

- Megan Anderson, Sportable Coach

For more information

To learn more about abuse prevention, email info@sportable.org or visit Sportable's abuse prevention website at Sportable.org/Abuse-Prevention.