



BOOKLET

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDELINES:

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORTS**

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RISE BOOKLET

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WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORTS



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RISE Booklet

Step-by-Step Guidelines: What to Do If You Experience Sexual Violence in Sports

Introduction

Sports are an amazing way and space to go and thrive, connect with other peers, feel empowered, and challenge yourself.

As it is important to train for your physical health, or passion or dream, it is equally important to protect yourself from harm which may occur within the sports settings.

This Booklet is designed and offered to support and guide you, by providing clear, simple, supportive, and inclusive steps for recognizing, addressing and preventing sexual violence.

Every person deserves to participate or/and play in a safe environment, no matter their gender, ability, or background.

Every person deserves to feel safe, respected, and heard, no matter who they are or where they come from.

**Together, we can make sports safer for all athletes
and all people working in sport-related environments.**



Section 1: What Is Sexual Violence in Sports?

Sexual Violence is considered as an 'umbrella term covering different forms of sexual offences,' (Dibia, Esom, Abbah and Ononuju, 2023, p. 65). Recognizing and understanding these forms is considered crucial for prevention. International organizations and other stakeholders are specifying and identifying more and more forms of sexual violence.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) provides a definition of sexual violence, which is designed in such a way that a) it covers all recognized and unrecognized forms and b) is considered more inclusive and interdisciplinary:



Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

WHO has identified a wide range of different forms of sexual violence, including rape by strangers, rape by a partner/friend/- close person, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, sexual abuse of persons with mental and/or physical disabilities, verbal harassment, through inappropriate sexually suggestive comments, jokes, or messages (including on social media), human trafficking, denial of contraception, digital sexual violence (including assault), female genital mutilation, forced abortion, forced marriage and others.

Sexual violence within sports can take various forms of the above, also including **unwanted and inappropriate touching or physical acts** during practice, competitions, medical examinations, or sports events. It can also be manifested through coercion, exploitation, or harassment by individuals in positions of authority or influence.

Sexual violence may coexist with other forms of abuse in sports, such as:

- **Psychological manipulation**, including coercion, intimidation, or emotional abuse to exert control over the victims.
- **Abuse of power**, where coaches, staff, or peers manipulate or coerce athletes or others, fostering dependency or fear.
- **Physical violence**, such as aggressive behavior, punishment, or harm inflicted under the guise of discipline.
- **Financial exploitation**, including withholding financial support, misusing athletes' earnings, or pressuring them into financial dependence.
- **Discriminatory violence**, where individuals face abuse based on gender, race, sexual orientation, or disability.
- **Social isolation**, where athletes or other victims are deliberately cut off from support networks to make them more vulnerable to exploitation.

FACT

Sexual violence in sports can occur by any person and may affect any person despite gender, age, disabilities, financial and other background.

It can happen in various sports settings, during practice, medical examination, locker rooms, during trips, or even online.

Section 2: Recognizing Warning Signs and Red Flags

Learning to recognize warning signs and red flags can help you protect yourself and others.

**Recognizing these signs is the first step
toward stopping sexual violence.**

The warning signs include (non-exhaustive list):

➔ **Isolation** from teammates or coaches, such being discouraged from relating with family members or peers.

➔ **Excessive preferential treatment** by a coach or teammate that isolates you from your peers or/and others.

➔ **Special treatment or provision of gifts** that make you feel uncomfortable.

➔ **Reinforcement** to keep secrets about certain behaviors or situations.

➔ **Unwanted physical contact** or exaggerated personal intimate or not comments.

➔ **Pressure to engage** in activities or behavior of sexual nature that feel uncomfortable, whether verbal, physical, or online.

➔ All the above may escalate over time, so it is important to speak up the moment you start feeling and thinking
"This is not right! Something is wrong"

**If you ever feel uncomfortable, do not ignore it!
Trust your instincts and seek help.**

Do not be afraid to speak up!



Section 3: Immediate Steps to Take in Case of Victimization

If you experience or witness any act of sexual violence immediately do the following:

1. Ensure Your Safety:

- ➡ Remove yourself from the situation, if possible. Remember your well-being is a priority.

2. Tell Someone You Trust:

- ➡ Reach out to a person you trust, a friend, a parent, family member coach, safeguarding officer, or another trusted adult.

3. Report on the Incident:

- ➡ In case you feel comfortable, and you wish to report the sexual violence incidence:
- ➡ **Contact** and get advice from a **Safeguarding Officer**. Learn what formal Protocol is or/and a procedure to report a sexual violence incident.

Safeguarding Officer

A **safeguarding officer** is the designated individual within a sports organization, club, school, or youth centre who holds responsibility for ensuring the safety and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, or neglect.

Their key responsibilities include:

- Implementing and monitoring safeguarding policies across the organization.
- Responding promptly and effectively to safeguarding concerns or disclosures.

- Providing training and guidance to staff and volunteers on recognizing and reporting abuse.
- Collaborating with relevant external bodies, such as child protection services or law enforcement.
- Maintaining clear, confidential records of safeguarding incidents and actions taken.

Within the context of this Booklet, the Safeguarding Officer serves as the primary contact for reports of sexual violence in sport-ensuring survivors are supported with sensitivity and that procedures are followed transparently and thoroughly. Their presence is essential in building a culture of trust, accountability, and proactive protection.

 **Go to the nearest police station** in your country.

 **Call 112 the European** emergency number.

 **Contact** the following.

If you live in one of the RISE partner countries:

- **Austria:** **a)** Austrian Police at 133 for immediate assistance **b)** Women's Helpline Against Violence at 0800 222 555 (available 24/7 and free of charge) and **c)** for children and young people, call Rat auf Draht at 147 for confidential support.
- **Bulgaria:** Ministry of Interior at 112
- **Cyprus:** Cyprus Police at +35722808691 / 22808691 / 1480 and **b)** if you are a minor contact FONI at 1466 or the Police at 1460
- **Greece:** Police at 100
- **Italy:** Centri Antiviolenza: Local anti-violence centres spread around Italy where victims of violence or abuse can ask for help.

- **Spain:** **a)** Emergency Assistance at 112. **b)** Policfa Nacional at 091. **c)** Guardia Civil at 062.

4. Record the Details

Write down all the details you remember of what happened, including dates, times, when the incident(s) started, and people involved. This can help when sharing your story.

5. Seek Support

Reach out to trusted friends, teammates, coaches, family members and others and ask for emotional support and guidance.

6. Get Professional Support

7. Call the helplines or child protection hotlines in your country for confidential assistance and anonymous reporting.

Call the European Helpline for Children and Adolescents:

116111

Contact the following if you live in one of the RISE partner countries:

- **Austria:** **a)** Women's Helpline Against Violence at 0800 222 555 (free, 24/7, multilingual). **b)** Child and Youth Helpline - Rat auf Draht at 147 (free, 24/7, anonymous).
- **Bulgaria:** National Helpline for victims of violence at 080018676
- **Cyprus:** **a)** Helpline: 112 (if you are in direct risk) or 1440. **b)** Police: 1460. **c)** FONI or Hope for Children (if you are minor) at 1466
- **Greece:** Helpline SOS - Violence Against Women: 15900

- **Italy:** Helpline Violence and Stalking: 1522
- **Spain:** **a)** Emergency Assistance at 112. **b)** Gender-Based Violence Helpline at 016 (24/7, available in multiple languages). **c)** ANAR Foundation (Minors Support) at 900 202010 (24/7 helpline for children and adolescents). **d)** LGBTQ+ Support Line at 028

8. Contact NGOs or Support Centers in your country to ask for guidance and support

Austria:

- **Austrian Women's Shelter Network (AOF):** Offers support and safe accommodation for women and children affected by violence - <https://www.aof.at>
- **Violence Protection Centers (Gewaltschutzzentren):** Offer legal and psychosocial support - <https://www.gewaltschutzzentrum.at/>
- **Violence Protection Centers (Gewaltschutzzentren):** Legal and psychosocial assistance to victims of domestic violence - <https://www.gewaltschutzzentrum.at>
- **LEFO - Counselling, Education and Support for Migrant Women:** Specialized support for migrant women, including victims of trafficking - <https://www.lefoe.at>

Bulgaria:

- "Animus Association" Foundation: <https://animusassociation.org/>

Cyprus:

- **Centre for Prevention, Education and Awareness "React Act Prevent Sexual Violence":**
<https://www.reactactprevent.com/>
- **Hope for Children** (only for minors):
<https://uncrcpc.org.cy/>
- **Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF)** Helpline 1440:
<https://domviolence.org.cy/>

Greece:

- **Smile of the Child:** Call 1054 (Line operates 24/7):
<https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/>

Italy:

- **Change The Game**, Italian Association of volunteers against emotional, physical, and sexual abuses and violence in sport <https://www.changethegame.it>

Spain:

- **Minors Support (ANAR Foundation):** Call 900 20 20 10 24/7 support for children and adolescents.



9. Other NGOs and Centers for support

Austria:

- **ZARA - Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work:** Supports victims of discrimination and hate speech, including online - <https://www.zara.or.at>
- **MENVIA - Support for Men Affected by Violence:** Offers counseling for men experiencing or using violence - <https://www.men-center.at>
- **White Ribbon Austria:** Part of the global movement of men working to end male violence against women - <https://www.whiteribbon.at>

Bulgaria:

- **Alliance for the Protection against Domestic Violence,** <https://www.alliancedv.org/>

Cyprus:

- **SIKESO:** <https://sikeso.com/>
- **Cyprus STOP Trafficking** <https://cyprusstoptrafficking.com>

Greece:

- **MeNowMeToo:** <https://menowmetoo.gr/>
- **WHEN:** <https://when.org.gr/>
- **BIASTOP:** <https://www.viastop.gr>
- **DIOTIMA:** <https://diotima.org.gr/>

Italy:

- **ASSIST ITALY**, national association for female athletes which works towards gender equality in sports, and to fight against harassments and abuses in sports
<https://www.assistitaly.eu>

Spain

- **Delegación del Gobierno para la Violencia de Género**

Government body coordinating national response to gender-based violence. Includes helplines, legal support, and resources across regions.

Website: <https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es>

- **Fundación ANAR**

Focused on children and adolescents at risk (including sexual abuse).

24/7 helpline (116111), psychological, legal, and social support.

Website: <https://www.anar.org>

- **Asociación APRAMP**

Specializes in helping women escape sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Offers direct intervention, shelters, legal and psychological support.

Website: <https://www.apramp.org>

Remember, reporting is not just brave!

It is an essential step to stop the cycle of harm.



Section 4: Accessing Help and Support

No matter your personal circumstances, support systems are designed to help you:

- ➔ **Safeguarding Officers:** They are trained professionals within your sports club where you can reach out for guidance, support and to address your concerns confidentially
- ➔ **Helplines:** Local and National public helplines operate 24/7 providing help, support and guidance (see above).
- ➔ **NGOs/Centers:** Local and national NGOs operate specialized centers for direct practical help, advice, guidance for any crisis (see above).
- ➔ **Community and Online Networks:** Safe spaces to connect with peers, mentors, and advocates.
- ➔ **Specialized Support:** Tailored resources are available for people with disabilities or from marginalized backgrounds.

**You are never alone! There are people ready
to support you every step of the way.**



Section 5: Safe Practices in Sports

Sports are about **respect**, **teamwork**, and **enjoying the game**, but it's also about **ensuring safety**.

Fostering a safe sports environment requires clear boundaries and respect for everyone.

Key practices include:

- ➡ **Set boundaries** in relationships with coaches, teammates, and sport staff. Always maintain a level of professionalism
- ➡ **Request to be asked for your consent** before being physically touched when your coach, or a medical staff or a teammate tells you that it is necessary to touch you to show you a sports move.
- ➡ **Request for the code of conduct and safeguarding standards** applied in Sports in your sport club or academy.
- ➡ **Be an Active Bystander** in case you witness an act of sexual violence against another person. Please remember to secure your safety before acting. For practical tips and practices for active bystander interventions please visit <https://rise-project.org/>
- ➡ **Use Technology Safely:** Be cautious when communicating online and sharing personal information online.
- ➡ **Ensure Equal Access:** Advocate for your rights, safeguarding standards, and for inclusive environments where every teammate of all abilities, genders, and backgrounds feel valued.
- ➡ **Be Prepared on Sports Trips or Events:** Request and ensure proper supervision and regular check-ins and communication with guardians.

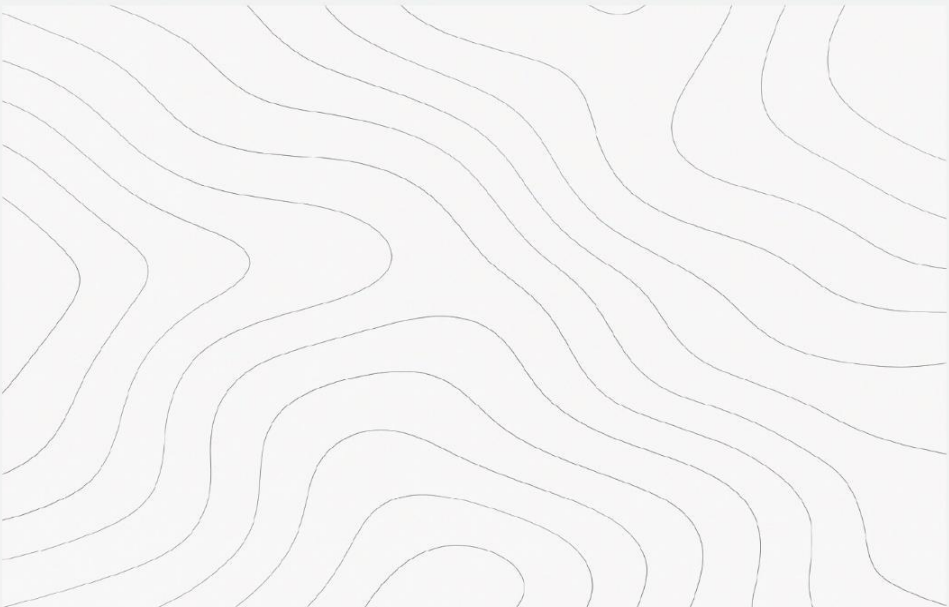


Safeguarding Standards

Safeguarding Standards in sport consist of guidelines, practices, and ethical guidelines that should be adopted by sports organizations and sports venues to ensure the safety and well-being of athletes, especially children and individuals who are particularly vulnerable. According to the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (2018), the ten standards of protection are:

The policy and procedures for responding to incidents, operational systems, prevention, codes of conduct and behavior, justice, communication, education and training, access to advice and behaviors, implementation and monitoring, influence.

Every athlete deserves to train and compete without fear.



Section 6: Your Rights as an Athlete

As an athlete, you have the right to:

- ➔ **Participate** in sports in an environment **free from abuse, harassment, neglect, exploitation** and any other kind of violence.
- ➔ **Be treated with dignity and respect**, and **fairness**, no matter your gender, ability, age, ethnicity, disability or background.
- ➔ **Speak up or/and report concerns or/and incidents**, without fear of retaliation or judgement if you experience or witness a sexual violence act.
- ➔ **Access support systems** tailored to your needs, including safeguarding officers, counsellors, and advocacy groups.
- ➔ **Refuse unwanted contact, uncomfortable inappropriate situations**, or activities that make you feel unsafe. Your body is your own and you have the right to physical and emotional boundaries.

**Your voice matters and standing up for your rights
helps create safer sports for everyone.**

Section 7: Preventing Abuse and Building Positive Cultures

**Prevention starts with fostering a respectful
and inclusive team environment.**

Here's how:

- ➔ **Speak up** if you witness bullying, discrimination, or inappropriate behavior of any type of violence.
- ➔ **Encourage open communication** with peers and teammates to report concerns and support each other.
- ➔ **Promote and accept diversity, equity, equality and inclusion** for all in sports and team environments. Everyone should feel safe and accepted.
- ➔ **Advocate for fair play and equal treatment** of athletes, regardless of identity or ability.
- ➔ **Practice Empathy:** Support friends, peers, teammates, who may be struggling and encourage them to seek help when needed.

**A strong team culture is built on trust,
respect, and mutual support.**

**By promoting respect and inclusion, every athlete can
contribute to a positive team culture.**



Conclusions

Sports should not tolerate sexual violence.

You have the means to keep others and yourself safe. Young athletes can have a significant impact by identifying sexual violence, understanding how to respond, and cooperating to stop harm.

Never forget that asking for help is always the right thing to do and that it's not your fault.

By working together, we can all establish a sports environment where everyone is respected, empowered, and feels safe.



Contact us

Cyprus - Social Policy and Action Organization (SPA0)

Website: www.socialpolicyaction.org E-mail: info@socialpolicyaction.org

Greece -American College of Greece Research Center, (ACG-RC)

Website: <https://www.acg.edu/>
E-mail: irb@acg.edu

Greece - Sports Club ALTIS (A.S. ALTIS)

Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sport-club-altis>
E-mail: a.s.altis@outlook.com

Bulgaria - Bulgarian Sports Development Association (BSDA)

Website: <https://en.bulsport.bg/aboutBSDA>
E-mail: info@bulsport.bg

Austria - Innovative Education Center (IEC Austria)

Website: <https://www.zentrumib.org/>
E-mail: info@zentrumib.org

Italy- Centro Universitario Sportivo di Padova (C.U.S. Padova A.S.D.)

Website: <https://www.cuspadova.it/>
E-mail: europa@cuspadova.it

Spain - Sport and Cooperation Network Foundation (Red Deporte)

Website: <https://www.sportanddev.org/network/organisation-directory/red-deporte-y-cooperaci%C3%B3n>
E-mail: rdc@redeporte.org

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