

WADOKAI WORCESTER



Safeguarding and Protecting Children:

A guide for sportspeople



PREFACE

This pack is NOT intended as an expert's comprehensive manual. Instead it offers a practical guide for all those involved in providing support for children. It aims to increase awareness about safeguarding and child protection, help you to recognise the signs of abuse and poor practice and subsequently deal sensitively and effectively with any issues that may arise. It also prompts you to review your own practice to ensure that sport provides a positive and enriching experience for children and that your behaviour is always above reproach.

By the end of this pack, you should be able to;

- Identify the foundations of safeguarding, good practice and child protection
- Describe the different categories of child abuse and the impact of abuse on children
- recognise the signs and symptoms of each category
- Identify the appropriate action to take if abuse is suspected
- Recognise the roles and responsibilities of relevant statutory agencies.

In the context of coaching, WadoKai Worcester Safeguarding and Protecting Children; A guide of sportspeople will encourage you to consider the issues you may encounter when coaching children and, most importantly, to explore what good coaching practice involves.

You may have had some training and/or experience in safeguarding or child protection already. In this case the pack will help you to think more about your responsibilities in a sport setting and how you may share your knowledge and experiences. However, you may have no previous experience in this area and may want to spend more time on some sections than others. Or discuss with your colleagues.

Although this pack is designed for you to work through on your own or as a follow-up, some issues covered may raise strong feelings for you. It might be helpful to identify someone who is also working through the pack with whom you can regularly share your thoughts with. Make sure you have a clear agreement about how you will work together. Additionally, if you are unsure about any issues raised you should make a note and discuss these with relevant staff on your club (child Protection officers; Katrina Wilson and David Wilson or Child protection Leads. Ines Maior & Lorna Bowerman)

While this resource is specifically focused on safeguarding and protecting children and young people in sport, the principles of best practice should also be applied to all participants (including vulnerable adults) who should equally be assured a safe and enjoyable experience.

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SECTION 1

The Foundations of Safeguarding, Good Practise and Child Protection

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sport can have a very powerful and positive influence on people- especially children- and should provide opportunities for both enjoyment and achievement. Through sport, children can develop valuable qualities, such as leadership, confidence and self-esteem.

However, these positive outcomes can only be achieved if WadoKai Worcester has prioritised safeguarding the welfare of young participants, and if the coaching you provide is of the highest possible standard. It's essential that you understand and act on your responsibilities, so that children can enjoy sport within a safe and secure environment where they feel protected and empowered to make the most suitable choices. Providing children with positive sporting experiences means that they will be more likely to achieve their true potential.

This first section will introduce you to the key principles of good coaching practise and relate these specifically to the context of coaching children. As you work through the section you may well identify aspects of good practise that you already adopt in your work; you may also encounter other issues that have not occurred to you before, but which you may need to address when coaching children in the future.

By the end of this section, you should be able to explain the;

- Key principles of WadoKai Worcester Code of practise for karate coaches
- Implications of these principles for;
 - Coaching in general
 - coaching children

1.1 Code of practise for sports coaches

The code is based around four key principles described below;

RIGHTS- coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sports.

RELATIONSHIPS- coaches must develop a relationship with athletes (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect

RESPONSIBILITIES; Personal standards- coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times

RESPONSIBILITIES; Professional standards; To maximise the benefits of minimise the risks to athletes, coaches must attain a high level of competence by attaining qualifications through a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practise.

These key principles relate to the relationship between coaches and performers. They may also apply to relationships with other people, including parents, guardians, friends, peers, teachers, medics and the press. This list should be an active one changing as coaching progress develops and as coaches view each other performer within their sporting environment.

The key principles apply in any coaching situation, whatever the specific role of coaches within the club. But are particularly important when coaching children.

1.2 Implications of coaching

In this section we will be exploring the four key principles from 1.1

RIGHTS-

In order to respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport you should;

- Provide choices for individual performers in your sport
- Provide an environment in which children are free from fear or harassment
- Recognise the rights of performers to be treated as individuals
- Encourage performers to confer with coaches if the need arises
- Promote the concept of a well-balanced lifestyle for performers, both within and outside of sport.

Remember!

Sport should always be a positive experience for all children. You Should:

- Treat all individuals in sport with respect at all times
- Not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, disability, sexuality, age, occupation, religion or political opinion
- Not condone, or allow any form of discrimination to go unchallenged
- Not publicly criticise or engage in demeaning descriptions of others
- Be discreet in any conversations about performers, coaches or other individuals
- Communicate with, and provide feedback to, performers in a manner that reflects respect and care.

You may feel that there are further issues to consider in relation to player rights-

If so please discuss this with Katrina or David

RELATIONSHIPS-

As a coach, you must develop relationships with children and other that are based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

You should always;

- Consider your behaviour- do not engage in behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse
- Promote the welfare and best interests of your performers, even if this means letting another professional take over
- Take action if you have a concern about the behaviour of an adult or young person towards a child
- Empower performers to be responsible for their own decisions
- Clarify the nature of the coaching services being offered to performers
- Ensure the best interest of your performers when communicating and cooperating with other organisations and individuals.

You should never;

- Engage in sexual intimacy with performers at any time, or under any circumstances, including immediately after the coaching relationship has ended.

Physical contact

It is good practise for coaches to inform children, parent and carers that, in some sports, it will be essential for the coaches to manually support the child in order for them to perform a technique safely. If you must do this you should outline the nature of the support and any further actions that may be necessary if the child needs additional help to perform the technique safely.

Training Practises

In some sports, you may need to explain training practices in detail so that everyone involved in the coaching process understands exactly when and why factors relating to intensity, duration, nutrition or treatment are important.

Language

Always consider the age and experience of the children you are working with. In some case, it may be appropriate to use technical terminology (when children need to learn the specifics of movement, tactics and rules); in other cases, you may need to simplify the terminology used. Remember that the meaning attached to certain words may vary from region to region, You should try to ensure that the language you use does not confuse children; it should not be a barrier to to their understanding and enjoyment of sport.

Player welfare

The relationship between the child as a young performer, and the child as someone who is able to make decisions relating to their own training, is straightforward in some cases and more delicate in others. You should encourage children to take responsibility for their own development and actions.

Coaching services

You should discuss and agree on experts or organisations that can offer appropriate further services, with the child and/or parents or carers. Always inform the child and/or parent or carer of any potential costs involved.

RESPONSIBILITIES

You will often find yourself in positions of considerable influence- particularly when coaching children. You therefore have a profound responsibility to demonstrate and set high moral and ethical standards throughout your coaching practice. Your primary role is to improve performance and to demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Remember!

You should always;

- Be fair, honest and considerate to performers and other in your sport
- Project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency
- Be a positive role model for the performers at all times.

SUMMARY-

Good coaching practice involves;

- Promoting safe and correct practice in relation to;
 - Physical environment
 - Other performers
 - Significant others (eg umpires, drivers, ground staff).
- Accepting professional responsibility for your actions
- Making a commitment to provide a high-quality service
- Providing a positive benefit to society through sport
- Acknowledging that sport is a developing profession and that it is important to exchange knowledge and best practise tips
- Working towards attaining coaching qualification at different levels.

1.3 Implications for your club

This section outlines measures your club can take to promote the key principles outlined in sections 1.1 and 1.2 and thus provide a safe sporting environment for children.

Developing a code of Practice

In the UK, steps are being taken to ensure that codes of conduct are incorporated into governing bodies of sport and employer constitutions. Opportunities are now available for an individual, club/organisation or local authority to fully implement good practise within their coaching programmes this may involve;

- An accreditation process
- A coach education programme
- A commitment to implement policies and procedures
- Accessing central information systems (eg local authorities, governing bodies of sport, criminal records checks)

Use the key principles of sports UK's Code of Practice for Sports coaches as the basis code of practice for the club.

Complying with codes of conduct should be a requirement and not an option, for individuals in the relevant group. It is important that clubs have, or put in place, a policy and procedure to respond to breaches of their codes of conduct; without this, the management of concerns about an individuals behaviour can become very difficult.

Good practise involves seeking support when you need it. As a coach, you should never feel that you are alone- you should feel able to seek help, advice or support whenever it may help you deal with an issue.

Recruitment, employment and deployment of staff

As part of its approach to safeguarding children, your club should have a robust recruitment and selection policy and procedure. This should ensure that all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

Communication

Good communication is vital to the effective operation of your club in general, but is particularly important in the context of coaching children.

Establishing and maintaining effective communication channels in your club could involve;

- Newsletters
- Making policies available
- Fundraising activities
- Committee
- Supporters club

- Lottery panel
- Establishing and maintaining a link with a local sports development officer
- Coach education programme
- In hour training and opportunities

Many clubs have implemented systems through which they can share good practice and provide coach feedback through formal channels. With such a system in place, managers should be able to identify concerns that could be addressed by a coach education programme or a simple change of coaching focus

1.4 Implications for coaching children

It is essential that a culture of honesty, integrity and competence exists in coaching.

This means;

- Understanding and acting on your responsibilities as a coach
- Recognising the need to protect the key concept of participation for fun and enjoyment, as well as achievement.

Remember!

All staff, including coaches who work independently should not only be required to sign up to your clubs code of practice, but also ensure that they demonstrate good practice at all times.

Acting as a role model

Not all children may behave as you would like during your coaching sessions. Often, they are influenced by the media's portrayal of their professional sports-star heroes. Unfortunately, the media tend to focus on incidences of poor, rather than good, behaviour and often blow things out of proportion. However, children are unlikely to understand this and may try to emulate undesirable behaviour that they have witnessed in major matches or events. This may result in a conflict between you and the children and, if ignored, could have disastrous consequences.

As a coach, you should always try to be a positive role model for the children you coach. If you act in a responsible manner, they will be encouraged to do so, too.

Appearance- always project a professional image

Fashion- you need to wear kit and equipment that is recommended and appropriate for your sport

Tattoos- very popular but not always desirable

Jewellery- remove or tape up

Language- it is often not just what is said but how it is said, foul language in front of a child is forbidden

Smoking- always discourage children from smoking, set a positive example

Alcohol- it is unacceptable to consume or be under the influence of alcohol when responsible for children

Drugs- take a firm stance against drugs and lead by example.

Empowering children

As a coach- particularly of children- you hold a powerful and unique leadership role, often carrying considerable authority and status. This role is frequently accompanied by a closeness and mutual trust usually help only between the parent and child. You often wittingly assume the level of authority and, occasionally, your influence over spills into the child's personal life. One of the challenges you repeatedly face is to manage this potential power and to balance the responsible and safe boundary between coach and performer. The challenge to do this is exacerbated by the need for you to build high levels of trust from children-particularly those involved in elite performance- in order to encourage them to optimise their performance and develop the level of commitment required to reach their potential.

When coaching children, you may start by using your authorities role to build a strong relationship or bond. This can, and often does, result in you having a very positive influence over the child- sometimes and influence that grows even more powerful than that of a child's parents or schoolteachers. Over time, the all-important trust needed normally develops.

However, with this trust come increased vulnerability and potential for you to misuse, or even abuse, your power. This might be the result of thoughtlessness, negligence or occasionally wickedness. Even a passive type of abuse of power (for example, by questioning the child's loyalty or commitment) may sharpen the child's need for belonging. Over time, this may result in over-conformity, obsessive behaviours and emotional dependency.

As you become an importance figure for a child, you may need to examine your own coaching behaviour. Likewise, the child may develop an inappropriate attachment to you, based on a misunderstanding or misreading of your relationship. Care should be taken to ensure that the relationship is an appropriate and positive one, and not one that could be open to abuse or misinterpretation. In this way, you will help to protect the child and yourself and provide a positive role model for other coaches and children.

There is of course, a close but potentially dangerous relationship between commitment and conformity. Inadvertently or intentionally, you may encourage conformity to your values and ideas to commitment to sport. In seeking greater sporting commitment, you may, therefore, be overstressing the need to conform so possibly thwarting personal responsibility and self-determination, thus encouraging over dependence in the child, It is important to recognise and avoid the potential negative consequence of your power and trust. Your role as a coach should be to instil confidence in the children you coach, so that they are willing to play an active role in the coaching process.

Poor practice

As well as adopting and promoting good practice, it is also important to recognise and respond to examples of poor practice (ie actions that fail to comply with the key principles of good practice and child protection). These could involve;

- Rough, physical and/or sexually provocative games
- Inappropriate touching
- Children using inappropriate language without being challenged
- Children being reduced to tears as a form of control
- The use of sexually suggestive comments, even in jest
- Failing to respond to allegations made by a child

This is not an exhaustive list and you may be able to identify additional examples. In all cases, poor practice must be challenged and attempts made to rectify the situation.

The use of team meetings to discuss actual and potential examples of good and poor practice will help foster an open and positive sporting environment.

1.5 SUMMARY-

In the first section, you have been introduced to four key principles relating to good coaching practice;

- Rights
- Relationships
- Responsibilities; personal standards
- Responsibilities; professional standards

You should also have considered these principles in the context of coaching children and should now understand the crucial role you play in the development of sport and in the lives of the children you coach.

You should also have begun to think about the issues arising from the key principles and the action required to address them. Good practice involves ensuring that these actions result in a professional approach to coaching where there is evidence of honesty, integrity and competence. The aim is to provide sporting opportunities for children-for fun as well as for achievement- within a safe and secure environment.

SECTION 2

Understanding and Identifying signs of child abuse

2.0 INTRODUCTION

All those directly or indirectly involved with children's sport have a responsibility to;

- Identify their values and feelings in relation of child abuse, and recognise how they may impact on their responses.
- Be able to recognise and respond to signs and indicators of child abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise situations where abuse has already taken place or may potentially occur. As a coach, you are not expected to be an expert, but you do have a responsibility to act if you have any concerns about the behaviour of an adult or a child towards another child.

In this section, you will be given the opportunity to explore what child abuse is and to consider your own feelings, beliefs and values in relation to it. You will begin to differentiate categories of abuse and will then be encouraged to start to recognise the signs and indicators. Although quite factual, this section is intended to stimulate both thought and discussion. By the end of this section you should be able to;

- Consider your own beliefs and preconceived ideas about child abuse
- Describe the different categories of child abuse
- Describe the effects of abuse
- Describe the incidence of abuse and identify those children most at risk
- Identify the signs and symptoms of child abuse in sport situations.

2.1 What constitutes Child Abuse?

The term 'child abuse' is used to describe all the ways in which children are harmed, by adults or other children and often by those they know and trust. It refers to the damage that has been, or may be, done to a child's physical or mental health or development. This may occur at home, at school or in a community setting, including a sports environment. An adult may abuse a child by both inflicting harm and by failing to prevent harm. Alternatively, a child may abuse another child- indeed, there is growing evidence to suggest peer abuse is an increasing concern for young people.

Some people are motivated to harm others deliberately, and seek out opportunities to work or volunteer in environments that offer access to young people. It is therefore important that any clubs or organisations providing services for children and young people have effective recruitment and deployment systems in place. Seeking appropriate references and DBS checks. **Please complete the Senior Coach- Identifying child abuse Quiz**

2.2 Truths and Myths

Having completed the Senior coach quiz and discussing with Instructors any points you didn't understand or agree on, now use your current knowledge about child abuse and neglect by completing the [Senior Coach True and False quiz](#).

2.3 Categories of Abuse

Child abuse can take many forms, but can be broadly separated into five main categories;

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying and Harassment

Neglect

Neglect occurs when adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Examples of neglect include;

- Failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing
- Regular leaving children alone unsupervised
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Refusing to give children affection and attention.

Examples in Sport

Neglect in a sport situation could include a coach failing to ensure that children are safe and comfortable, or exposing them to undue cold or heat, or to unnecessary risk or injury.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when someone causes physical harm to injury to a child. Examples include;

- Hitting, shaking or throwing children
- Poisoning, burning or scalding children
- Biting, suffocating or drowning children
- Giving children inappropriate drugs or alcohol
- Otherwise causing them physical harm

Examples in sport

Physical abuse in a sport situation may be deemed to occur if the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child immature and growing body. This includes instances where drugs are used to delay puberty, control diet or enhance performance.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when adults or young people use children to meet their own sexual needs, this could include;

- Full sexual intercourse
- Masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling
- Involving children in producing pornographic material (video or photographs)
- Showing children pornographic material (magazines, videos or Photographs)

Examples in Sport

There are situations within all sports where the potential for this form of abuse exists;

- Some individuals have deliberately targeted sports activities in order to gain access to, and abuse children
- There is evidence that individuals have sometimes ignored codes of conduct, and used physical contact within a coaching role to make their inappropriate touching of children
- Some coaches consider it an acceptable part of the sports culture to have a sexual relationship with their young proteges.
- Some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video of sports people in vulnerable positions.

The term 'grooming' refers to the way in which sexual abusers (or potential abusers) manipulate targeted victims, carers, colleagues and their environment. They do this to make it easier to abuse children, and to reduce the likelihood of the child either telling or being believed they should disclose what is happening. Grooming behaviour may appear to be positive, and the plausibility of the individual concerned often makes it difficult for others to identify their real motivation. However, they will also ignore, undermine or resist the application of good practice and other safeguarding guidelines. Adherence to codes of conduct, an understanding of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour, and an awareness on the part of everyone in a club when and how to report concerns, will all contribute to identifying and dealing with grooming behaviours. Concerns about an adults behaviour should be reported to the relevant club child protection officer (Katrina Wilson & David Wilson)

Emotional Abuse

This is the emotional ill treatment of a child that results in severe and persistent adverse effects on his or her emotional development. Although it can occur in isolation, children who have suffered neglect or physical/sexual abuse will also have suffered some level of emotional abuse. Research shows that children who experience an emotionally abusive environment are at higher risk of suffering other forms of abuse. Children of all ages can be emotionally abused in a number of ways, such as through;

- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations on them
- Making them feel worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet, the needs of another person
- Making their positive self-image entirely dependant on sporting achievement and success
- Making them feel frightened or in danger
- Shouting at, threatening or taunting
- Overprotecting them, or conversely, failing to give them the love and affection they need.

Examples in Sport

Emotional abuse may occur in sport if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure to consistently perform to high expectations. In some cases, this may be from parents and coaches. The inappropriate use of availability of personal information or images (in the media, internet, photographs or even club notice board) can be distressing for any performer.

As a result of emotional abuse, children may feel nervous, lack confidence and self-worth, and learn to dislike any form of activity. It is up to the coach to lead by example and to ensure that concerning incidences are handled with care and sensitivity, so that the situation is controlled and not made worse.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can be verbal, written or physical and can include actions such as;

- Physical assaults
- Name-calling, sarcasm and racist taunts
- Threats and gestures
- Unwanted physical contact
- Graffiti

- Stealing or hiding personal items
- Being ostracised or ignored

Bullying can also occur via the internet, by phone or through text messaging.

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons.

The effects of bullying may be invisible, but can leave lasting emotional scars. The bully is not always obvious to others and the victim often keeps quiet.

Harassment is closely associated with aspects of bullying and occurs when an individual feels that they are subject to behaviour from others that is unacceptable to them. Such behaviour could include simple name-calling or an action that is designed to annoy, upset or worry another child. In some cases, it may develop into an identifiable pattern of bullying; in other subtle cases, it may take the form of random acts- act designed to upset others.

Examples in Sport

The competitive nature of sport makes it an ideal environment for the bully. The bully could be;

- A parent who pushes their child too hard
- A coach who shouts at, or humiliates children
- Children who actively seek to make sport a difficult or unhappy experience for others.

Although bullying often takes place in schools, it can occur wherever there is the opportunity for children to meet. The bully may not be selective in location, but is always likely to be careful about who else may be able to observe what is said or done. The damage inflicted by bullying is frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to some children to the extent that they may stop participating in sport or taking their own life.

Although it may be difficult for you to anticipate when your actions could provide further opportunities for the bully, you have a responsibility to ensure that sport is a positive experience for all children. Carefully observe the child you coach and evaluate whether they are being included in activities by other children and whether they have the confidence to voice any doubts they may have. It is easy to tell if children are unhappy-you cannot get the best out of them if they are hurting emotionally.

2.4 Effects of Abuse

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not have the access to people who can help them cope with abuse.

Adult survivors of child abuse typically say that their childhood experiences have made them feel guilty and worthless. They may have blamed themselves for what happened, which in turn led to anxiety, depression and sometimes, difficulty in forming or maintaining relationships. If help is not provided, the behaviour displayed by children who have been abused may persist into adult life, and sometimes lead to abusive relationships with their own children or with other adults.

As a result of abuse children may;

- Die- clearly the most serious effect
- Suffer pain and distress
- Develop behavioural difficulties, such as becoming angry and aggressive
- Experience a developmental delay
- Experience school-related problems
- Develop low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Suffer from depression or inflict self-harm, sometimes leading to suicidal attempts
- Become withdrawn or introverted
- Suffer temporary or even permanent injury.

2.5 Incidence of Abuse

Child abuse can happen to children of all ages, regardless of their gender, race, culture or background. What places children at risk of abuse?

Some children are perceived as being more vulnerable than other. Assessing the overall risk to a child is a very complex task, undertaken by Child protection professionals. This process takes account many factors such as;

- High levels of stress
- Previous violence in the family
- Poor relationships between parents or carers
- The age of the child
- The history and characteristics of the abuser
- Potential access to the child by the abuser

However, even when many of the factors exist, it doesn't necessarily mean that the child concerned will be abused.

Care should therefore be taken to ensure that safeguarding measure reflect the specific needs and potential vulnerabilities of these groups.

To compound the problem, adults do not always hear or pick up messages children give to indicate that they are being abused. This places children at further risk. Abused children may also behave in ways that adults find difficult to cope with and which make them more vulnerable. However, recent research clearly indicates that children and adults can recover from the effects of abuse if they are believed, protected from further abuse and receive help they need to overcome the experience they have suffered.

Some factors that may increase likelihood of risk;

- Age- young children may have difficulty tell others
- Disability- disabled children may struggle with communication or accessing people to tell
- Spending time away from home and family- Elite young athletes who are required to spend time away
- Children already experiencing some form of discrimination (eg racial harassment)- this is a further form of abuse
- Poor relationship between children and parents/carer
- High levels of stress
- History of violence in the family

2.6 Identifying Signs of Abuse

Recognising abuse is not easy, even for individuals who are experienced in working with abuse. Often personal feelings of shock or anger can interfere with the recognition that abuse is, or may be, taking place, and it is easy to deny that it is happening. This section is not designed to make you an expert, but to make you more alert to the signs of possible abuse in all five areas. By the end, you should be able to identify the possible signs and indicators of each type of abuse-neglect, physical, sexual, emotional and bullying or harassment.

Common signs of abuse are;

- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Sexually explicit actions or language
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Something the child has said
- A change observed over a long period of time (eg weight loss, increasingly dirty or unkempt)

All of these factors are important and children may often suffer from more than one form of abuse. For example a child who is physically abused may also experience emotional abuse through being frightened, anxious or worthless.

Neglect

Because neglect is where adults consistently or regularly fail to meet a child's basic physical/psychological needs, it is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It can go unnoticed for a long period of time, yet have lasting and very damaging effects on children. Children who do not receive adequate food or physical care will often develop and mature more slowly, while those who are left alone, unsupervised or unoccupied, will often find it difficult to make friends or socialise adequately. It is important to be able to recognise both physical and emotional indicators.

Remember!

PHYSICAL INDICATORS of neglect include;

- Constant hunger, sometimes begging or stealing food from other children
- An unkempt state (frequently dirty or smelly)
- Loss of weight or being underweight
- Inappropriate dress

Behavioural indicators of neglect include;

- Being tired all the time
- Frequently being late or not coming at all
- Failing to attend hospital or medical appointments
- Having few friends
- Being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis

Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life, and certainly through their involvement in sport.

Minor cuts and bruises and soft tissue injuries are quite common in some sports. The areas where bruising is most likely to occur are the bony parts of the body (eg elbows, knees or shins)

Remember!

You should be aware of children's injuries or bruising that can be caused non-accidentally. These will often be part of a recurring, sometimes appearing regularly (eg after a weekend). An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are;

- Unexplained or for which multiple or contradictory explanations have been given
- Untreated
- Inadequately treated
- On parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely (cheeks or thighs)

Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups. You need to be alert to the following physical indicators;

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises that may reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping, grabbling, pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken burns
- Scalds

Physical abuse may not always be apparent from bruises, fractures or physical signs. Behavioural indicators, particularly then there are changes in behaviour, can also indicate that the child is being abused. This might be evident in the following behaviours;

- Fear of parents being contacted
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Running away
- Fear of going home
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed
- Covering arms and legs, even when hot
- Depression
- Withdrawal behaviour

Sexual Abuse

How will you know if a child is being sexually abused? Because physical signs are difficult to observe on day-to-day, routine basis, a child's behaviour may be the only outward indicator of sexual abuse. Often concerns will be reported to you by a third party (eg a friend of the child, or another adult who has heard or noticed something that gives rise for concern).

Children may tell you either directly or indirectly that they are being sexually abused. Direct disclosures from children are competitively rare. This will have taken enormous courage on their part because it is likely that they will feel ashamed, and will have been threatened by the abuser about what will happen if they tell, and/or will be aware and very frightened of the potential consequences (eg the abuser going to prison). In all cases, children will tell you because they want the abuse to stop. Therefore, it is very important that you listen to them and take them seriously.

Remember!

There may be physical indicators of sexual abuse, such as;

- Pain or itching in the genital area

- Bruising+ or bleeding near the genital area
- Having a sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

If you suspect or become aware of such indicators, it is inappropriate for you to check them out yourself. In these circumstances, always refer the child to a medical expert and discuss your concerns with your club welfare or child protection officer.

The sort of behavioural indicators you may notice include;

- Sudden or unexplained change in behaviour (eg becoming aggressive or withdrawn)
- Apparent fear of someone
- Running away from home
- Having nightmares
- Having sexual knowledge that is beyond the child's age or developmental level
- Making sexual drawings or using sexual language
- Wetting the bed
- Having eating problems (overeating or anorexia)
- Self-harming or mutilating, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they can't tell anyone
- Abusing substances or drugs
- Suddenly have an unexplained source of money
- Taking over a parental role at home and seeming beyond their age level
- Not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting sexually explicit towards adults
- A child telling someone about the abuse

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is perhaps the most difficult of all forms of abuse to measure. Often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled, or because they receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Coaches and others involved in performance sport should also consider the potential emotional abuse from excessive pressure during training regimes or in relation to competition.

Remember!

Physical indicators of emotional abuse may include;

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on the weight in other circumstances (eg in hospital or away from home)
- Sudden speech disorder
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Behavioural indicators may be;

- Neurotic behaviour
- Being unable to play, unwilling to take part
- Excessive fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted

Remember!

In term of good practice in care of children, you should never;

- Allow of engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Favour one child over others
- Make sexually suggestive comment about, or to a child, even in fun
- Refer to a child's ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality in a way which is derogatory
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games or horseplay
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves. If children are very young or are disabled, these tasks should only be carried out with the consent (preferably written) of parents or carers. In an emergency situation, parents or carer should be informed. Discretion and sensitivity are important at all times.

Bullying and Harassment

The damage inflicted by bullying and harassment is frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, in extreme cases causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a child is being bullied; these are outlined below.

Remember!

Physical indicators may include;

- Stomach aches or headaches
- Difficulty sleeping
- Bed wetting

- Scratches or bruising
- Damaged clothes
- Bingeing (food, cigarettes, alcohol)
- Shortage of money
- Frequent loss of possessions

Behavioural indicators may include;

- Fear and/or avoidance of a particular individual or group
- Reduced concentration
- Becoming withdrawn or depressed
- Being clingy
- Emotional fluctuations or mood swings
- A reluctance to go to training
- A drop in performance

2.7 Summary

In this section you had the chance to consider your own feelings about child abuse or protection issues and have been encouraged to be aware of situations. You have also been asked to consider different categories of abuse and should now be able to relate them to your own sport.

The indicators outlines in section 2.6 are very important but, even if children display some or all of these signs, it doesn't necessarily mean they are being abused. It is not your responsibility to decide. However, it is your responsibility to act by reporting your concerns if you suspect abuse.

Your observations could be the missing piece in a larger jigsaw of concerns, which is already being pieced together by a child protection professional, such as social workers and the police. This is why it is vital that you are aware of all the signs and indicators both in terms of what you see and what you observe.

SECTION 3

Taking Appropriate Action

3.0 INTRODUCTION

You should always take immediate action by reporting your concerns if a child says or indicated that they are being abused, or if you have reason to suspect that this is the case.

In this section, you will be encouraged to consider how you should respond to a child for whom you have concerns, either as a result of a disclosure from the child, your own observations or the concerns of others. You will also see that, by developing procedures to both prevent and deal with such situations it is possible to provide both a fun and safe sporting environment for children.

By the end of this section, you should be able to;

- Describe how you would respond to a child who discloses abuse
- Recognise the importance of your own observations in the detection of possible abuse
- Identify the person(s) to whom you should report or share your concern
- Deal with difficult situations involving allegations against parents/carers or other staff/volunteers.
- Deal with incidences of bullying
- Describe the responsibilities of various agencies, including your club, governing bodies or sport, local authorities, social services and the police
- Prepare yourself for the possibility to having to deal with suspected abuse in the future.

3.1 Dealing with disclosures of Abuse

Children who are being abused will only tell people that they trust and with whom they feel safe. Coaches very often share a close relationship with their performers and may, therefore, be the sort of person in whom a child might place their trust in. Children want the abuse to stop. By listening and taking what a child is telling you seriously, you will already be helping to protect them.

It is useful to think in advance about how you might respond to this situation in such a way as to avoid putting yourself at risk. The following guidelines are included in most governing bodies of sport child protection policies and procedures, and is strongly recommended that they are incorporated into those of your own club.

Timing and Location

Understandable, a child who has been abused may want to see you alone, away from others. They may therefore approach you at the end of a session when everyone is going home, or may arrive early at a time they think you will not be busy. However, a disclosure is not just a quick chat, it will take time and usually has further consequences. Bear in mind that you may also need to attend to other children, check equipment or set up an activity- you cannot simply leave a session unattended. Therefore, try to arrange to speak to the child at an appropriate time.

Location is very important. Although it is important to respect a child's need for privacy, you also need to protect yourself against misinterpretation or potential allegations. Do not listen to the child's disclosure in a completely private place- try to ensure that other members of staff are present or at least nearby.

Responding to a child

It will have taken a great deal of courage for a child to tell you about abusive behaviour and it is crucial that you take this into consideration when responding to the child's disclosure. Following the guidance below will help you act in an appropriate and responsible manner.

Guidance-

- Do not panic- react calmly, so not to frighten the child
- Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult, but they are right to confide in you
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame
- Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying.
- Be honest straight away and tell the child you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep (such as you personally will make it stop)
- Do not promise that you will keep it a secret. Explain that in order to help them you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down
- Listen carefully to the child; take them seriously
- Do not show shock or distaste
- Keep any questions to the minimum required for you to clarify any facts or words that's you do not understand- do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not probe for more information than is offered
- Encourage a child to use their own words
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- At the end of the conversation, ensure that the child is being collected or is capable of going home on their own
- Do not approach the alleged abuser

Recording the disclosure

Once the child has left, make an accurate written record of what was said, You should use your clubs standard incident report form

Once you have completed the written record;

- Sign and date it
- Provide your club welfare officer and other with copies, as required by your clubs child protection procedures.
- Store the information in accordance with your clubs sport procedures (a minimum is safe and secure)

Other sources of concern- reports, allegations or suspicions of abuse

In addition to a child making a direct disclose of abuse to you, concerns may arise in a number of other ways. These include;

- A conversation with an adult or child
- Direct observation of a worrying incident
- Observations of signs, indicators or behaviour that suggest possible abuse
- Receipt of an anonymous allegation

These should be recorded in the same way as disclosure, using an incident report form.

Dealing with bullying

All incidences or suspicions of bullying must be taken very seriously. The guidelines below will help your club deal with the issue appropriately;

- Develop guidelines on dealing with bullying and ensure that these are part of an active policy
- Promote the guidelines in your clubs code of practice
- Ensure that concepts of equity, value and inclusion are covered in staff training,
- Take all signs of bullying seriously
- Involve parents or carers
- Do not ignore the victim or the bully- encourage them to discuss their thoughts both with you and, if appropriate, with each other within a group
- Encourage children to change their behaviour in order to improve the situation
- Follow general guidelines- listen, record, report, reassure and take appropriate action
- Invite professional organisations to explain specific issues to children and offer further help- this could be a session for both coaches and children
- Share concerns- the victim may not be safe

- Follow up what you do- remember sport should be safe and fun for both the bully and the victim
- If the bullying incident was severe in nature (eg serious assault), or bullying behaviour persists despite attempts to deal with it, this should be reported and dealt with in line with the clubs child protection policy and procedures.

3.2 Responding to observations

Children

Due to the nature of coaching, you have a unique opportunity to observe children both physically and emotionally. For example, it is now quite common for coaches to carry out fitness assessments prior of the start of a coaching programme, during which personal details are recorded (height, weight and body measurements). These can prove useful if a child show signs of rapid change through diet or weight training. However, always remember to obtain the parents or carers consent to collect this kind of information when a child joins your club.

Colleagues

Remember, you not only have to consider the consequences of your own actions, but also those of others within your club. For example, from time to time, you may be required to observe other coaches sessions and may have concerns or spot risks that, for whatever reason, may have been missed by the coach leading the session. In these circumstances, you may need to intervene, either by stopping the session or simply discussing your concerns with the coach in question. This should be viewed as good practice, rather than interfering, as failure to take action could result in a case of negligence being made against the coach and/or club. The incident should be recorded in writing and made available to other coaches to avoid them making the same mistake themselves.

Whereas some incidences are clearly a cause for concern and may prompt action (such as a risk assessment, change to coaching style or review of goals), be aware that some incidences are not so obvious and only surface once the damaged has occurred.

3.3 Sharing your concerns

As a result of disclosure or an observation, you may be worried about what a child has said or simply feeling that something is not quite right. Taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy and you will inevitably experience a mixture of emotions. You may feel that you have been partly responsible; you may be worried about the consequences of the action you take for the child's family or others. These feelings are completely natural, particularly because of the nature of the medias coverage of child abuse

What is important is the child's long-term future- imagine what could happen if you do not take action. Sadly, in some extreme cases, a failure to act has led to a child's death, as many child abuse inquiries have shown. At the very least, a failure to act may well result in continuing abuse of one or more children. Your information could be vital in preventing future abuse and you have a responsibility to share and/or report your concerns, however small they may be. Many adult survivors of childhood abuse have said that telling someone who helped stop the abuse was a vital step in the healing process.

Sharing with designated person, welfare officer or senior colleague

In some sport situations, it may be quite easy to determine who you should contact if you are concerned about a child being abused. For example, if you work for a local authority, in a sport or leisure centre there should be staff with designated child protection responsibilities. If not, you will have a senior colleague or line manager to contact. If your work with children takes place at a sports club, your governing body of sport is likely to have a lead child protection officer, and your club should have a welfare officer, to whom you can report your concerns, Failing this, you should speak to the club secretary or chairperson. Whether you are a paid employee or volunteer, there should be someone to whom to can turn.

Remember!

Whoever you talk to, you will need to maintain confidentiality but do not need to take full responsibility. Your lead child protection officer, club welfare officer or senior colleague will expect to be informed so that you can begin to protect the child and be supported in what could be a difficult situation.

Sharing with Parents/Carers

You should always be committed to working in partnership with parents or carers when there are concerns about their children. In most situations, it is therefore important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns In doing so, you may discover reasons that explain behavioural changes or find out that the family needs further support. Parent and carers will usually inform someone at your club if their child is upset or unwell but occasionally this information may not reach you. In cases like this, simply talking to parents or carers can help resolve any initial concerns.

Sharing with professionals

In some situations, particularly if it would be inappropriate to discuss your concerns with the child's parents or carers. It may be necessary to inform social services and /or the police. If available, your club lead child protection officer, welfare officer or senior colleague should take responsibility for this. However, you need o be aware of that to do in case they are unavailable or inappropriate, or there is no one obvious to whom to report your concerns.

1. Inform the duty officer at social services of the police and explain that your referral involves child protection. Give your name, role, address and telephone number. Give clear,, accurate details of the child, what you have observed, what the child has said and what action you have taken. This is the type of information you should have recorded on the incident reports
2. Social services/police will advise you on hat to do next, including whether, how and when to involve parents/ carers, and will also take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate enquires and investigations are undertaken.
3. If a child needs urgent medial attention as a result of suspected abuse, then you must seek this as a matter of urgency. Inform medical staff of your suspicions of possible abuse and contact social services as soon as possible to obtain advice about involving parents/carers.
4. Record carefully what you have heard, seen and done, including conversations you have with other professional, using the appropriate incident report form

Remember!

- However small your concern, share it with the club welfare officer, child protection officer or senior colleague, who will take responsibility for deciding whether to inform social services. If no one is available then you must ring social services yourself, giving accurate details of your concerns.
- Social services departments have a responsibility to investigate all concerns of child abuse. They do this jointly with the police. This may involve talking to the child and their family and/ or gathering more information
- It is important to be open and honest with parents, but in some circumstances this may put the child in more danger. If in doubt, discuss your corners firsh with appropriate and qualified personnel.

3.4 Dealing with difficult situations

Allegations against parents/carers

In some cases, a child may be placed at even greater risk if you share your concerns with their parents/carers. In these circumstances, you must report any suspicion, allegation or incident to abuse to the relevant child protection or welfare officer as soon as possible and ensure that it is recorded in writing. If this person is not available, refer your concerns to social services or the police immediately.

Remember!

- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only
- Ensure the relevant child protection or welfare officer follows up with social services
- The child protection or welfare officer should seek advice from social services about whether, when and how to consult the child's parents/carers.

Allegations against staff/volunteers

As a coach, you are responsible for the welfare of each child in your care, and for making others aware of their own responsibilities. However, child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting, and it also sometimes occurs in sport

Hearing allegations against coaches, members of staff or volunteers is particularly distressing. It can raise feelings of anger because children have placed their trust in adults who have abused that trust, and guilt on the part of other colleagues, who may feel they could have done more to stop it happening. An immediate response is to want to deny the possibility that the allegation could be true. Reporting suspicious, allegations or incidents of abuse against a colleague can be equally distressing. Clubs should ensure all coaches, staff and volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports their concerns about a colleagues practice or the possibility that a child is being abused.

Remember!

The child will and should be at the centre of the whole process; their confidence, safety and security must be assured.

Allegations of abuse against a member of staff in any setting can have far-reaching consequences. Other children, parents and members of staff may need to be interviewed by the police and social services. The effects on other staff can be distressing, and child protection policies and selection procedures may need to be reviewed.

There may be three types of investigation;

- Criminal (police)
- Child protection (Social services)
- Disciplinary (club)

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the alleged victim, their family, or the person accused.

The clubs designated child protection officer should make the governing body of sport equivalently aware of the allegation and seek advice as appropriate. However, if the clubs child protection officer is subject to allegation, a senior person from the club should report directly to the governing body of sports leads child protection officer.

The club and/or governing body of sport should make an immediate decision about whether an individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from coaching pending further investigation.

Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, the club must assess all available information in each case, under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure, to decide whether the accused should be reinstated and, if so, how this can be handled sensitively with other staff or volunteers. The welfare of children should always be the primary consideration, even when there is insufficient evidence either to take the

matter to court, or to secure a conviction. It is important to note that the burden of proof required to secure a conviction is 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This is a higher threshold than that required in child protection/welfare proceedings/ Where a judgement is made' on the balance of probability' about whether allegations are true, and an individual is a potential risk to children.