



PROMOTING AND ADVOCATING FOR SAFE AND WELCOMING SPORT ENVIRONMENTS

A Discussion Paper

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SPORT**
makes us better

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Based on:

Report on Harassment and Abuse in Sport – Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment

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Aussi disponible en français

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER?

Maintaining safe and welcoming sport environments requires everyone involved – coaches, officials, trainers, teachers, parents, athletes, sport organizations, community groups, governments, health and social service professionals, spectators, the media – to take an interest, to take responsibility, to make it happen everywhere and all the time. Maintaining safe and welcoming sport environments also requires leadership to bring a priority focus to the need for action, to foster the common will to take action, and to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive response. *This discussion paper presents an overview of the background and issues that need to be understood for an informed review of the considerations and options for fulfilling the leadership role.*

The issues and recommendations presented in this paper are drawn from the *Report on Harassment and Abuse in Sport – Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment* that was prepared for the True Sport Secretariat by Tom Kinsman in August 2004. The report looks at how the overall concern of harassment and abuse in sport may have changed since a collective effort by 40 national sport organizations and governments to address the problem ended in 1997. Promising ideas and recommendations for further progress are also identified. The report is based primarily on the opinions, experiences and perspectives of a cross-section of leaders within the Canadian sport community who have been involved in different ways with harassment and abuse in sport, ranging from policy aspects to raising awareness and resolving disputes. *This discussion paper summarizes the findings of the situation analysis and needs assessment to facilitate discussion and decisions on specific goals and roles for appropriate, effective future action.*

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

1993 TO 1997

Harassment and abuse in sport was a problem that was both hidden and overlooked prior to 1993, resulting in the Canadian sport community being sadly lacking in protecting its participants. Significant progress was made in confronting harassment and abuse in sport during the period spanning 1993 to 1997 in a climate of heightened awareness and action in other sectors such as workplaces, the education system, the health, legal and social service professions, child care agencies, religious institutions, and governments.

Shortly after publicized incidents of harassment occurring in a number of different sports exposed the problem, a small harassment in sport working group¹ was formed in October 1993. The working group produced the publication *Harassment in Sport: A Guide to*

Current Status

Harassment in Sport: A Guide to Policies and Procedures and Resources

- *needs to be updated and no longer readily available*
-

¹ The working group was chaired by Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) and included representatives from Sport Canada, Volleyball Canada, Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (now renamed Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS)), Athletes CAN, Canadian Sport Council, Canadian Professional Coaches Association (CPCA) and Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), and Status of Women Canada.

Policies and Procedures and Resources which was completed in September 1994. The guide included a generic policy which could be used or adapted by the sport community and that also was available on diskette. Between September 1994 and April 1997, over 10,000 copies of the handbook were distributed.

In 1997, Sheldon Kennedy's shocking public revelation of having been sexually abused from ages 14 to 19 by his well-known and successful hockey coach, Graham James, was a catalyst for expanding the working group into **the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective** of 40 sport organizations and governments. The Collective's accomplishments included:

Current Status

Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective

- *inactive due to lack of resources and lead members' competing priorities*
-

- **an inventory of existing programs, services, interventions, policies and other resources** in place in the sport community to deal with harassment
- based on input from the sport community, governments and organizations in other sectors, **ideas to determine needs and a listing of possible interventions and services** to include as part of a broad continuum of approaches to address harassment
- a survey in which 90 stakeholders and individuals with relevant expertise **ranked the priority of 40 activities and interventions in terms of their importance** to creating a safe sport environment for participants
- based on the survey results, **an action plan with lead roles** for eight areas: (1) policies and guidelines for sport organizations and clubs; (2) screening mechanisms; (3) complaint management; (4) information and victim support for athletes; (5) education within the sport community; (6) a broad-based education campaign; (7) research; (8) systemic issues.

Concurrently and with assistance from the Collective, Hockey Canada and the Red Cross developed the excellent publication, ***Speak Out!...Act Now!...A Guide to Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Harassment in Sport***. This guide was then generalized to be applicable to all sports² and made available to the Collective and the broader sport community. *Speak Out!...Act Now!* has proven to be a seminal resource for detailed, complete information directed specifically to the sport and physical activity communities.

Current Status

Speak Out!...Act Now!

- *revised two years ago but no funds for publication*
 - *current version out of date and not readily available*
-

² The generic guide was produced by Hockey Canada, the Red Cross, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), with funding support for finalizing and printing the guide provided by Sport Canada.

A major initiative identified in the Collective's action plan was to develop the **harassmentinsport.com website** which was launched in December 1997.³ The website provided instantly available, high quality, up-to-date information for any organization or individual with access to the Internet. In addition to extracts from *Harassment in Sport: A Guide to Policies and Procedures and Resources* and the complete *Speak Out!...Act Now!* publication, the website included articles, question and answer pages, guidelines and sample policies written by experts specifically for the site or reprinted from credible sources. Information on complaint mechanisms, screening processes and relevant agencies and services was also provided. The website was a breakthrough in resource support for safe and welcoming sport environments, and a means to fulfill many of the goals identified in the Collective's action plan.

Other action plan initiatives carried out by the Collective included:

- a series of **training sessions for harassment officers** coordinated by CAAWS
- a **hot line to request help and guidance** established by the Centre for Sport and Law
- a booklet, ***What Parents Can Do About Harassment and Abuse in Sport***
- a partnership with **the Kids Help Phone** for promoting use of its Canada-wide 800 number to sport participants
- **workshops and presentations** at seminars, conferences, board meetings, annual general meetings and other suitable opportunities for providing information and guidance on harassment and abuse issues

By the end of 1997, a number of individual sport organizations had adopted harassment policies and appointed harassment officers, and organizations such as the Coaching Association of Canada, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and the Centre for Sport and Law had developed new resources and could provide expert help to the sport community. However, the end of 1997 also saw the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective become inactive as lead members had to turn their attention to other responsibilities within their own organizations and sufficient resources could not be dedicated to sustaining their leadership role.

Post 1997

The importance of harassment policies has been reinforced by **Sport Canada's and some provincial governments' funding requirements**. Sport Canada, for example, has expanded funding eligibility

³ The development of the website was led by CAAWS.

Current Status

www.harassmentinsport.com

- ➤ *no longer on the Internet*
 - *domain name now being used for a totally unrelated commercial site*
-

What Parents Can Do About Harassment and Abuse in Sport

- *available from CAAWS in hardcopy or on their website*
-

Kids Help Phone

- *active*
-

Centre for Sport and Law Hot Line

- *inactive*
-

criteria for national sport organizations to include the requirement of having a formal policy on harassment and abuse, with procedures for the reporting and investigation of complaints.

More generally, the context for developing and implementing measures to ensure safe and welcoming sport environments is now set within **an unprecedented framework of supportive policies and programs:**

- The *Expectations for Fairness in Sport* declaration (known as the *London Declaration*) was adopted by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Fitness and Recreation in August 2001.
- The *True Sport Strategy* (formerly the *Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport*) articulates a comprehensive vision, based on the *London Declaration*, for the state of sport in Canada by 2012, with a 10-year action plan for implementing specific initiatives.
- The *Canadian Sport Policy* reflects the interests and concerns of 14 government jurisdictions, the Canadian sport community and countless other Canadian organizations and agencies that influence and benefit from sport.
- Sport Canada's *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework* provides standards to achieve the objectives of the *Canadian Sport Policy* for national sport organizations, and multi-sport and multi-service organizations.
- The federal *Physical Activity and Sport Act* affirms the importance of sport in Canadian society.

As well, some members of the sport and active living/recreation communities and governments continue to provide individual leadership to make Canadian sport environments safe and welcoming, resulting in many excellent resource materials, education programs, research projects and advocacy initiatives. Just a few examples are:

- Hockey Canada's *Speak Out! Program* resources and compelling television commercials to raise awareness about parents' unrealistic expectations for their children's sport performances
- the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport's *The Sport We Want Symposium* to initiate a dialogue amongst Canadians on how community level sport can fulfill its potential to positively influence the moral and personal development of youth, and strengthen communities
- the *National Coaching Certification Program's Ethics and Teaching and Learning modules* and a new module, *Sport as a Discrimination Free Zone*, being developed for the aboriginal community
- Centre for Sport and Law's generic harassment policy and article on bullying posted on their website
- the Canadian Sport Centre Calgary's *Promoting a Positive Sport Environment* workshop (formerly called *Out of Bounds*) designed to raise awareness of the range of behaviours that can

contribute to or detract from a positive sport environment and encourage people to take greater personal responsibility for their conduct and actions

- the ***RespectEd for Sport, Culture and Recreation*** program set up by the Saskatchewan Government in collaboration with the Red Cross offering a variety of services on harassment and abuse issues including templates of policies, policy development presentations, information sessions, a toll free telephone help line and a pool of volunteer experts drawn primarily from the legal profession
- Canadian Parks and Recreations Association's ***Making All Recreation Safe – M.A.R.S.™*** initiative that includes a ***Literature and Best Practice Review***, a ***Communication Tool Kit***, a ***Free from Harassment and Abuse Resource Kit***, and pilot projects in four communities

Important resource materials and programs are also available from organizations outside the sport and active living/recreation communities, such as Volunteer Canada's exemplary ***Safe Steps*** screening program and the Red Cross's ***It's More Than Just A Game*** workshop and other initiatives under their ***RespectED*** program.

At the same time, since the disbanding of the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective, there has been a lack of leadership for the community as a whole, resulting in a loss of overall momentum and an uneven, inconsistent effort to provide safe and welcoming sport environments in Canada.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

Many interconnected issues become apparent in the *Report on Harassment and Abuse in Sport – Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment*.

The core issue is that the problem of harassment, abuse and similar harmful behaviours continues to be a serious concern requiring focused attention and a coordinated, adequately resourced campaign. A 1997 Canada Games study of 537 athletes and 72 coaches revealed participants were experiencing significant levels of different forms of harassment: 6.7% reported having been racially harassed, 11% having been physically harassed, 12.6% having been sexually harassed, 12.6% having been harassed about their sexual orientation, and 25.1% having been verbally harassed, with almost 30% of those who had experienced harassment identifying peers as the cause. A 1998 Parks and Recreation Ontario survey of 138 recreation participants aged 11 to 25 found that 47% reported having been sexually harassed. It is known that harassment and abuse can go on for many years before being reported, and thought that many occurrences are never reported at all.

The key enabling issues that have become evident as contributing factors are numerous and complex, involving both individual and organizational knowledge and behaviours as well as factors inherent to the sport community and its supporting environments. These issues include:

- **underestimating the prevalence and priority of the problem**

Differing and uninformed views about the prevalence and effects of harassment and abuse in Canadian sport environments lead to uncertainty about the priority of taking action amidst other pressing concerns. Underestimating the prevalence of harassment and abuse can be linked to a number of factors. Behaviour that is described by special terms, such as hazing, homophobia, racism, discrimination and bullying, may not be recognized as harassment. The wide range of issues and behaviours involved in harassment and abuse may not be adequately understood. Harassment and abuse can be about gender, sexual orientation, skill level, physical appearance, and training techniques as just some examples, and can take many forms such as inappropriate sexual relationships, improper touching, hitting, degrading comments, screaming and other verbal attacks, isolating or ignoring, or inappropriate training and performance demands. Harassment can be couched as routine matters. For example, concerns about racial discrimination in selecting teams could be described simply as “selection issues”. The seriousness or extent of harassment issues can be minimized by senior personnel who are not in touch with the problems or simply hope the problems will resolve themselves. The following four issues also create uncertainty about the prevalence and priority of the problem.

- **confusion about the boundaries between poor behaviour, harassment and abuse**

There is a continuum between poor behaviour that is tolerable through harassment to abuse. Poor behaviour tends to involve relationship issues that can be resolved with the help of supervisors, councillors, mediators and similar approaches. Harassment involves rights issues that typically can be handled by an organization’s processes for mediation, arbitration and tribunal reviews, though severe cases can be treated as criminal offences. Abuse is usually a criminal offence and there can be a legal requirement to report the abuse to the police or an agency such as Children’s Aid. It is important to be able to differentiate between poor behaviour that should be dealt with using supervisory skills or a dispute resolution process with what constitutes harassment or abuse warranting a complaint and investigation. For both organizations and individuals, confusion about where behaviour lies in this continuum can lead to inaction, inappropriate action, or fear of taking appropriate action.

- **reluctance to contact the responsible organization or authority**

People seeking help can often feel apprehensive or unable to raise their concerns with the organizations or other authorities to whom the alleged harasser or abuser is accountable. Multi-sport organizations tend to be seen as neutral and serving in a helping capacity, and as a result are often the place of first contact. Typically, these organizations do not have the jurisdiction to investigate conduct issues involving other organizations or individuals, and see their role as providing advice and referrals to experts. People seeking help from national sport organizations usually find that conduct issues are redirected to the provincial or club level unless the issue involves national teams or their support personnel. The result is that many concerns are not followed up by the multi-sport organization or the national sport organization or the concerned caller, and therefore are left unresolved.

- **non-reporting**

The extent of unreported harassment and abuse in sport is unknown, but the general sense is that non-reporting is common. Logical reasons for non-reporting include fear of negative repercussions or reprisals, feeling intimidated by or being unaware of the complaint process, lack of trust in the authorities or confusion about which authority is responsible, and fear of humiliation, alienation or publicity. Non-reporting also occurs when there are no harassment policies or reporting mechanisms in place and this is of particular concern at the community level.
- **fragmented jurisdictional authority**

When someone is prepared to report harassment or abuse to the responsible organization or authority, it is not always clear how to proceed. Jurisdictional authority at the club and community organization level is often separate from the associated provincial or national sport organization. At the same time, policies and processes to deal with conduct issues are often not in place or too simplistic at the club and community level, leaving no direct means of reporting or resolving conduct problems. In cases where different organizations and/or levels of sport are involved, just determining who to contact can be a challenge. More generally, complaint and disclosure mechanisms throughout the sport community need to be improved, particularly in terms of being accessible and being seen as trustworthy.
- **inadequate overall knowledge, skills and capacity**

One of the most commonly cited shortcomings of anti-harassment work to date is not having adequately reached the club and community level where most harassment and abuse is thought to occur given the sheer number of organizations and individuals involved. This level is comprised of diverse, often under-resourced organizations that are spread over innumerable neighbourhoods across the country, making education, skill development and policy implementation regarding harassment and abuse a formidable challenge. A related aspect is the lack of capacity at the local level to follow through with policies and preventive measures, and an understandable reluctance to set expectations that cannot be met. More generally at all levels of sport, maintaining requisite knowledge and skills is hampered by turnover of staff and volunteers in leadership positions or positions directly involved with requests for help or complaints and related investigations and hearings.
- **the need for highly specialized expertise and experience**

Harassment policies normally include appointing a harassment officer to oversee or carry out the policy's procedures. With limited resources and the tendency to underestimate the complexities and consequences of the policy, sport organizations often appoint a staff member or volunteer with marginal training and experience to this role. This approach can be adequate for an overseeing role, but actually executing the policy when a harassment or abuse issue arises requires highly specialized expertise and experience. Critical skills not only include knowing what should be done, but also knowing what cannot be done. For example, a harassment officer's neutrality is essential to a credible, fair process and this is a learned skill that is acquired through training and experience. Investigations

also require knowledge of expert methodologies and adequate experience in applying them in order to ensure the quality and validity of the investigative process and findings. Experts need to be involved or provide advice in many other areas as well, including providing legal guidance for policy development, identifying and developing best practices, giving presentations and workshops, and ensuring resource materials are accurate, up to date and credible. Access to expertise is a problem for many sport organizations and a limiting factor in their efforts to prevent harassment and abuse.

- **policies of convenience and no policies at all**

While more sport organizations have been adopting harassment policies to be socially responsible, there are still many policies hastily put in place with the primary purpose of meeting funding conditions or to superficially demonstrate due diligence with respect to statutory human rights requirements or even to satisfy insurance concerns. And there are still sport organizations that have not adopted a policy at all. A good policy is considered a crucial initial step in preventing and dealing with harassment and abuse. In order to be effective, a good policy must be actively present in the organization's culture and understood by staff, volunteers and everyone else affected by the policy. Too often overlooked is the policy's larger purpose to promote and build an organizational climate that consistently supports safe and welcoming sport environments. Too often the policy becomes an end rather than a beginning.

- **an environment susceptible to attracting abusers**

The combination of close, trusting relationships inherent to sport experiences, settings that often are casually or not supervised, and a lack of formal preventive measures can attract abusers.

- **parents who have unrealistic expectations**

Some parents have emerged as a relatively new group of harassers who are making sport environments unwelcoming and, in some cases, unsafe. An increasing number of parents verbally harass and sometimes physically abuse their own children, other people's children, other parents, coaches and officials at sport practices and events, or carry over this behaviour outside of sport settings. The underlying causes for this behaviour include living vicariously through their children, having unrealistic expectations of their children's sport abilities and prospects, not understanding performance-based progression in sport, and being influenced by accepted negative behaviour in professional sport. These parents have become a serious concern for the sport community, and a predicament in view of parents' major and influential roles as volunteers, fundraisers, intermediaries and spectators. The sport system needs to provide more awareness and education for parents, and find ways to reach and engage this diverse and busy group.

- **vulnerability of the coach-athlete relationship**

The coach's relationship with athletes is intense and personal, sometimes continuing over many years and always highly influential in shaping attitudes, values and behaviours. Coaches are in a unique and powerful position to make sport experiences either welcoming and safe or unwelcoming and unsafe for participants. No one else in the sport system is as significant as the coach in spreading messages to athletes, other coaches, administrators and parents. Given this profound role, the selection criteria, ethical education and training, certification standards, codes

of conduct and performance review for coaches are high priority issues. The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is central to this purpose. The NCCP is a training and certification program for coaches offered across Canada in more than 60 sports, and covering the community, school and club level through to high performance athletes. The NCCP is already well grounded in concepts that support safe and welcoming environments, but also is under tremendous pressure to include everything that can be taught about coaching, making it difficult to include an in-depth focus on harassment and abuse issues for all coaches. However, the program is currently in transition to a competency based format that will introduce a continuing education requirement and this is an opportunity to offer more education on preventing and dealing with harassment and abuse.

- **too little attention to harassment and abuse of children and youth by peers**

Too little attention has been given by the sport community to the impact of young participants' behaviour. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's recent *M.A.R.S.TM Literature and Best Practice Review* has a primary focus on peer-initiated harassment and abuse in recreation settings. The review concludes that mistreatment of children and youth by their peers is far more prevalent and equally harmful as mistreatment by adults. Over the last few years, there has been more awareness of the extent of bullying and other harassment by young people and increased effort to deal with these behaviours in schools and other social settings. Sport could benefit from workshops and resource materials that provide insight into the underlying causes and effective ways to prevent and address this problem.

- **underutilizing prevention and detection measures**

Screening is an essential prevention and detection measure for maintaining safe and welcoming sport environments. While general awareness of screening is apparent in the sport community, screening is often thought to involve just checking backgrounds and criminal records. Effective screening is much more. It is a process that also includes assessing all paid and volunteer positions for risk of exposing participants to harassment or abuse, as well as monitoring the behaviour of candidates selected for risk positions. It extends to how job descriptions are written, recruitment strategies and what is assessed in performance evaluations. Volunteer Canada's *Safe Steps* screening program provides an exemplary process but there is not enough awareness or application of this program in the sport community.

- **a lack of awareness of and accessibility to resource materials and education initiatives**

Many excellent resource materials and education programs are already available. Important new initiatives are under development. There is expertise to fill any gaps. The challenge clearly is making available resources and programs known throughout the sport community, and keeping the sport community informed of new initiatives. The challenge is to improve accessibility and impact not only in terms of ensuring materials and programs are readily available but also addressing such considerations as the design and presentation styles suited to specific audiences, and follow up reinforcement. It is also important to have expert input for assessing existing resources and programs, and leadership to determine priorities and ensure support for what needs

to be developed or revised. When it was on the Internet, the harassmentandabuseinsport.com website had served as a dedicated source of information on harassment and abuse issues. The True Sport Strategy's new ethicalsport.ca resource centre website gives priority focus to specific issues including harassment, parental conduct, violence and fair play, but currently is in the initial phases of developing content across these and a broader range of topics.

- **the need for more support, coordination, collaboration and leadership to address all of the above issues**

There is overwhelming agreement within the sport community that sport environments should be safe and welcoming for all participants. However, unless imposed by a specific incident, it is a challenge for most sport organizations to make harassment an important focus amidst other pressing issues and demands. Typically, last minute responses to crises mean being ill-prepared and not providing the level of response deserved by the complainants and alleged offenders. Support, coordination and capacity to implement preventive measures and policy procedures necessary for safe and welcoming sport environments are limited, particularly at the club and community level. More collaboration is needed within the sport community as well as between the sport and active living/recreation communities and other sectors where significant work has been done on prevention and detection of harassment and abuse. There is a pressing need for leadership to guide all of these parameters from the “big picture” perspective that is essential to achieving social change goals. The leadership, coordination and support role for priority action provided by the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective in the past has not been replaced.

KEY ISSUES AT A GLANCE

Core Issue
➤ The problem of harassment, abuse and similar harmful behaviours continues to be a serious concern requiring focused attention and a coordinated, adequately resourced campaign.
Key Enabling Issues
➤ underestimating the prevalence and priority of the problem
➤ confusion about the boundaries between poor behaviour, harassment and abuse
➤ reluctance to contact the responsible organization or authority
➤ non-reporting
➤ fragmented jurisdictional authority
➤ inadequate overall knowledge, skills and capacity
➤ the need for highly specialized expertise and experience
➤ policies of convenience and no policies at all
➤ an environment susceptible to attracting abusers
➤ parents who have unrealistic expectations
➤ vulnerability of the coach-athlete relationship
➤ too little attention to harassment and abuse of children and youth by peers
➤ underutilizing prevention and detection measures
➤ a lack of awareness of and accessibility to resource materials and education initiatives
➤ the need for more support, coordination, collaboration and leadership to address all of the above issues

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

The *Report on Harassment and Abuse in Sport – Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment* identifies specific areas and concrete actions for making sport environments safe and welcoming for all involved. **Key recommendations** include:

- **providing clearer guidance on policy development and implementation**

A policy is an agreement of all involved to do things in a certain way, either voluntarily or as prescribed by external requirements or a combination of the two. Developing and implementing a harassment or conduct policy should involve discussions and consensus-building with those expected to adhere to the policy in order to ensure understanding and commitment. This means engaging parents, volunteers, coaches, officials and staff in defining the sport environment they want and how they will attain and maintain that environment. Organizations need guidance on these matters as well as practical issues. Such practical issues include balancing human rights with protection measures, whether to have a separate harassment policy or to integrate the harassment policy into a broader conduct policy, how to ensure the policy appropriately differentiates between poor behaviour and harassment or abuse, and how to ensure the policy is implemented in a transparent, unbiased and accountable manner that protects the rights of both the complainant and the alleged offender. A fundamental goal is to have current, appropriate and effective policies throughout the sport system.

- **establishing and implementing expectations of appropriate behaviour**

Sport organizations at all levels need to be clear and proactive in setting expectations for parent, coach and athlete behaviour and relationships. Having a harassment policy in place does not replace the need for codes of conduct and a clear articulation and assessment of expected behaviour in the day-to-day functioning of a club or organization. Organizations and communities also need to assess and monitor their own behaviour. Quality endorsements such as Ontario Parks and Recreation Association's *HIGH FIVE Quality Assurance Process* and the True Sport Secretariat's *True Sport Community Recognition Program* help motivate, substantiate and acknowledge exemplary organizational and community behaviour. The concepts used for *ISO⁴ quality management standards* have become an international reference for quality assurance and could be investigated for possible application to the sport community. For example, the *Canadian Anti-Doping Program* has ISO 9001:2000 certification that the program's policies, procedures and day-to-day operations are meeting specified standards. While further consideration is warranted, the costs, time and myriad of practical challenges to make an ISO endorsement program or modified version workable and credible would need to be carefully assessed.

- **clarifying jurisdictional authority and responsibilities**

Policies are required to clarify jurisdictional authority and related responsibilities for harassment

⁴ ISO is the acronym for the International Organization for Standardization

and abuse issues at the national, provincial and community levels. Coordination will be needed with national level facilitation.

- **improving accessibility to and trust in complaint and disclosure mechanisms**
Complaints and disclosures are the primary means for detecting harassment and abuse, and therefore also play a vital preventive role when it is known that the related systems in place are effective and readily accessible. Currently, effectiveness is seriously hampered by systems that too often do not provide adequate assurances to allay fears about the process, do not ensure personnel have the requisite training and experience, and do not inspire trust that handling of cases will be neutral, thorough and fair. In addition to clarifying jurisdictional authority and responsibilities, improving accessibility will involve minimizing the complexities of procedures and ensuring there is readily available, clear information on how the system works and how to use it.
- **providing more education on the use of interpersonal and dispute resolution skills**
Organizations need to be able to effectively manage conduct issues that have not escalated to harassment or abuse by using less formal approaches involving interpersonal, supervisory or dispute resolution skills. The systems and procedures should not turn incidents of poor judgement or mistakes into criminal offences.
- **promoting realistic expectations of children and youth's sport achievements**
Parents need to be better educated about performance-based progression in sport and helped to have realistic expectations of their children's sport abilities at all levels of sport, from community clubs to national teams.
- **building capacity throughout the sport community and particularly at the club and community level**
Much more has to be done in a positive, practical way to assist and encourage local clubs, leagues and community organizations to focus on preventing and addressing harassment issues. Coaches at all levels are an important target group for awareness and education initiatives. Excellent resource materials, education modules and model programs exist or are being developed, but in many cases need additional support and exposure. A closer relationship between the sport community, the active living/recreation community, and organizations in other relevant sectors is needed. Better collaboration within the sport community is needed. Collective access to expertise is needed to have the benefits of cost sharing, economies of scale, less research time by individual organizations, less duplication, more consistency and better quality. Readily accessible and efficient communication methods are essential, particularly Internet-based access to information and expertise. An equivalent to the harassmentinsport.com website should be reactivated as a high priority. It is a matter of coordination, collaboration and leadership.
- **implementing a collective strategy with effective leadership**
A collective strategy is needed to bring all members of the sport community together in commitment and action to ensure safe and welcoming sport environments. A strategy is required

to help identify and support implementation of the series of steps required for the long-term task of preventing harassment and abuse in sport. Leadership is needed to review and extend the strategy developed by the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective, to determine priorities, to promote the best use of limited resources, to oversee coordination of initiatives in order to distribute the work that needs to be done and minimize duplication, to increase collaboration and communication within and outside the sport community, and ultimately to champion the cause. Building commitment and capacity will require expert guidance and an array of resources that can be used by sport organizations to address harassment and abuse issues in their individual circumstances and settings. Good leadership will work towards all members of the sport community having access to quality information, policy templates, reliable mechanisms for complaints and disclosures, tried and proven approaches, and a pool of expertise to handle or provide advice on procedures. Good leadership will ensure the strategy engages and motivates the sport community because people within the community believe the strategy will work and want to be part of it.

The *Report on Harassment and Abuse in Sport – Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment* identifies some of the specific actions for achieving these goals. All of the recommendations presented in the report should be considered in determining priorities and making specific decisions on what needs to be done.

WHO SHOULD PROVIDE COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR THE SPORT COMMUNITY?

The new leadership role for a comprehensive strategy should include representation and input from the sport community yet provide a more stable, but small, administrative base. The True Sport Secretariat with its Steering Committee of community representatives and its coordinating, capacity building mandate is an obvious candidate. Alternatively, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport or another multi-sport organization, or a new collective of organizations and governments could assume the leadership role. However, a collective of more than a few members would still require one member or a small group of members to provide leadership and overall support for the collective's activities.

The responsibilities of the leadership role could include:

- leading the review and update of the lapsed strategy to prevent harassment and abuse in sport
- leading consensus-building on priorities and realistic, concrete actions
- coordinating the work of existing leaders within the sport community
- finding new partners and contributors
- bringing the sport community and active living/recreation community together for this common cause to share expertise, resources and encouragement
- developing collaborative efforts and reinforcing the work of others

- promoting positive approaches and consistent messaging
- building on and ensuring coordination of current Canada-wide campaigns to raise awareness
- ensuring that resource materials and initiatives developed by members of the sport community and outside agencies and institutions (the Red Cross, Volunteer Canada, universities, schools, Scouts and Guides...) are shared with the sport community at large
- identifying common needs and engaging experts to develop best practice strategies and resources that can be used by all
- maintaining and making available contact lists of experts, and finding other creative and cost-effective ways to provide easy access to expert help and guidance for those who need help in specific areas and those who are generally unsure how to proceed
- providing a well-promoted website that provides fast and easy access to harassment and abuse in sport information, resource materials, strategies and contacts

Who should lead? Who can lead? What should the leadership role entail? Will there be adequate financial and human resources for the leadership role? Will there be community confidence in and support for the leading organization or collective? **The immediate leadership required is to answer these and other fundamental questions in order to resurrect the visioning, brokering, servicing role initiated by the Harassment and Abuse in Sport Collective in the 1990s and still unquestionably needed to ensure Canadian sport environments are safe and welcoming everywhere and all the time.**