



2025 Quadrennial Congress

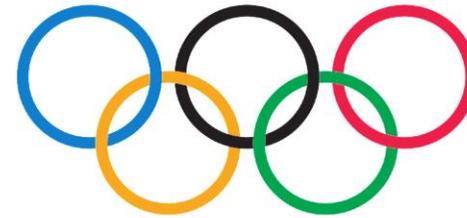
Lausanne, Musée Olympique

14-15 March 2025

II.4. Strategic Projects and various operational and administrative matters

II. 4.a. IOC Athletes Safeguarding and Mental Health

a. IOC Athletes Safeguarding & Mental Health



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

IOC Health, Medicine, and Science Department Director
Dr. Jane Thornton

IOC HEALTH, MEDICINE AND SCIENCE



JANE THORNTON
Director of HMS

OUR OBJECTIVES



1

**HEALTH
LEADERSHIP
ACROSS OLYMPIC
MOVEMENT**

2

**OPTIMAL ATHLETE
HEALTH AND
HEALTH CARE AT
OLYMPIC GAMES
(AND ALL IOC
EVENTS)**

3

**SAFE SPORT:
SAFEGUARDING
AND MENTAL
HEALTH**

4

**INJURY AND
ILLNESS
PREVENTION
(RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION)**

5

**CLEAN SPORT AND
EMERGING
TECHNOLOGIES
(AI, ESPORT)**



THE HMS TEAM



DR JANE THORNTON
Director HMS



FIONA TRABELSI
Office Manager



KIRSTY BURROWS
Associate Director HMS



CATIA GIANNOTTA
Project Manager



GLORIA VISERAS
Senior Manager Safeguarding



SCOTT SLOAN
Senior Project Manager
Mental Health



DR TORBJØRN SOLIGARD
Scientific Manager



DR TINE VERTOMMEN
Research & Academia



CARRIE RAUKAR-HERMAN
Monitoring & Tracking



DR NIALL ELLIOT
YOG Medical Services



DR ROALD BAHR
Senior Scientific Advisor

HEALTH BENEFITS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

REDUCED RISK OF PREMATURE MORTALITY,
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, OBESITY, DIABETES, CANCER

IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

ELITE ATHLETES HAVE HIGHER LIFE EXPECTANCY AND
LESS MORBIDITY, INCL. LOWER RISK OF DISABILITY
AND HOSPITALIZATION

**BUT A HIGHER RISK OF MUSCULOSKELETAL
DISORDERS.**



WHY ARE WE SURVEYING ATHLETES' HEALTH IN THE GAMES?



To document athlete health problems across all sports and identify athlete populations at particular risk



To provide better healthcare to athletes in the future

by informing the planning of the medical services in future Olympic Games

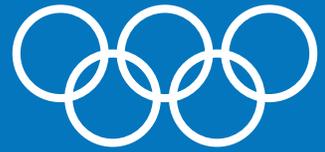
To prevent athletes' health problems in the future

by informing the planning of mitigation measures



Despite sports many health benefits, one in three athletes experience symptoms of mental ill-health.

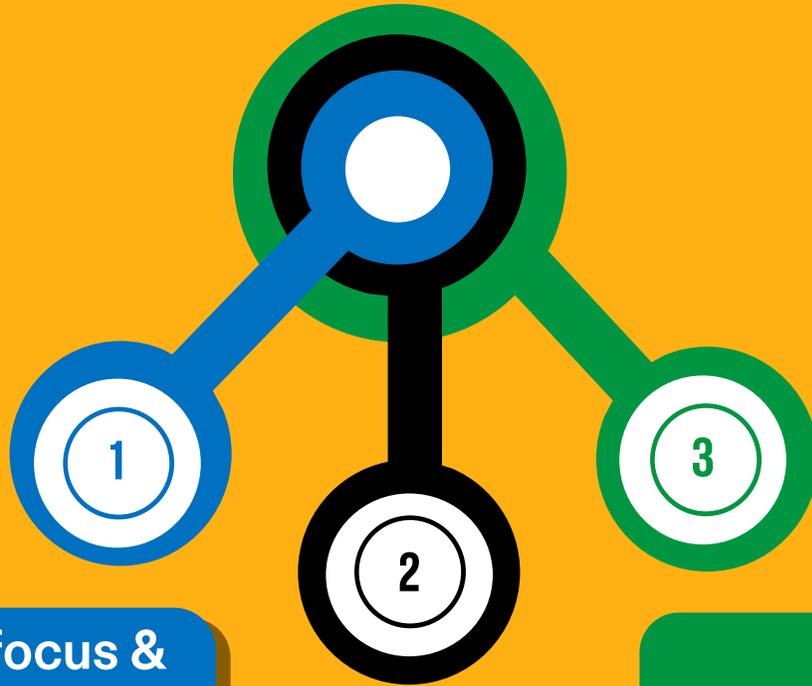




**Athletes are people too.
But sport brings:**

- **Injuries**
- **Safeguarding issues**
- **Career transitions**
- **Online abuse**
- **Perceived poor performance**





Enhanced focus & resilience

Purcell et al (2022)

Career sustainability

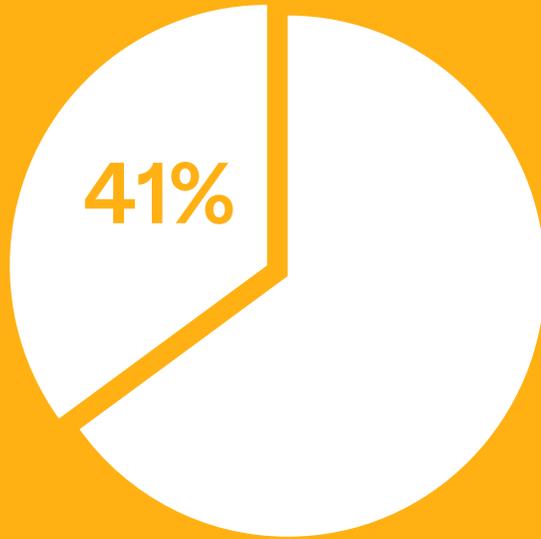
Rice et al (2016)

Injury prevention & recovery

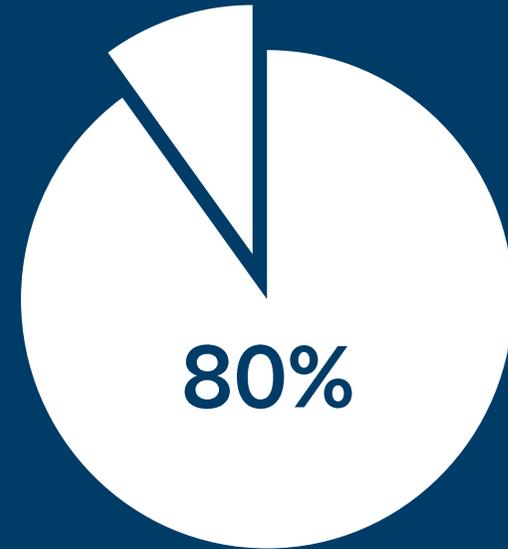
Wiese-Bjornstal et al (1998)

LIFESPAN





of NOCs offer
psychological
support



athletes who did not
seek support when
experiencing issues

COMMON CHALLENGES



“I don't want my coach to find out.”

Lack of mental health literacy

“I wouldn't even know where to go.”

Uneven access to care



Stigma

“I don't want people to think I'm weak.”

Culture of self reliance

“I can handle this on my own.”

Perceived medicalisation

“They're just going to diagnose me with something”



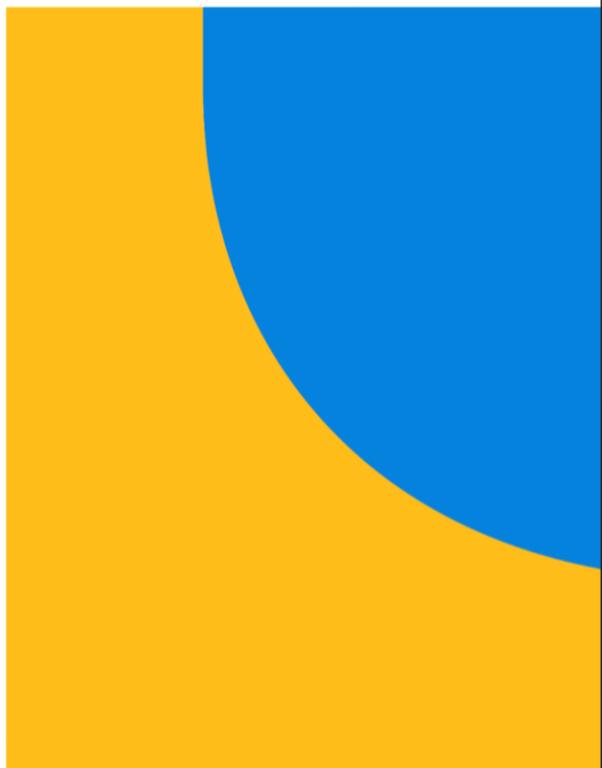
International Olympic Committee

MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

July 2023

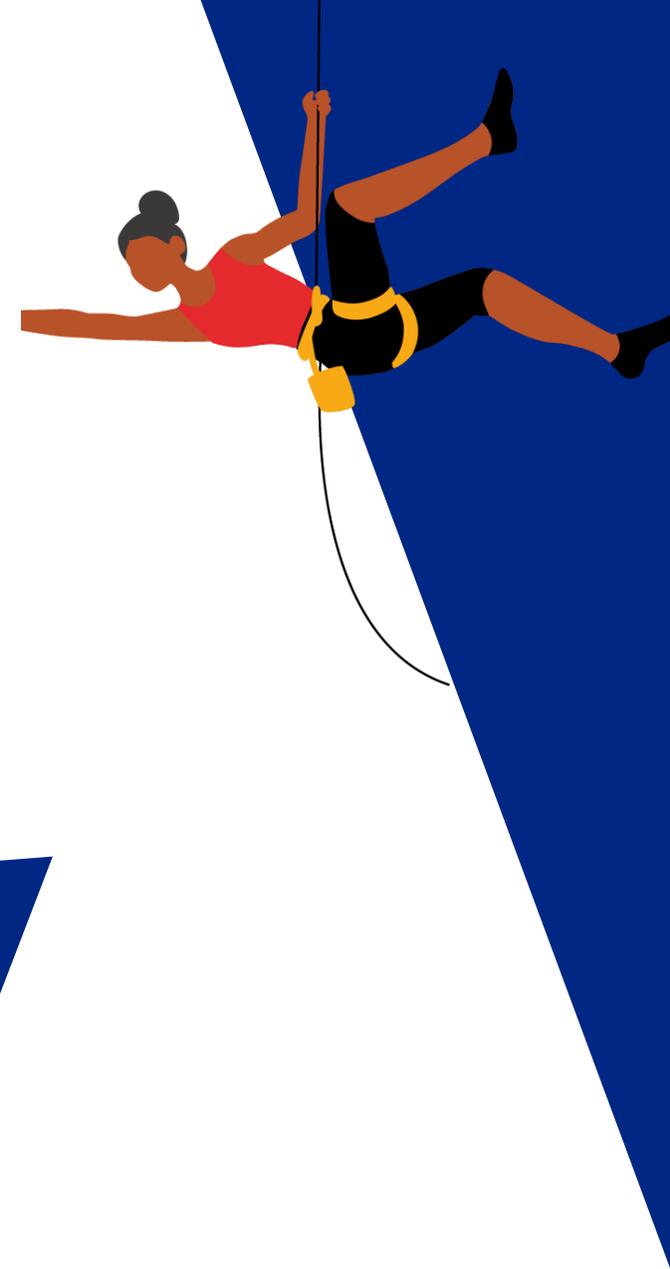
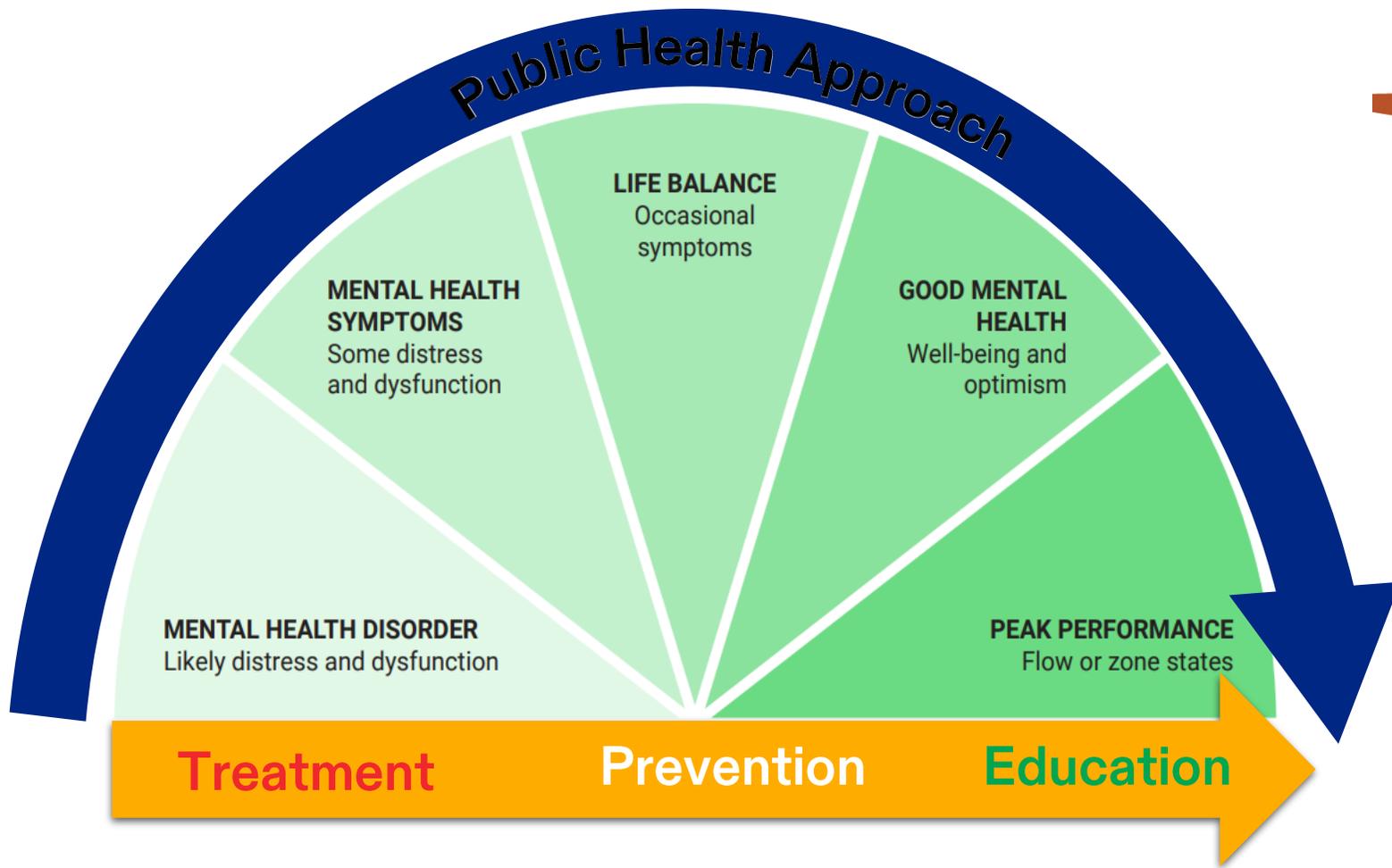
OUR ACTION PLAN

The following table presents the 12 objectives relative to five key focus areas. These objectives are common across the IOCs four spheres of responsibility.



FOCUS AREA	CULTURE & LEADERSHIP	MEASUREMENT & RESEARCH	REDUCE PREVALENCE & IMPROVE WELL-BEING	IMPROVE THE CARE ENVIRONMENT	IMPROVE ACCESS TO BENEFITS OF SPORT
SCOPE	As the owner of the Olympic Games and leader of the Olympic Movement, the IOC must, across all four spheres, show strong leadership and commitment, develop clear areas for action, formulate financially informed and evidence-based actions, and incorporate mental health and duty of protection towards athletes into its mission, vision values and policies in order to be credible. It is also important that we use the experience and learnings from our activities to improve the support we can give to our partners.	Information, evidence and research are critical ingredients for appropriate mental health policy, planning and evaluation. The generation of new knowledge through research enables policies and actions to be based on evidence and best practice, and the availability of timely and relevant information or surveillance frameworks enables implemented actions to be monitored and improvements in service provision to be detected.	The promotion of mental well-being, with an emphasis on creating psychologically safe environments, is key to allowing athletes, coaches and support staff to thrive. Educational interventions aimed at improving mental health literacy are key to both prevent and treat mental health symptoms and disorders in athletes. IOC-developed tools and resources will be evidence based, developed in collaboration with professionals (such as sports psychiatrists, sports psychologists and clinical psychologists), and tailored and adapted to the cultural and social context.	The IOC will encourage the establishment of a safe environment for athletes and encourage members to recognise and report mental health and well-being issues. This includes the promotion of practices such as regular check-ins to discuss how athletes are feeling, standardised screening tools for mental health symptoms or disorders, education in mental health literacy and removing the stigma surrounding requesting assistance for mental health care.	The IOC's strategic roadmap seeks to ensure that people, especially young people and those in resource-limited settings, benefit from the physical and mental health advantages of sport.
OBJECTIVES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage mental health to be encompassed within the foundational statutes of Olympic Movement stakeholders 2. Encourage allocation and optimisation of human and financial resources to support mental health and well-being programmes, including through strategic partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Establish strategies to monitor athletes' and entourage members' mental well-being 4. Improve research capacity on the priorities laid out in the IOC Consensus Statement on Mental Health (2019) 5. Support meaningful consultation with athletes on current issues related to mental health and well-being 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Reduce stigma by developing awareness and fostering attitudes which improve and promote mental health literacy 7. Prioritise preventive interventions to help reduce stressors that impact mental health and well-being 8. Promote self-care strategies and the development of effective recognition and self-management skills to improve mental health and well-being 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Optimise better pathways to care 10. Ensure appropriate follow-up on early signs of mental health symptoms and disorders 11. Encourage help-seeking behaviours to promote early intervention 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Promote and support the mental health benefits that people and communities experience through accessing sport and Olympism in society, especially in resource-limited settings, contributing to Olympism365 Focus Area 3.

<https://olympics.com/ioc/olympism365>

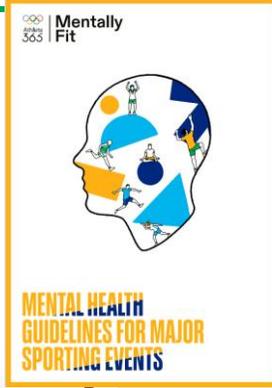


PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT



PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

Mental Health Policy: 7%



Screening & surveillance: 6%

Consensus statement

Mental health in elite athletes: International Olympic Committee consensus statement (2019)

Claudia L Reardon,¹ Brian Hainline,² Cindy Miller Aron,³ David Baron,⁴ Antonia L Baum,⁵ Abhinav Bindra,⁶ Richard Budgett,⁷ Niccolo Campriani,⁸ João Mauricio Castaldelli-Maia,^{9,10} Alan Currie,^{11,12} Jeffrey Lee Derevensky,¹³ Ira D Glick,¹⁴ Paul Gorczynski,¹⁵ Vincent Goutteborge,^{16,17} Michael A Grandner,¹⁸ Doug Hyun Han,¹⁹ David McDuff,²⁰ Margo Mountjoy,^{21,22} Aslihan Polat,^{23,24} Rosemary Purcell,^{25,26} Margot Putukian,^{27,28} Simon Rice,^{29,30} Allen Sills,^{31,32} Todd Stull,³³ Leslie Swartz,³⁴ Li Jing Zhu,^{35,36} Lars Engebretsen^{37,38}

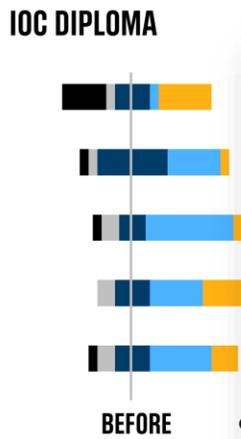
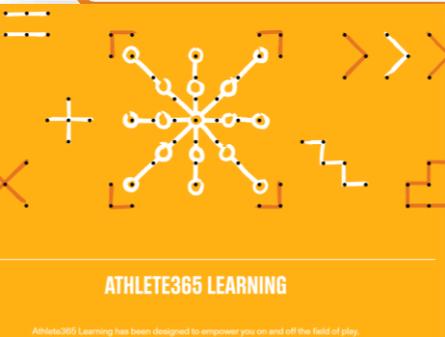
Safeguarding Plan: 27%



MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

Treatment & support: 34%

Education: 27%



ACTIONS AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES



Mind Zone

PRESENTED BY



Athlete
365

Mentally
Fit



MIND ZONE
DEDICATED SPACE
FOR ATHLETES
TO DISCONNECT
AND DECOMPRESS



CLINICAL
SUPPORT



24/7 HELPLINE



Cyber Abuse Protection

Welfare Officers

MentallyFit Helpline

Mind Zone

Polyclinic

PREVENTION

CASE MANAGEMENT

SELECTIVE

INDICATED

UNIVERSAL

CASE IDENTIFICATION

CASE MANAGEMENT

CARE & SUPPORT

FOLLOW UP SUPPORT

PROMOTION

PROMOTION

AFTER-CARE





ATHLETE365 MIND ZONE X POWERADE

GIVING ATHLETES THEIR MINDFULNESS
SPACE AT PARIS 2024

90%

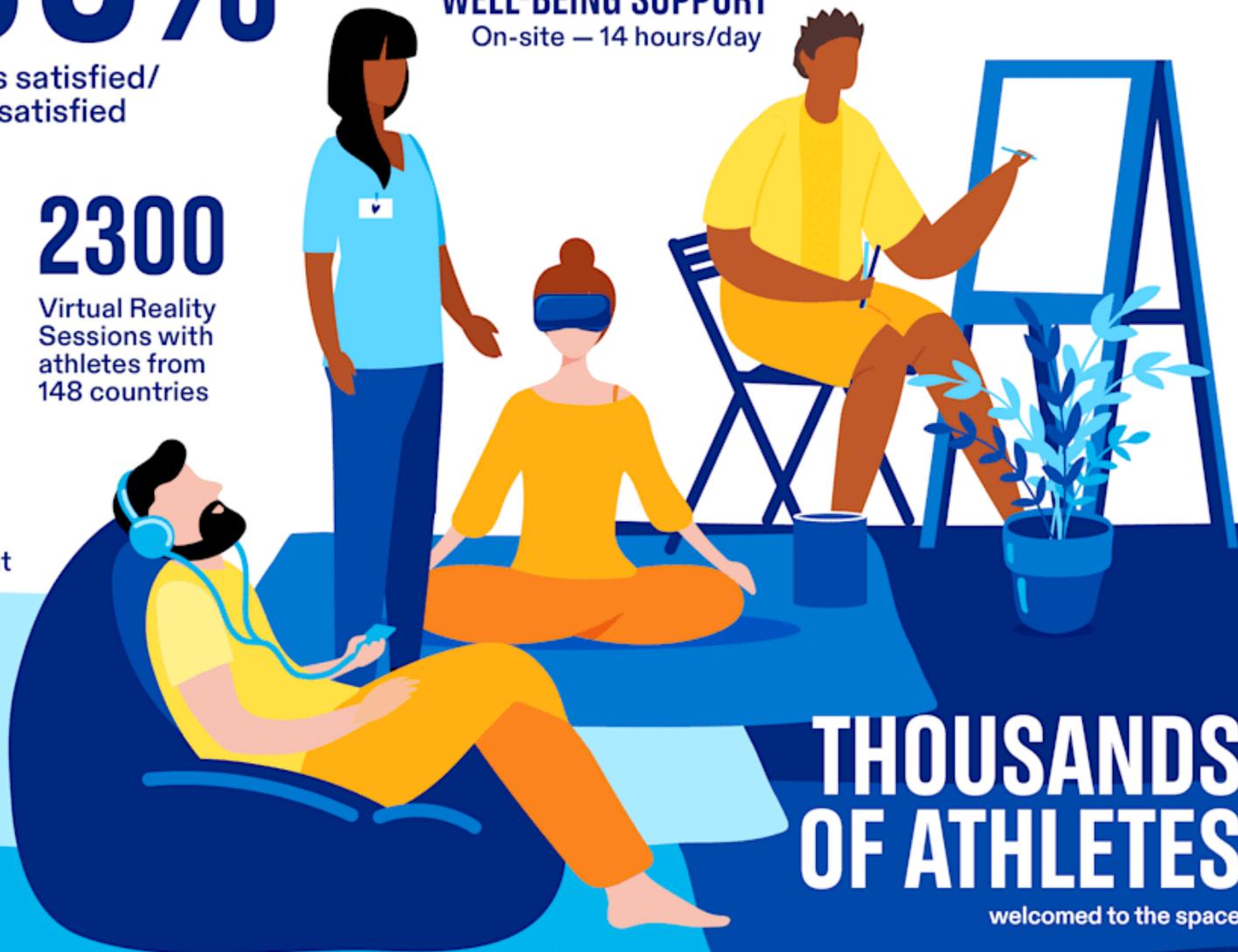
users satisfied/
very satisfied

TRAINED
MENTAL HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING SUPPORT
On-site — 14 hours/day

2300

Virtual Reality
Sessions with
athletes from
148 countries

Over
4000
gratitude
postcards sent



THOUSANDS OF ATHLETES

welcomed to the space

AIM



To help safeguard athletes and other participants from harassment and abuse during the Olympic Games-time Period

IOC GAMES-TIME SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK





AIM



To help safeguard athletes and other participants from harassment and abuse during the Olympic Games-time Period

CONTENT



- Definitions and expected standard of behaviour
- Education resources
- Reporting and subsequent process
- Special measures for those at higher risk

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



- IOC Safeguarding Officers
- NOC Welfare Officers

WELFARE OFFICERS

154



welfare officers from
74 NOCS

mental health practitioners
or
trained safeguarding officers

SAFE SPORT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME FOR IF AND NOC WELFARE OFFICERS





WELFARE OFFICERS

154



welfare officers from
74 NOCS

mental health practitioners
or
trained safeguarding officers

WELFARE OFFICER PROGRAMME

6

EDUCATION SESSIONS



41

focal points from
international federations

All summer IF's represented

16

Chaperone accreditations
From 12 NOCs
for athletes 15 and under



CYBER ABUSE PROTECTION SERVICE

PARIS 2024 KEY RESULTS



2.4M

posts from athletes and officials scanned in real time on X, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok

>152K

posts flagged as potentially abusive via AI

>10.2K

posts verified as abusive & actioned for removal, coming from 8.9k unique accounts

353

athletes/officials directly targeted with abuse



Athletes targeted by abusive posts were provided with real-time safeguarding and mental health support

20K

individual accounts covered

10.4K

athletes & officials covered by the service

35

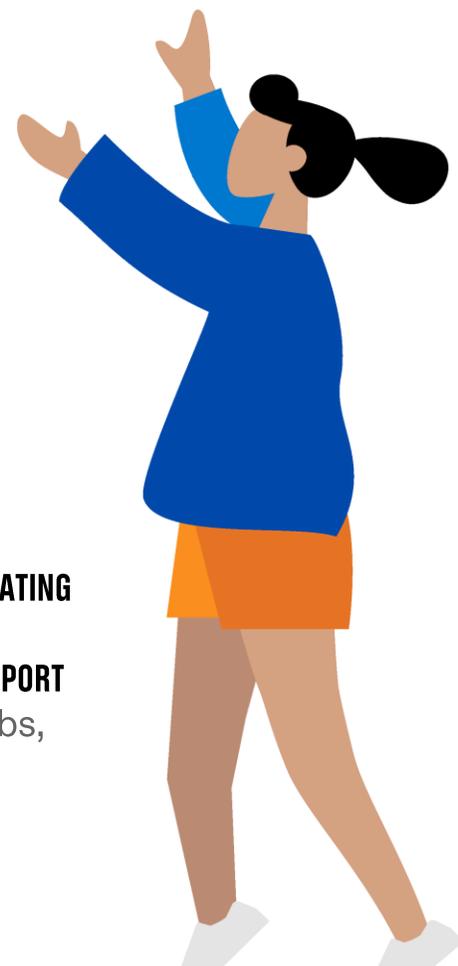
languages



Mentally
Fit



SAFEGUARDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION



IOC GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS (IFs) AND NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES (NOCs) RELATED TO CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A POLICY TO SAFEGUARD ATHLETES FROM HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT

(hereinafter "Guidelines")

PREAMBLE

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Committee on Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sport (IOC Committee) is committed to ensuring that athletes in sport are safe and healthy. It is the responsibility of IFs and NOCs to ensure that athletes are protected from harassment and abuse in sport. The IOC Committee has developed these Guidelines to assist IFs and NOCs in creating and implementing a policy to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.

1. DEFINITION

For the purposes of these Guidelines:

"**Harassment**" is defined in Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics as "harassment and abuse, including psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment and assault". These terms are defined as follows:

"**Psychological abuse**" means any conduct, including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation or any other treatment that may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.

"**Physical abuse**" means any conduct, including and not limited to, such as the complete covering, binding, tying and striking, that causes physical trauma to a body. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate physical contact, such as, for example, inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing.

"**Sexual harassment**" means any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome or offensive, and is not intended to be sexual in nature. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault and sexual harassment.

"**Harassment**" within the meaning of these Guidelines includes the notion of a victim or another person who is the object of such conduct. It is the responsibility of IFs and NOCs to ensure that athletes are protected from harassment and abuse in sport. It is the responsibility of IFs and NOCs to ensure that athletes are protected from harassment and abuse in sport. It is the responsibility of IFs and NOCs to ensure that athletes are protected from harassment and abuse in sport.

IOC SAFEGUARDING TOOLKIT
For: IFs, NOCs, NPCs and NF, clubs, athletes and entourage

IOC GUIDELINES FOR IFs NOCs RELATED TO CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A POLICY TO SAFEGUARD ATHLETES FROM HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT
For: IFs, NOCs, NPCs and NF, clubs, athletes and entourage



WHY

IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE?

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ...



PROVIDE A ROADMAP FOR DAY-TO DAY OPERATIONS

- Ensure it is robust enough to allow you to make decisions
- Don't wait until you are in a crisis situation
- Work together – no need to reinvent the wheel



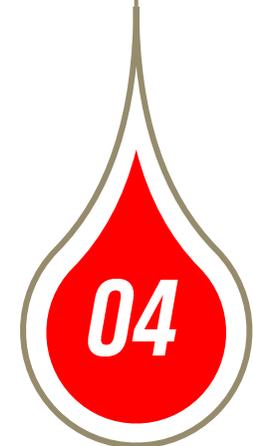
ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

- Map what is publicly available in your country
- Map what you already have in place in your organisation and work on filling gaps.



PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDANCE THAT ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

- Ensure to communicate clearly
- Ensure Policies and procedures are easily accessible to all



STREAMLINE INTERNAL PROCESSES

- Link them to other procedures
- Monitor and ensure compliance
- Update periodically as needed



IOC consensus statement: interpersonal violence and safeguarding in sport

Yetsa A Tuakli-Wosornu^{1,2}, Kirsty Burrows,³ Kari Fasting,⁴ Mike Hartill⁵, Ken Hodge,⁶ Keith Kaufman,⁷ Emma Kavanagh,⁸ Sandra L Kirby⁹, Jelena G MacLeod^{10,11}, Margo Mountjoy¹², Sylvie Parent¹³, Minhyeok Tak,¹⁴ Tine Vertommen^{15,16}, Daniel J A Rhind¹⁴

ABSTRACT

Objective Interpersonal violence (IV) in sport is challenging to define, prevent and remedy due to its subjectivity and complexity. The 2024 International Olympic Committee Consensus on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding aimed to synthesise evidence on IV and safeguarding in sport, introduce a new conceptual model of IV in sport and offer more accessible safeguarding guidance to all within the sports ecosystem by merging evidence with insights from Olympic athletes.

Methods A 15-member expert panel performed a scoping review following Joanna Briggs Institute methodologies. A seminal works-driven approach was used to identify relevant grey literature. Four writing groups were established focusing on: definitions/epidemiology, individual/interpersonal determinants, contextual determinants and solutions. Writing groups developed referenced scientific summaries related to their respective topics, which were discussed by all members at the consensus meeting. Recommendations were then developed by each group, presented as voting statements and circulated for confidential voting following a Delphi protocol with ≥80% agreement defined a priori as reaching consensus.

Results Of 48 voting statements, 21 reached consensus during first-round voting. Second-round and third-round voting saw 22 statements reach consensus, 5 statements get discontinued and 2 statements receive minority dissension after failing to reach agreement. A total of 43 statements reached consensus, presented as overarching (n=5) and topical (n=33) consensus recommendations, and actionable consensus guidelines (n=5).

Conclusion This evidence review and consensus process elucidated the characterisation and complexity of IV and safeguarding in sport and demonstrates that a whole-of-system approach is needed to fully comprehend and prevent IV. Sport settings that emphasise mutual care, are athlete centred, promote healthy relationships, embed trauma and violence-informed care principles, integrate diverse perspectives and measure IV prevention and response effectiveness will exemplify safe sport. A shared responsibility between all within the sports ecosystem is required to advance effective safeguarding through future research, policy and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal violence (IV) in sport affects all ages and competitive levels yet remains understudied. Ljungqvist *et al* published the first consensus

statement on sexual harassment and abuse in sport in 2007.¹ Since then, research has expanded to cover a wider range of abuses, leading to the 2016 International Olympic Committee (IOC) consensus statement on harassment and abuse in sport. This statement broadened the scope to include physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, bullying and hazing, introducing a definition of 'safe sport' (figure 1).² Groups that experience higher levels of IV such as children, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer+ (LGBTQ+) athletes were highlighted, along with potential outcomes for athletes and sport organisations.

The current consensus builds on these landmark contributions and is updated for several reasons. First, acknowledging the evolving nature of the science cited in the 2016 paper, subsequent exponential growth in evidence necessitates this timely update.³ Second, adhering to best practices, we employed a systematic approach to data identification, analysis and synthesis.³ Third, while the 2016 consensus largely focused on individual and interpersonal IV determinants using Brackneridge's 2001 sexual exploitation continuum as its underpinning theoretical framework and conceptual model,⁴ our update extends the analysis to include contextual determinants, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and ecological model of human development.^{5,6} Fourth, in response to the 2016 paper's call for applicable solutions and multistakeholder approaches, we discuss IV prevention and response strategies that have received scholarly attention. Finally, aligned with current research, practice and policy, this consensus extends its scope beyond safe sport to include 'safeguarding' (figure 1), and beyond scholarship to include athletes' voices.

Krug *et al*'s definition of IV, encompassing physical, psychological, sexual violence, and deprivation/neglect, is used throughout this manuscript.⁷ Following the IOC's directive, this consensus prioritises elite sport, but data from all competitive levels are analysed for comprehension. Bronfenbrenner's model of human development underpins the consensus due to its interdisciplinary nature, relevance to both scholarly and real-world contexts, and ability to provide a holistic understanding of IV and safeguarding in sport by emphasising the bidirectional influence between sportsperson (figure 2) and their environments. As increasingly

► Additional supplemental material is published online only. To view, please visit the journal online (<https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2024-108766>).

For numbered affiliations see end of article.

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Check for updates

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IOC CONSENSUS STATEMENT: INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE & SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT

- 3 IOC Consensuses
- 15 international experts, including athletes
- 2 year process, grounded in a review of
- 24 thousand scientific papers, across
- 9 languages, providing
- 43 actionable "solutions"



IOC SAFEGUARDING OFFICER IN SPORT CERTIFICATION

NOW

343

STUDENTS/GRADUATES*
FROM

99

COUNTRIES



IN YEAR 1

33

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

240
GRADUATES
TO DATE



103
STUDENTS
(CLASS OF 2025)

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER SEARCH TOOL

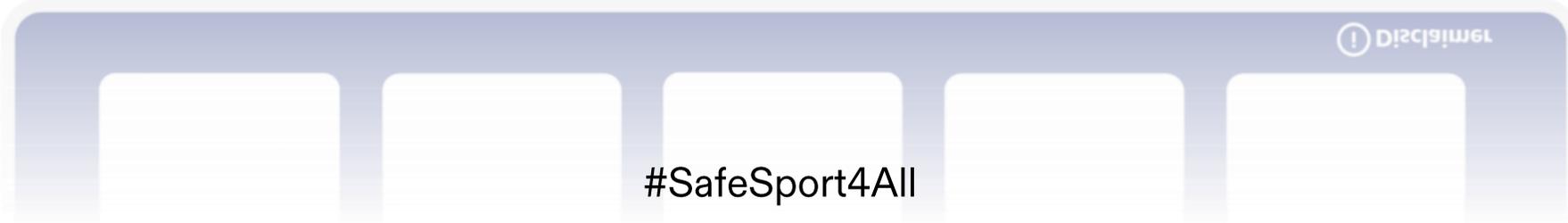


FIND A SAFEGUARDING OFFICER BY...

SAFE SPORT
for all

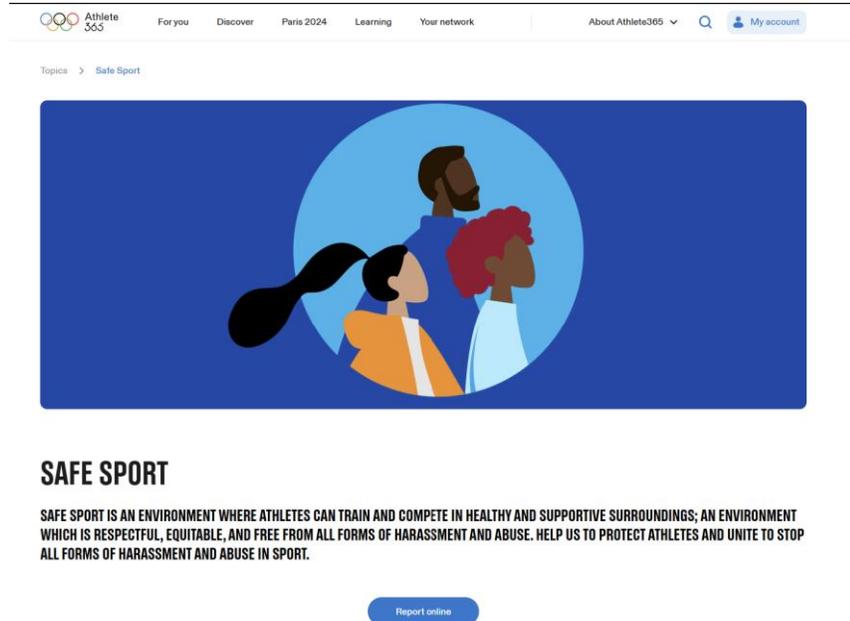
 LANGUAGE	 COUNTRY	 SAFEGUARDING SERVICE	 ORGANISATION TYPE	 NAME
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 Disclaimer



#SafeSport4All

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING



CONTINUED SUPPORT TO CONTINENTAL ASSOCIATIONS, NOCS AND IFS

- Workshops, conferences and lectures

NEW TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS COURSE (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)



“SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS FOR SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINTS”

- Will support certified Safeguarding Officers to train focal points locally
- Will allow for translation and contextualisation to maximise impact
- Will equip students with knowledge to
 - implement prevention measures,
 - appropriately receive disclosures and
 - build knowledge of referral pathways to a fully trained safeguarding officer.
- 4 modules of 1 h of learning each
- English, Spanish and French
- Manual, activity book, contextualisation guidelines and template presentations

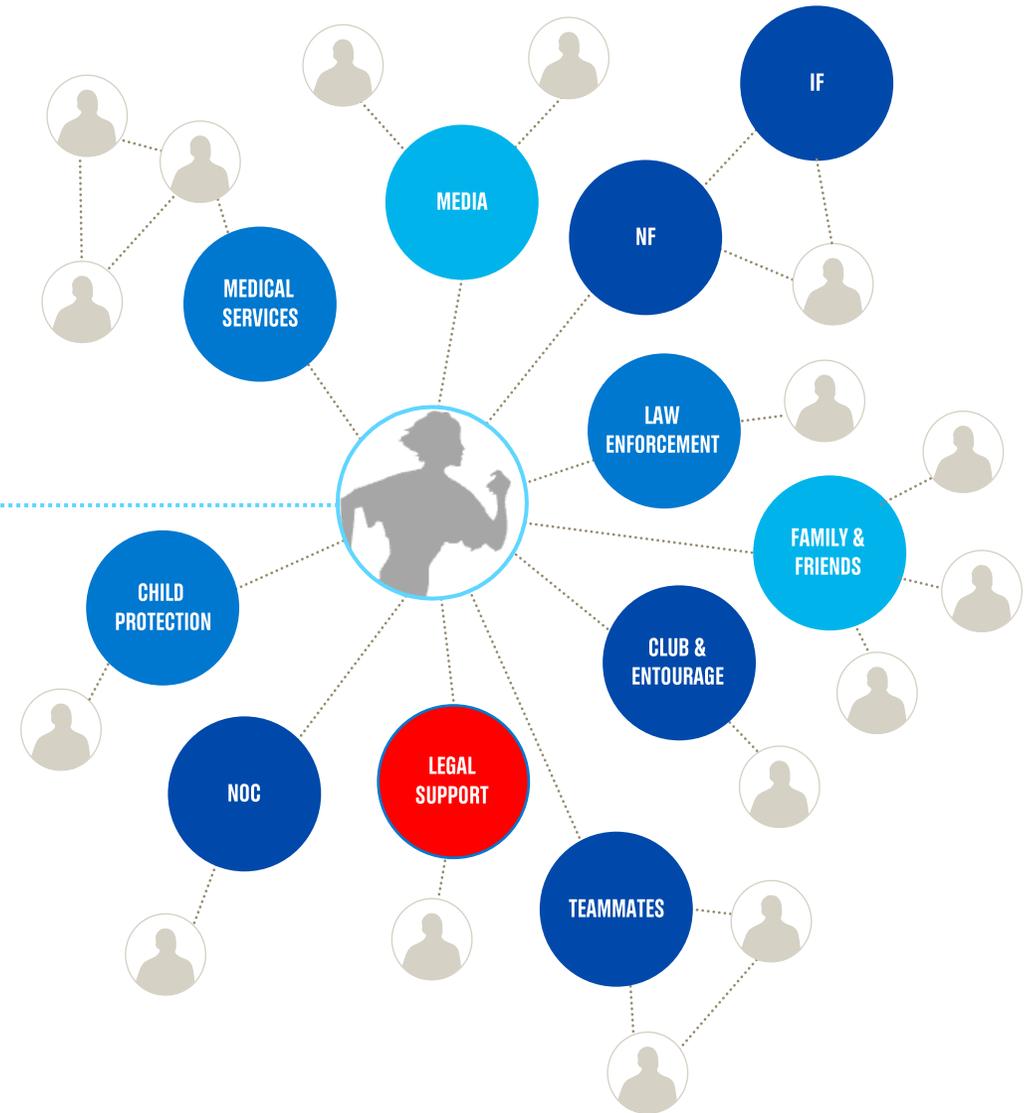
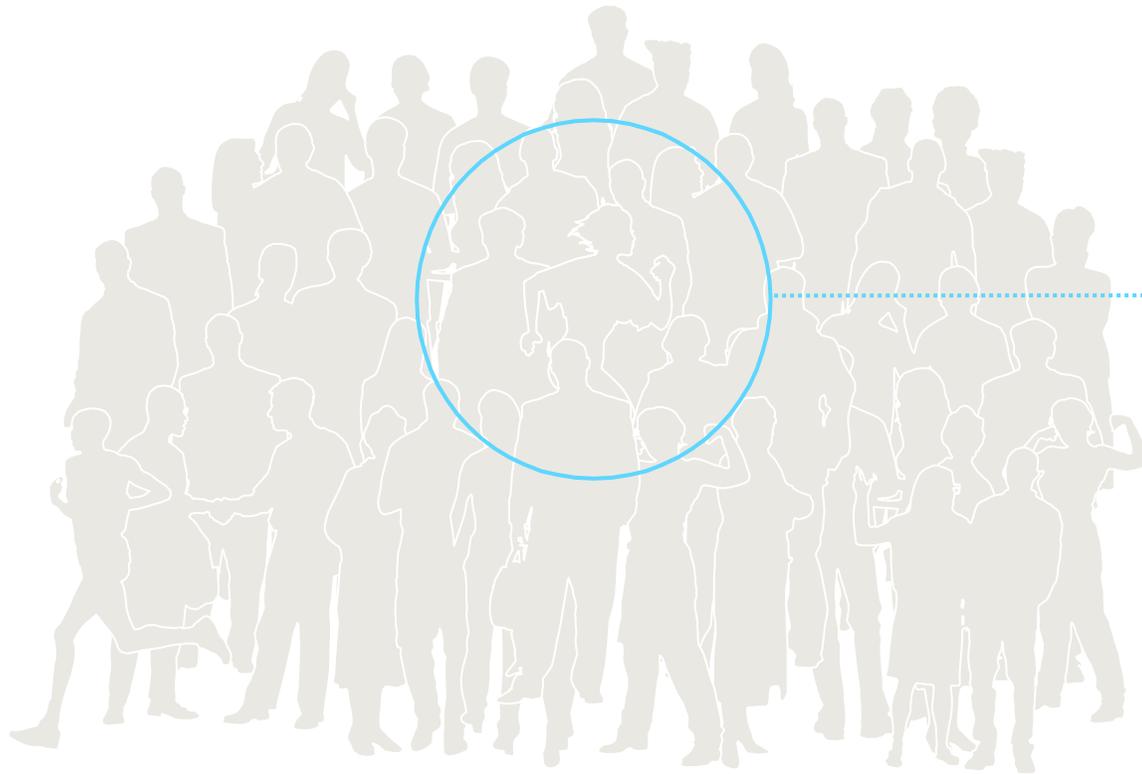


SAFE SPORT REGIONAL HUB INITIATIVE

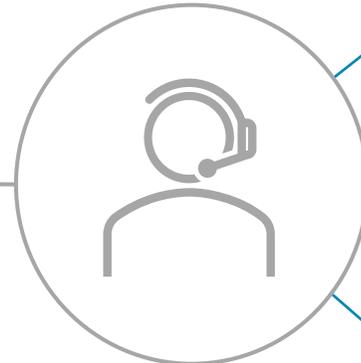
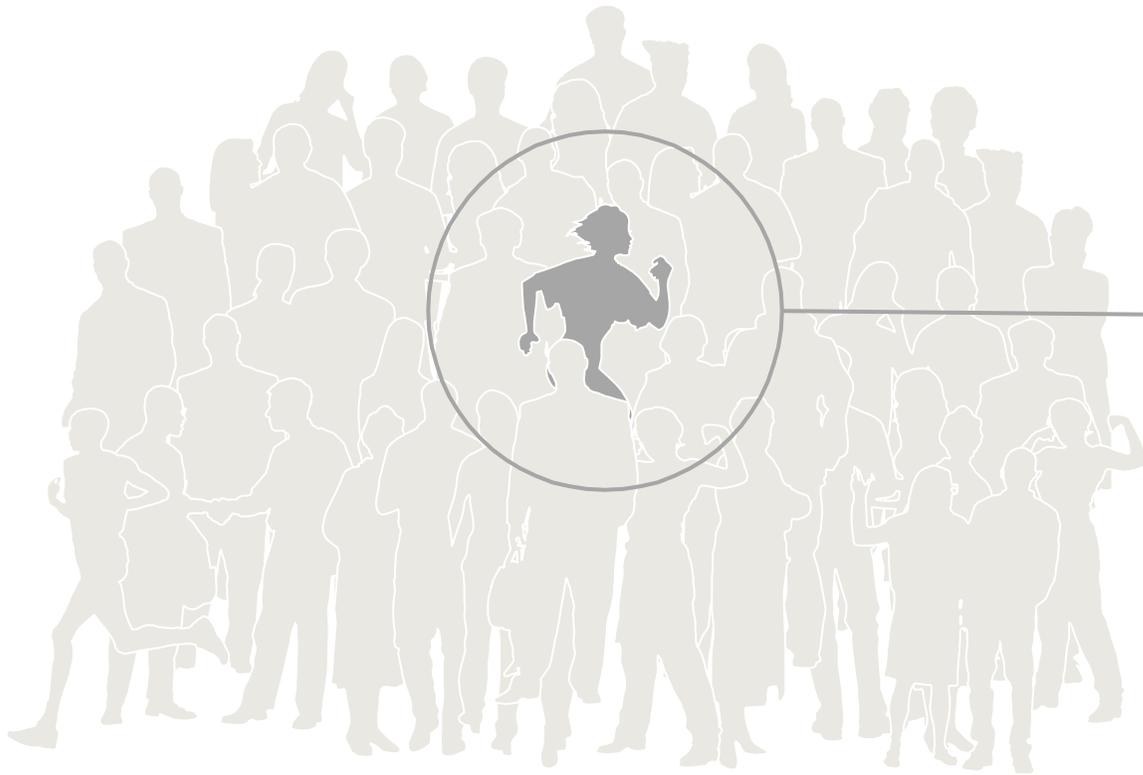


SAFE SPORT REGIONAL HUB INITIATIVE





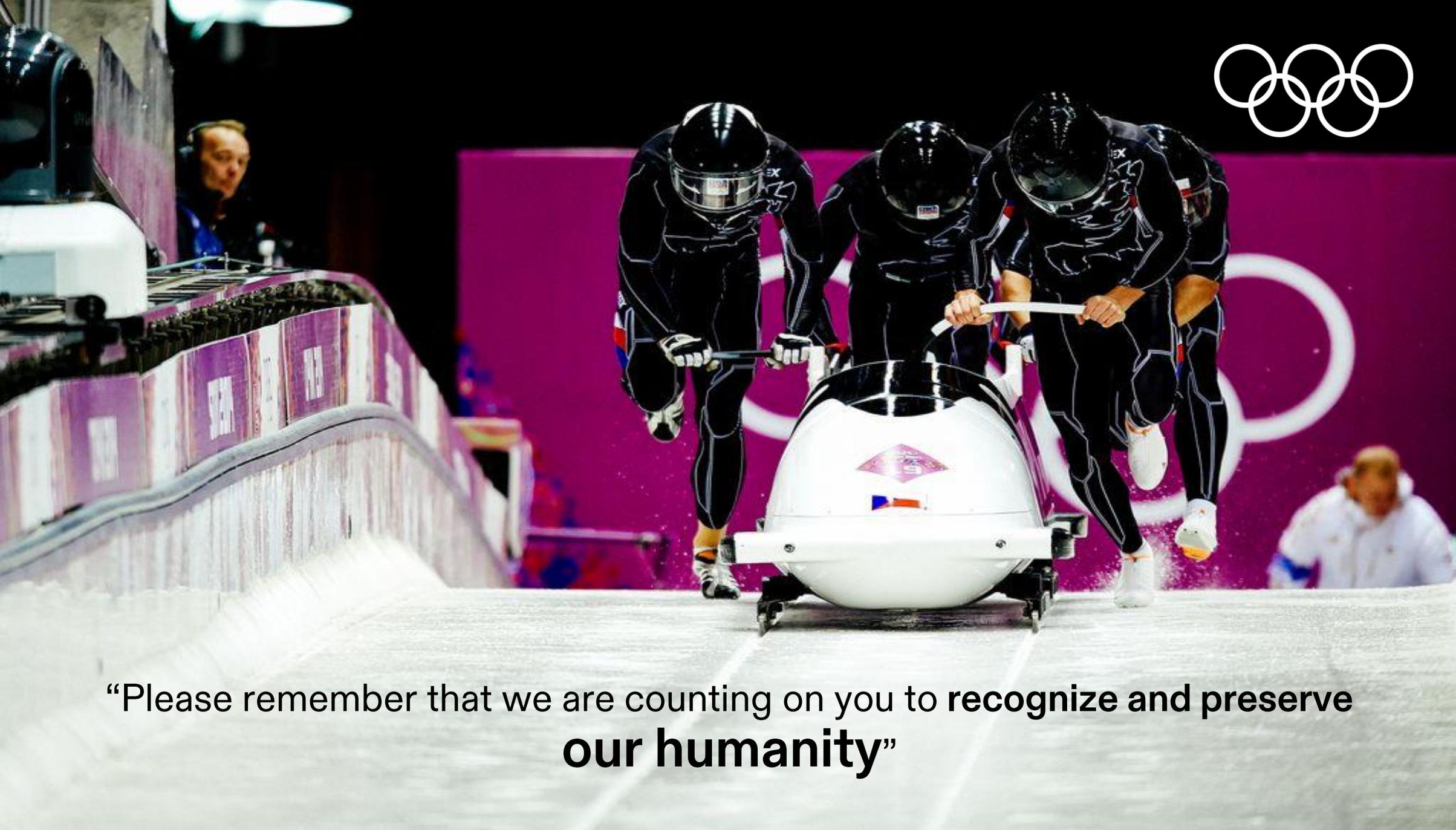
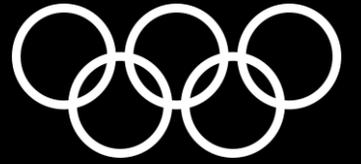
ATHLETES OFTEN DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO



 **INDEPENDENT GUIDANCE**

 **ACCESS TO SUPPORT**

 **IN LOCAL LANGUAGE,
CULTURE AND CONTEXT**

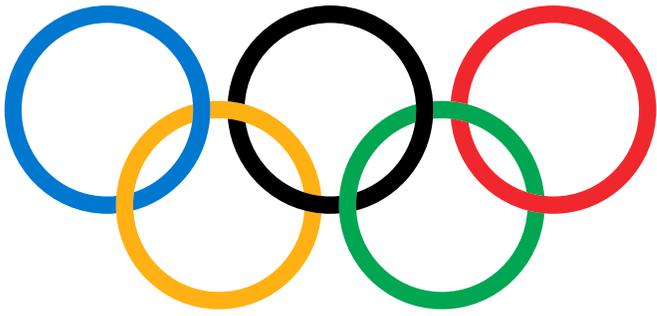


“Please remember that we are counting on you to **recognize and preserve our humanity**”



“TRUST IS EARNED IN DROPS AND LOST IN BUCKETS”

Kevin A. Plank



GRAZIE
MERCI
THANK YOU
GRACIAS
DANKE
XIE XIE
OBRIGADO