

TRAUMA-INFORMED MANDATORY REPORTING

**This sheet is for:**

This sheet describes mandatory reporting in connection to sports for advocates and others with various roles and responsibilities around mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect. This sheet is not legal advice. Individuals should always talk with a lawyer to better understand what this means in their state/jurisdiction.

How advocates can use this:

This sheet can provide reminders on best practices around being transparent around roles and responsibilities when it comes to mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect.

Common individuals that athletes may interact with who are mandatory reporters:

Coaches

Staff at the US Center for SafeSport

Teachers and any school staff

Doctors, nurses, & licensed mental health professionals

Things to know about mandatory reporting and sport to the US Center for SafeSport:

All US Center for Safe Sport (The Center) employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

All of The Center employees are mandated reporters of abuse in sport for adults and children.

The Center employees have to report within 24 hours of becoming aware/having a reasonable suspicion of abuse.

The Center employees will cross-report to law enforcement in cases of suspected child abuse.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MANDATORY REPORTERS

If you are a mandatory reporter (and some advocates may be mandatory reporters in accordance with their state laws), these are some best practices in building clear and transparent communication around your roles and responsibilities.

Before You Report

A trauma-informed mandatory reporting notice is a communication that balances legal obligations with a supportive, trauma-informed approach. It informs individuals that the person they are speaking with is a mandated reporter who is required to report suspected abuse in sport and/or child abuse or neglect, while also explaining in a supportive manner how the reporting process will be managed. Key components include stating the legal duty to report to a designated agency, such as the US Center for Safe Sport or Child Protective Services (CPS), and clarifying what constitutes a reportable offense. Simultaneously, it should build trust by connecting the person to resources and ensuring they know they have the right to support services and have a right to understand the process.

01

Provide notice of mandatory reporting requirements:

- Acknowledge the state and federal mandatory reporting laws around suspected child abuse or neglect that may apply to the conversation.
- Examples and sample language: It is important to do this early in a meeting or when conversations include discussing abuse with athletes. This can include adding it in major introductions and direct conversations. For example, if you are a mandatory reporter for the US Center of SafeSport, and you are meeting a team for the first time, you can explain your role in your introduction: “For full transparency, I am a mandatory reporter of all abuse in sports, regardless of age or when it occurred. If you’d like to talk with me about abuse that is occurring or has occurred previously and was not yet reported, I will have to report to the US Center for SafeSport.”
- Additionally, if someone is talking to you and you sense they are about to disclose, you can politely interrupt and say, “I want to interrupt you quickly to remind you that I am a mandatory reporter with the US Center for SafeSport. If you’re not sure if you want to report to the Center yet, but would like to talk to someone about something you have experienced, I can connect you with someone else to talk through your options.” You can then connect them with a therapist, someone who is not covered by Center’s mandatory reporting, or even with The Assist.

02

Explain your legal duty, including what could cause a mandatory report, such as reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child (someone under the age of 18), or information about abuse in sports that are connected to the Olympic and Paralympic movement. As a mandatory reporter in whatever context, is it critical that you have clarity about when, how and why you must file a mandatory report of abuse and you pass this information on to the individuals with which you engage.

03

Clarify the reporting procedure: Outline who you must report to (e.g., US Center for SafeSport, Child Protective Services, law enforcement, school teachers and staff, or any combination of the former) and the required timeframes for reporting, such as making a phone call and following up with a written report.

04

Be trauma-informed: Explain that the goal is to be supportive and to minimize harm, even when a report is required.

05

Explain confidentiality limitations: Clearly state the limits of confidentiality due to the mandatory reporting laws and responsibilities that may apply.

06

Provide additional resources: Offer support and information about available resources. Options may include counseling, safety planning, and advocacy services, such as The Athlete Survivors’ Assist, www.theathletesurvivorsassist.org

07

Reinforce safety and empowerment: Ensure they are connected to support and understand their ability to seek support during reporting and any other investigations.

If a conversation occurs and you must make a mandatory report, here's an example of a trauma-informed notice:

"I am a mandated reporter, which means I am required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS), and I am also required to report abuse in sport to the US Center for Safe Sport. This is to help ensure the safety of children. I will need to make a report based on what you have shared with me.

However, I am committed to doing this in the most supportive way possible. I will report the information clearly and will be available to answer your questions about the process. Please know that I will support you through this, and we can work together to determine how to move forward in a way that keeps you safe. You will also have access to resources like counseling and support services to help with any challenges you may be facing."

Note:

Confidentiality protections still apply even when a report is required. You should still work to your professional best standards to keep records confidential, encrypted, and/or under lock and key. You also must respect HIPPA and other forms of protected information to professional standards. This includes not accessing confidential information that you do not have a professional reason to access.