

CONTEXT MATTERS! GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SPORT

Gender-based violence can occur in all types and levels of sport.

Athletes are in a specific context that can impact their experiences of gender-based violence and support-seeking. These contextual considerations can be further compounded by oppressions that athletes experience including sexism, racism, colonialism, and ableism.

Below are contextual considerations to keep in mind when supporting and empowering athlete survivors:



IMPORTANCE OF ATHLETIC IDENTITY

Extensive commitments to sport, often to the exclusion of other endeavours, lead athletes to define themselves by their sport. Due to athletic identity and investments made by caregivers and coaches, disclosing abusive behaviour or leaving the athletic program may not feel feasible or appropriate for the individual.

ACTIVE SILENCING

Power imbalances may impact athletes' decisions to disclose and seek justice. Athletes may fear retaliation (for example: being ignored or sidelined as "punishment", subjected to excessive training to coerce silence, frightened that they will lose their sport or career in sport, told they will "let down" their team).



NORMALIZATION OF HARM

Athletes and their caregivers may be socialized to believe that potentially harmful behaviours are normal and even necessary for athletic development and success. These can include harsh criticisms and berating comments from coaches, body shaming, and unnecessary touching.

When we recognize context,
we can better support survivors!

This infographic was made in partnership with Gretchen Kerr and Erin Willson, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto.