

# Safe Sport Strategy

Training,  
Knowledge  
Retention and  
Prevention of  
Maltreatment



# INTRODUCTION: DEFINING SAFE SPORT >

What is Safe Sport? When we think about safe sport we often think first of physical safety and define safe sport as sport that is physically safe for participants. We might consider injury prevention, developmental ages, concussion protocols, anti-doping regulations and the physical environments where sport and physical activity take place.

But, safe sport also encompasses psychological safety, social-emotional safety and cultural safety. Safe sport isn't just about whether participants are physically safe, but perhaps more importantly, do they feel safe? What safe sport means to each person might differ vastly.





Safe sport also extends beyond the field of play.

It applies to the social interactions between participants and the workplaces where sport and physical activity programming is designed and delivered. Safe sport is not only about the players, but also about the coaches, referees, officials, volunteers, administrators, practitioners, parents, guardians, family members and spectators. Everyone involved, regardless of their role, has a responsibility to contribute to safe sport environments that are free of harassment, abuse, discrimination and maltreatment.

Regardless of ability, age, ancestry, athletic potential, citizenship, colour, creed, economic status, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, language, marital status, place of origin, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation, everyone has the right to cultural safety, physical safety, psychological

safety, and social-emotional safety.

When Sport for Life (S4L) refers to safe sport, we mean the design, development, delivery, evaluation and knowledge mobilization of quality sport and physical literacy experiences that consider and strive to ensure each participant feels physically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally safe. We acknowledge that safe sport is intersectional and multi-faceted, but also instrumental to our mission to foster positive quality sport and physical literacy experiences for everyone. Safe sport is intrinsic to quality sport; safety is a fundamental component of good programs, delivered by good people in good places.

To Sport for Life, safe encompassess being protected, and not having to worry about danger, risk or injury.



Our team describes safe as:





We acknowledge safety (physical, psychological, social-emotional and cultural) is fluid and subjective, and therefore we appreciate that others may interpret the terms differently than how we have described them below.

### **Physical Safety**

Environments where danger or maltreatment from physical conduct does not impede participation.

### **Psychological Safety**

Sharing ideas, questions, concerns or making mistakes without causing harm to one another's well-being.

### **Social-Emotional Safety**

Feeling secure and trusting of those around you to be vulnerable, courageous and authentic.

### **Cultural Safety**

The ability to embrace, respect, preserve and celebrate each person's culture(s) without discrimination.

SPORT FOR LIFE'S SAFE SPORT

## VISION >

For each of its representatives and stakeholders to have equitable opportunities to participate in safe quality sport and physical literacy development experiences via access to education, and professional development, and a robust and independent safe sport mechanism.





As we work towards this vision, Sport for Life's Safe Sport initiatives will be guided by the following values:

- **Collaboration** – We firmly believe that a cross-sectoral, harmonized approach driven by partnerships will lead to sustainable safe sport and physical activity environments.
- **Innovation** – Systemic change requires innovative practices, especially when existing systems and approaches are contributing to unsafe sport and physical activity environments for participants.
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (EDIA)** – A holistic approach to safe sport cannot be achieved without EDIA.
- **Participant-Centered** – If we want every participant to feel safe, participants need to be at the heart of everything we do from design through to knowledge mobilization.
- **Evidence-Informed** – Both emerging research and consultation of our representatives and stakeholders should guide our safe sport initiatives.
- **Kaizen** – We acknowledge that this work is complex and multi-faceted and will require continuous improvement, even when it is hard.
- **FUN** – We feel that optimizing fun and enjoyment are critical to achieving safer quality sport and physical activity environments.



## SAFETY IN SPORT AND LEADERSHIP: SECTORAL ALIGNMENT >

In addition to Sport for Life's safe sport values, our safe sport initiatives are also closely aligned with other sectoral governing documents, principles and movements including:

- The Government of Canada's commitment to safe sport outlined in the [Minister of Sport Mandate Letter](#)
- The [Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport](#)
- The [True Sport Principles](#)
- The [Responsible Coaching Movement](#)

# GOALS > Sport for Life's safe sport goals align with its 2021–2024 Strategic Plan in the following ways:



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

1

### **Foster Stronger Relationships**

- Forge strong partnerships with leaders in safe sport mobilization
- Collaborate with leaders in safe sport to design and deliver resources, training and tools
- Mobilize safe sport principles and recommended practices to inform policy, programs and investments

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STRATEGIC  
PRIORITY

2

**Enhance Product/Knowledge  
Delivery and Mobilization**

- Embed emerging safe sport principles and recommended practices into long-term development (e.g., Athlete Development Matrix), quality sport and physical literacy development resources
- Develop complementary resources that explore safe sport within long-term development, quality sport and physical literacy development
- Enhance safe sport expertise provided to organizations and leaders as part of long-term development, quality sport and physical literacy development support services





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STRATEGIC  
PRIORITY

3

**Optimize Business  
Performance**

- Implement robust safe sport policies, procedures, guidelines and strategies
- Provide safe sport professional development opportunities to representatives and stakeholders
- Actively engage staff and representatives in safe sport initiatives
- Monitor and evaluate safe sport initiatives to inform feedback loops

# 2020-2022 SAFE SPORT INITIATIVES >

Some of the ways in which Sport for Life has been working to achieve its safe sport vision and goals include:



- ✓ All staff and Board Members completed Respect in the Workplace training; Respect in the Workplace training is embedded in onboarding processes
- ✓ Brian Ward appointed as S4L's independent third-party Harassment, Abuse, Discrimination and Maltreatment (HADM) Officer
- ✓ New Safe Sport Policy suite approved by S4L's Board of Directors
- ✓ All safe sport policies, procedures and guidelines added to S4L's website in both official languages
- ✓ All staff completed the Coaching Association of Canada's Safe Sport Training; safe sport training is embedded in onboarding processes
- ✓ S4L's Safe Sport Policy and Procedure Overview Presentation provided to staff





✓ Procedures flowchart produced and circulated to outline the process of reporting a complaint

✓ Safe sport resource repository created

✓ S4L Safe Sport Lead joined Safe Sport Collaboration Network

✓ S4L became third program signatory of Abuse-Free Sport – the independent safe sport mechanism developed by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada

✓ S4L updated safe sport procedures and guidelines

✓ S4L shared its Safe Sport Strategy with representatives and stakeholders





# LOOKING AHEAD: 2022-2024 SAFE SPORT INITIATIVES >

Going forward, Sport for Life will continue to work to achieve its safe sport vision and goals through the following:

## Partnerships & Engagement

Strategic Initiative	Measure
Strengthen relationships with federal, provincial/territorial and community-based safe sport leaders	# of relationships formed / strength of relationships
Actively engage in Safe Sport Collaboration Network	# of meetings attended / # of updates shared with S4L representatives
Pursue opportunities to partner with other organizations to deliver safe sport initiatives that foster quality sport and physical literacy development experiences	# of partner opportunities

## Knowledge Delivery and Mobilization

Strategic Initiative	Measure
Launch safe sport web page	Web page launched by Sept. 2022
Share safe sport principles and recommended practices via Sport for Life's blog, newsletter and social media channels	# of articles / posts produced
Incorporate safe sport principles and recommended practices into the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) to prevent maltreatment through stage-by-stage athlete education	Revisions to the ADM completed
Develop evidence-informed materials that further explore safety (physical, psychological, cultural, social-emotional) within quality sport (e.g., via competition and selection environments, participant roles, etc.)	# of materials developed
Host sessions (e.g., workshops, webinars, direct consultation) with sport organizations to support the implementation of quality sport principles specific to physical, psychological, cultural and social-emotional safety in and through sport	# of sessions hosted
Integrate safe sport training and capacity-building into physical literacy projects (e.g., Physical Literacy for Communities [PL4C])	# of sessions hosted / materials shared as part of physical literacy projects

Policy and Operations

Strategic Initiative	Measure
Cross-reference and update Sport for Life Safety in Sport Policy and Code of Conduct and Ethics with the UCCMS 6.0	Safety and Sport Policy and Code of Conduct updated by Sept. 2022
Review and update Sport for Life policies, procedures, strategies and HR Manual to align with safe sport principles and recommended practices	Review and updates complete by Jan. 2023
Promote access to Abuse-Free Sport to all S4L representatives via presentations, memos and the safe sport web page	# of presentations, memos and updates circulated
Collect and store signed UCCMS Informed Consent Forms from current S4L representatives	Consent Forms collected by October 2022
Integrate UCCMS Informed Consent Form into onboarding processes and master service holder agreements	Consent Form integrated into onboarding and agreements by Jan. 2023

# Training and Retention

Strategic Initiative	Measure
Ensure all S4L representatives have completed safe sport training requirements based on their respective category as outlined in the Training & Retention Requirements section of this strategy	Training Requirements completed by March 2023
Develop an annual safe sport retention package to be circulated to all S4L representatives	Retention package developed by March 2023
Expand safe sport repository and share access with S4L representatives	# of resources in repository / shared with representatives by Jan. 2023
Provide additional safe sport professional development opportunities to S4L representatives	# of professional development opportunities offered

# TRAINING & KNOWLEDGE RETENTION > REQUIREMENTS

The following categories have been established to classify Sport for Life training requirements for its representatives in accordance with the organization's Safety in Sport Policy:

**Category 1 – Sport for Life's Leadership Team** are required to complete:

- Respect in the Workplace (Respect Group) and
- Safe Sport Training (Coaching Association of Canada).

**Category 2 – Contractors (e.g., Learning Facilitators, Physical Literacy Leads/Mentors, LTD Advisors)** who have entered a master service and/or employee agreement with Sport for Life are required to complete at least one of the following:

- Safe Sport Training (Coaching Association of Canada), OR
- Respect in Sport (Respect Group).

**Category 3 – Employees and Board/Committee Members** are required to complete:

- Respect in the Workplace (Respect Group) and
- Safe Sport Training (Coaching Association of Canada).

**Category 4 – Consultants and External Advisory Committees** who have not entered a master service and/or employee agreement with Sport for Life are strongly advised to complete one of the following:

- Safe Sport Training (Coaching Association of Canada), OR
- Respect in Sport (Respect Group), OR
- Commit to Kids (Canadian Centre for Child Protection), OR
- Respect Education (Red Cross), OR
- an SDRCC Safe Sport Workshop (Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada), OR
- an equivalent safe sport course or session.



All active Sport for Life representatives will be expected to complete and provide proof of training requirements to Sport for Life's Operations Team by March 31, 2023.

From April 1, 2024 onward, new Sport for Life representatives will be expected to complete and provide proof of training requirements to Sport for Life's Operations Team no more than one month after signing an employment agreement and/or master service agreement with Sport for Life.

In addition to the training requirements identified above, all Sport for Life representatives will receive an annual retention package to review with the latest evidence-informed resources and information pertaining to safe sport.

# MEASUREMENT & TRACKING >

To achieve the aforementioned goals, Sport for Life will develop and implement a safe sport tracking system that will align with its tracking and measurement of program and service-specific organizational goals and objectives. Tracking will involve both quantitative and qualitative measures including questionnaires, evaluation surveys and focus groups associated with both programs and services and internal strategic initiatives.



Quantitative and qualitative measures will be actively tracked, analyzed and re-evaluated on a quarterly basis through tracking and management software, to assess progress towards Sport for Life's Safe Sport Strategy. Results will be discussed among both Sport for Life's Leadership Team and the EDIA Committee, and used as feedback loops to inform additional strategies and actions in the spirit of continuous improvement.



**Sport for Life**

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**CREATE. SHARE. MOBILIZE.**