

# Working Group for Safe Training Environments

## Recommendations to the USOC Board of Directors

September 28, 2010



# Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary.....	3
II. Working Group Approach and Methodology.....	7
III. Recommended Actions.....	10
V. Areas for Further Development.....	19
VI. Other Prominent Issues Addressed by the Working Group.....	20
VII. Conclusions.....	21

## ***In Appreciation***

*I would like to thank all of the members of the Working Group for their dedicated service to the issue of promoting safe training environments in sport. Their outstanding participation in this effort over the last 5 months has led to the development of the key elements of this report.*

*I would also like to thank all of the NGBs, athletes, coaches, parents, volunteers, security experts, training providers, medical professionals, professional services organizations and other grassroots organizations for their insights and contributions to our efforts.*

*Nina Kemppel, Working Group Chair*

## I. Executive Summary

### *Purpose and Objectives of the Working Group*

The purpose of the Working Group for Safe Training Environments (Working Group) is to deliver a set of recommendations for promoting safe training environments in sport to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for further consideration.

The Working Group consisted of a diverse set of members, which included both individuals from within the Olympic Family and external experts in their fields. Over the course of the last five months, the Working Group focused on four primary objectives:

- Addressing the level of significance of sexual and physical misconduct in sport.
- Reviewing the guidelines and best practices across sports and other related organizations for promoting safe training environments.
- Assessing the needs of athletes, coaches, staff, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), clubs and other sports organizations in promoting safe training environments in sport.
- Providing a set of recommendations that promote safe training atmospheres and, above all, safe environments for athletes.

### *Addressing the Issue of Safe Training Environments in Sport*

One of the key questions the Working Group was tasked with answering was: Is sexual and physical misconduct a prominent issue within sport? The Working Group is in unanimous agreement that this is a critical issue within the society in which we live and, therefore, within sport. Current statistics show that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> Through discussions with professionals and organizations, it is generally agreed that many of these incidents are not reported and/or documented.

Sexual and physical abuse can be complicated within sport due to the unique relationships between athletes and authority figures. Athletes often develop very personal relationships with coaches and/or other authority figures (e.g., staff, and volunteers) that create substantial barriers for reporting of incidents due to fear of repercussion or the desire to protect authority figures. Also, the physical environments within many sports provide an opportunity for abuse to occur due to higher levels of physical interaction and an increased level of one-on-one contact between athletes and authority figures.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm>

### ***Current Focus on Sexual and Physical Misconduct***

Current events within religious organizations, other children's and sport's organizations suggest that sexual and physical abuse is an issue that needs to be addressed across multiple fronts.

While nearly all participants in sport have the utmost integrity in promoting the safety of their athletes, a small percentage of participants use sports venues as a means for perpetrating abuse. Unfortunately, this dynamic diverts attention to the situations where some athletes are not always provided the safe training environments and professional stewardship that we should expect within sport. This small group of ill-intentioned participants can have a dramatic impact on victims, individual sports organizations and, more broadly, all sports.

### ***Increasing Awareness of Sexual and Physical Abuse in Sport***

Some sports organizations have adopted strategies to tackle the issue of sexual and physical abuse; however, some sports organizations are just beginning to develop tools to deal with the issue of sexual and physical abuse within their sport. There is general recognition that this is a very difficult issue to address and it is only recently that sports organizations have expressed a desire for open collaboration in addressing the issue of sexual and physical abuse within sport.

In discussions with athletes, victims, coaches, NGBs, clubs, parents and other grassroots organizations, the predominant theme that emerged was that increasing awareness of sexual and physical abuse in sport was the most meaningful and important action that can be taken in promoting safe training environments. Training and education were identified as key pillars to raising a broader awareness of sexual and physical abuse across key stakeholders groups in sport. The development and adoption of policies, practices, programs and tools were also viewed as having a significant impact in helping to broaden the awareness of sexual and physical misconduct.

### ***The USOC's Role in Addressing this Issue***

Addressing the issue of safe training environments in sport will require a call to action for all members within the sports community, including members of the Olympic Movement and other grassroots sports organizations.

The USOC is poised to play a unique role as a leader in promoting safe training environments in sport given its position as the nation's elite sport organization. The USOC, NGBs and clubs have the ability to leverage their brands to drive adoption of innovative and meaningful tools for addressing sexual and physical misconduct in sport, enhance the collaborative development of programs/services that promote safe training environments and

promote further awareness of the issue of sexual and physical abuse within sport. Thus, the Working Group views this topic to be within the purview of the USOC and recommends that the USOC play a leadership role in promoting safe environments for athletes in sport.

While the recommendations outlined in this report provide a set of first steps in promoting safe training environments, the Working Group recommends that the USOC, NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations continue to work together to evolve the model for providing safe training environments for athletes.

### ***Recommended Actions***

The Working Group assessed the topic of sexual and physical misconduct in a manner that was very inclusive and incorporated feedback from multiple stakeholder groups. Our recommendations include input from NGBs, athletes, victims, coaches, parents, security experts, training experts and other grassroots organizations. The Working Group's assessment of this issue has led our group to propose six key recommendations for the consideration of the USOC Board of Directors and CEO.

➤ ***The USOC should play a leadership role in promoting safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC Board of Directors embrace the opportunity to become a leader in promoting positive training atmospheres, with the acknowledgment that playing a leadership role signals to the USOC organization and its partners in sport that this issue is of utmost importance to athlete safety.

We recommend that the USOC Board of Directors adopt a policy statement that sends a strong message regarding the USOC's commitment to this issue. The Working Group recognizes that the USOC Board of Directors will want to develop its own language to be included in policy statement. To assist the Board, we have provided sample policy statement for consideration: "Sexual and physical abuse is inconsistent with the Olympic Ideals and the USOC will work with its partners to play a leadership role promoting safe training environments for athletes."

➤ ***The USOC should lead by example in promoting safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC lead by example in promoting safe training environments, including the following actions that support the USOC policy statement discussed above: (a) Develop clear language explicitly prohibiting sexual and physical misconduct in all USOC Code of Conduct forms; (b) Develop an effective sexual and physical abuse training program for athletes, coaches and other regular participants at Olympic Training Centers; and (c) Review all relevant policies and forms to ensure they are consistent with promoting safe training environments in sport.

- ***The USOC should develop and provide a centralized set of training and education materials focused on sexual and physical misconduct that can be adopted by NGBs, clubs and grassroots sports organizations.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC, in collaboration with NGBs and other key stakeholders, work with an external content provider to develop and provide a core set of online training and education materials regarding sexual and physical misconduct that are applicable across all sports. A centralized training model creates significant economies of scale and reduces redundant efforts at the NGB level in development of their own training and education materials. The Working Group believes that leveraging the USOC brand will help to increase adoption at the NGB, club and grassroots organization levels.

- ***The USOC should develop a centralized online toolkit that provides a set of resources addressing various issues pertaining to sexual and physical misconduct in sport that can be used by NGBs, clubs and grassroots sports organizations.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC, in collaboration with NGBs and other key stakeholders develop a centralized toolkit of reference materials designed to provide a set of standardized and readily available sexual and physical misconduct resources to NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations. Resources could include sample code of conduct language, sample sexual and physical misconduct policies, sample behavioral guidelines, sample definitions of abuse, guidelines on reference checks, links to abuse reporting sites in each state, etc. The toolkit will allow NGBs, clubs and other grassroots organizations to adopt these tools directly or to customize the tools to fit their organizational needs, while still doing so in a cost effective manner.

- ***The USOC should work with NGBs to centralize and standardize the delivery of services designed to promote safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that, as a clear near-term example of centralizing the delivery of services, the USOC, in collaboration with NGBs: (a) Establish a criminal background check “preferred provider network” that includes reputable vendors with proven track records within sport; (b) Standardize the set of background search criteria across sports; (c) Negotiate equitable volume discounts with preferred providers to ensure participants have access to the best rates and providers are being compensated for their services; and (d) Standardize procedures for addressing violations found during the search process. Over the longer-term, the USOC and NGBs may pursue centralizing and standardizing other key services.

- ***The USOC should encourage NGBs to adopt policies, practices, programs and tools to address sexual and physical misconduct, and NGBs should, in turn, encourage clubs and other grassroots organizations in its sport to adopt similar measures.***

Due to the fact that sexual and physical misconduct is an issue that can exist at multiple levels within sport, the Working Group recommends that the USOC encourage NGBs to adopt the aforementioned policies, procedures, programs and tools and NGBs should encourage their clubs and members to adopt these types of measures as well.

### **Required Resources:**

The Working Group recognizes its third recommendation, regarding developing and providing centralized training and education materials may require an investment to deliver the quality training modules we have outlined in our report.

The Working Group believes that the other recommendations set forth in this report are also important and would only require a very limited investment to achieve success in these areas. The group also believes that the USOC has the opportunity to implement many of the limited cost initiatives in a timely manner if so inclined. The Working Group has provided a set of resources that serve as a starting point for the development of many of these additional tools and resources.

## **II. Working Group Approach and Methodology**

### ***Scope of Working Group Assessment***

Given the timeframe that the Working Group had to examine the topic of safe training environments, we limited the scope of our assessment to only include sexual and physical misconduct. The Working Group's recommendations take into consideration both abuse that occurs between a coach/ authority figure and an athlete, as well as, abuse that occurs between an athlete and another athlete.

While the Working Group addressed both sexual and physical abuse within the scope of this report, the majority of the feedback from athletes, NGBs and coaches was directly related to sexual abuse. It is our assumption that sexual and physical abuse in sport is inextricably linked and the recommendations that we have outlined in our report are applicable to both types of abuse.

It should be noted that bullying was also considered to be a significant threat within sport. While the Working Group did not have the time or resources to assess the topic of bullying, we recommend that it should be reviewed further at a later date.

Finally, the Working Group did not encounter any mentions of emotional abuse other than those that are directly associated with sexual and physical abuse, and thus, have not

included any recommendations that apply solely to emotional abuse in sport. This is a topic that the USOC should review at a later date.

### *Working Group Areas of Focus*

In addressing the complex issue of promoting safe training environments in sport, the Working Group focused its approach on reviewing best practices and recommendations across the following six key areas:

- Background Checks, Screening and Information Sharing
- Reporting Systems and Requirements
- Clubs and Grassroots Engagements
- Practices, Policies and Audits
- Behavioral Standards and Definitions of Abuse
- Training and Education



### *Diversity of Working Group Expertise and Knowledge*

The USOC Working Group was established with a focus on assembling a very diverse set of members, including individuals from within the Olympic Movement and external experts in their fields. The rationale for developing a diverse Working Group was to create a balance between members who had a deep understanding and experience in dealing with these issues within unique USOC-related environments and members that are external experts who could introduce new ways of thinking regarding best practices and innovative perspectives on sexual and physical misconduct topics.

Working Group Members include:

- Nina Kemppel: Working Group Chair, Four-time Olympian in Skiing and Vice-Chair of the Athletes' Advisory Council.
- Alison Alfors: Currently the General Counsel of Digital Globe with a strong background in training and compliance issues.

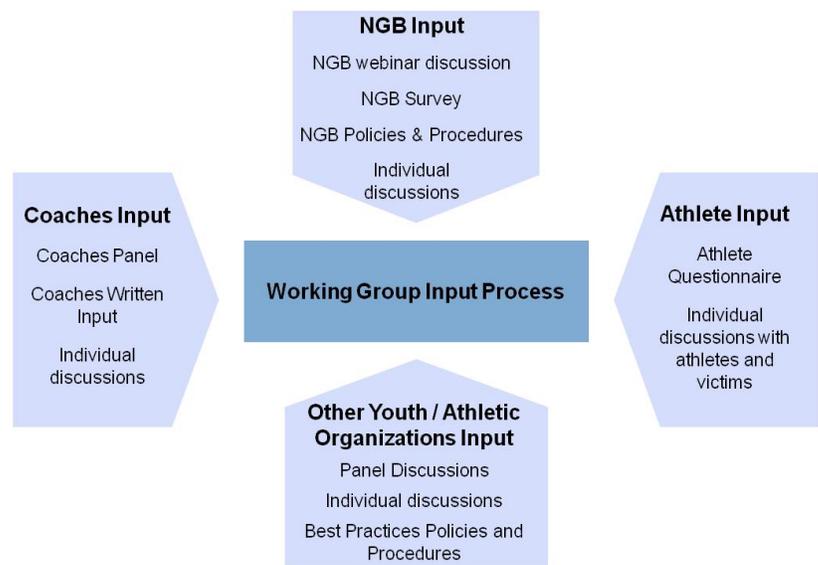
- Antonia Baum: Active psychiatrist with expertise related to sexual and physical misconduct topics in sport.
- Suzette Bewley: Legal Counsel with strong background in best practices for safe training environments.
- Jim Fox: Associate Executive Director of US Figure Skating.
- Amy Gantz: The Redwood Commercial Specialty Insurance Company, Senior Risk Manager.
- Rita Gladstone: Active Tennis Coach and Parent, former USOC Volunteer Coach of the Year.
- Raymond May: Former FBI with a Law Enforcement background and background check expertise.
- Steve Stenersen: President and CEO of US Lacrosse.
- Justin Wilcox: Olympic Athlete in Diving and member of the USOC Athletes' Advisory Council.

### **Working Group Methodology**

The Working Group addressed the topic of sexual and physical misconduct with a very inclusive process, which included input from key stakeholders within the Olympic Movement and with other organizations dealing with similar issues related to sexual and physical misconduct. Our recommendations include input from athletes, coaches, parents, NGBs, volunteers, security experts, training providers, medical professionals, professional services organizations and other grassroots organizations.

The Working Group's input process included: (a) One-on-one discussions with athletes, parents, coaches and NGBs, education providers, external security experts, background check providers and training providers; (b) Panel discussions with NGBs, coaches and other youth/ athletic organizations; (c) Surveys and questionnaires with athletes and NGBs; (d) Best practice documents from the USOC, NGBs, other youth /athletic organizations and insurance companies; and (e) Review of relevant research.

### **Working Group Input Process**



### *Discussion on Various Models*

The Working Group identified and vetted multiple models as part of assessment for promoting safe training environments in sport. The models that were discussed by the Working Group include:

- The direct delivery of all policies, practices, programs and services by individual NGBs, clubs and other grass roots organizations, with limited to no involvement by the USOC.
- The USOC, with direct input from NGBs, centralizes the delivery of core resources, such as best practice training / education and suggested policies, practices and services.
- The development of a USADA-type model that outsources all centralized services, including resources, programs, services and enforcement to an external provider.
- Hybrids of the above models.

### *Brand Agnostic*

The Working Group had numerous discussions with proprietary vendors and organizations that have strong recommendations on particular vendors who provide products and services that address the issue of sexual and physical misconduct in sport. However, the Working Group has taken the stance that it would remain brand agnostic on any recommendations it made to the USOC Board of Directors. The Working Group is able to share preliminary suggestions resulting from our work for suitable vendors that may be capable of providing the set of programs and services that the Board ultimately decides to pursue.

## **III. Recommended Actions**

The Working Group has developed six key recommendations for consideration by the USOC Board of Directors and CEO.

### **1. *The USOC should play a leadership role in promoting safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC acknowledge and embrace the opportunity to be a leader in promoting positive training atmospheres and, above all, safe training environments for athletes. Conduct constituting abuse of an individual is fundamentally inconsistent with the principles of Olympism. It is an inherent part of

the mission of the USOC and, by association, the NGBs, to promote and personify the principles of Olympism through example, education and advocacy. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics states: “All forms of harassment of participants be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries to participants are prohibited.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the Working Group recommends that the USOC Board of Directors adopt a policy statement that communicates a strong message to members of the Olympic Movement and other sports organizations that the USOC is committed to providing safe training environments and forbids any acts of sexual and physical abuse in sport. While the Working Group recognizes the USOC Board of Directors will want to develop its own policy statement that embodies the Board’s point of view on this issue, we developed a statement that may serve as a starting point for the Board’s discussion. The suggested policy statement is as follows: Sexual and physical misconduct is inconsistent with the Olympic Ideals and the USOC will work with our partners to play a leadership role in promoting safe training environments for athletes.”

The Working Group believes that a strong statement of leadership from the Board of Directors will signal to the USOC and its Olympic family members and partners that the USOC:

- Considers safe training environments to be a topic of the utmost importance in promoting athlete safety.
- Is committed to raising awareness of the issue of sexual and physical misconduct.
- Encourages action at all levels within the sports community in addressing the issue of sexual and physical misconduct.

The USOC Board of Directors is held in very high regard by its key stakeholders and there is common agreement that a directive from the Board would be beneficial in driving a strong call to action within the sports community.

## **2. *The USOC should lead by example in promoting safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC lead by example in promoting safe training environments. As the nation’s most elite sports organization and a leader in promoting safe training environments, it is critical the USOC holds itself to the highest standard of integrity regarding sexual and physical misconduct. Thus, we recommend that the USOC:

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<sup>3</sup> 2009 International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics, Sections 1 and 4

- Include clear language explicitly prohibiting sexual and physical misconduct in all Code of Conduct forms (e.g., Games Forms, Olympic Training Center forms) which must be acknowledged by the reader's signature.
- Ensure that the USOC Olympic Training Centers are implementing the highest standards of training programs and policies to address sexual and physical misconduct. This includes requiring athletes, coaches and other participants residing, or training regularly, at Olympic Training Centers to complete mandatory training on the topic of sexual and physical misconduct and sign a Code of Conduct that includes language prohibiting sexual and physical misconduct within all Olympic Training Center facilities.
- Provide sexual and physical misconduct training to all USOC staff and volunteers. Staff that work directly with athletes and Olympic Training Center participants should be required to complete training on a regular basis (e.g., annually). Other staff members should be required to complete training on a less regular basis (e.g., every two years).
- Review all relevant policies and forms to ensure they are consistent with promoting safe training environments in sport. These policies and forms would include: USOC Bylaws, Games Forms, Olympic Training Center forms, and other related materials.

**3. *The USOC should develop and provide a centralized set of training and education materials focused on sexual and physical misconduct that can be adopted by NGBs, clubs and grassroots sports organizations.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC, in collaboration with NGBs and key stakeholders, work with an external content provider to develop a set of standardized online training modules focused on the common elements of sexual and physical misconduct across all sports. These training materials may be customized by NGBs and clubs to fit their sport as appropriate.

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An ounce of prevention is worth  
a pound of cure.-- Benjamin  
Franklin

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Across all stakeholder groups (i.e., athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, NGBs, clubs and other grassroots organizations), training and education were viewed as key pillars in helping to promote safe training environments and increasing awareness of sexual and physical misconduct in sport.

Many of the core training and education concepts related to sexual and physical misconduct are applicable across all sports. A centralized model provides a common channel for the delivery of fundamental training and education programs and provides a centralized knowledge source on these complex issues. The Working Group believes there are significant economies of scale in centralizing the development of these educational materials, rather than relying on the redundant

efforts of each NGB and club to develop their own programs. A centralized training model allows NGBs and clubs to focus their efforts and resources on their athletic programs and not on topics in which they may have limited expertise.

The Working Group believes that three important components of the training are: (a) It is capable of being delivered online; (b) The modules would be tailored to address the most relevant topics for different recipient groups (e.g., athletes, parents, coaches, staff, volunteers and other participants that have direct contact with athletes); and (c) It should be peer-to-peer to the extent possible in order to increase relevance for the recipient group.

As the nation's elite sport organization, the USOC is positioned to play a key role in centralizing training and education resources on the topic of sexual and physical abuse. The USOC has the ability to leverage the strengths of its brand to "push" educational materials out to NGBs, clubs and grass roots organization in a manner that the Working Group believes will drive increased adoption.

A portfolio of training and educational topics may include modules that address the following topics.

#### Coaches, Staff and Volunteer Training and Education

- Behavioral standards -- including clear guidelines for the appropriate set of behaviors for coaches and staff (e.g., one-on-one time with athletes, appropriate touching, travel and rooming policies).
- Standardized definitions of sexual and physical abuse-- including clear descriptions of what actions constitute sexual and physical abuse.
- Key warning signs of sexual and physical abuse.
- Reporting systems -- including resources for overcoming the barriers to reporting incidents and legal reporting requirements.

#### NGBs, Clubs and Grassroots Organizations Training and Education

- Pre-hire screening processes -- including examples of key questions to ask former employers (e.g., would you hire this individual again based on what you know now).
- Reference checks -- including who should be contacted and key questions to ask (e.g., references to contact such as a family member, co-worker, supervisor).
- Reporting systems -- including resources for overcoming the barriers to reporting incidents and legal reporting requirements.
- Audits and self-audits for NGBs and clubs to assess their performance in promoting safe training environments.

- Sexual and physical misconduct allegation response education for NGB executives.

#### Athlete Training and Education

- Education on appropriate behaviors in dealing with coaches and other authority figures – including clear guidelines for what are acceptable behaviors for coach / athlete relations.
- Education on key warning signs of sexual and physical abuse.
- Reporting systems – including resources for overcoming the barriers to reporting incidents and how to contact local authorities to report direct or suspected abuse.

#### Parents Training and Education

- Education on parental responsibilities and oversight for their children in sport.
- Education on appropriate behaviors in dealing with coaches and other authority figures – including clear guidelines for that are acceptable behaviors for coach / athlete relationships.
- Education on key warning signs of sexual and physical abuse.
- Training resources for young athletes that include a joint athlete / parent education process.

The Working Group recognizes that not all of these recommended training modules will be developed in year one, but wanted to provide a preliminary list of training needs that we encountered in our assessment of safe training environments. It is assumed that the above list of training modules will be enhanced, refined, prioritized and developed over time.

- 4. *The USOC should develop a centralized online toolkit that provides a set of resources addressing various issues pertaining to sexual and physical misconduct in sport that can be used by NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC, in collaboration with NGBs and other key stakeholders develop a centralized toolkit of resources that would be available online for all NGBs, clubs and grassroots sports organizations to access. Resources would include standardized informational templates, best practices in educational resources, and links to external resources that serve as tools in addressing sexual and physical misconduct.

Through the Working Group's discussions with many key stakeholders, there was a need to have direct access to a toolkit of standard resources that sports organizations could easily adopt to address sexual and physical misconduct issues in their sport. The toolkit would provide a set of resources for NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations that they could adopt and/or customize for the specific needs within each sport.

A set of centralized resources within the toolkit may include:

#### Sample Templates and Forms

- Sample code of conduct language that could be incorporated into a sport's code of conduct documents.
- Sample templates of sexual and physical abuse policies that can be adopted and customized by NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations.
- Sample templates for policy statements regarding sexual and physical misconduct.
- Sample templates outlining the behavioral guidelines for coaches, athletes, staff and other members with direct access to athletes (e.g., parental monitoring, appropriate touching, and guidelines for unsupervised one-on-one time with athletes).
- Sample templates that provide standardized definitions of sexual and physical abuse.
- Sample incident reporting templates that allows for the tracking and recording of reported incidents -- including first call mapping and confidentiality guidelines.
- Sample self-audit forms for NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations to assess their performance in promoting safe training environments.

#### Educational Resources

- Resources for pre-hire screening processes, such as top-ten tips for interviewing / Q&A on questioning former employers (e.g., key questions to ask).
- Resources for reference checks, such as top-ten tips for key people to contact and appropriate questions to ask (i.e., guidance on contacting family members, co-workers and supervisors in reference checks and a set of key questions to ask each group).
- Educational resources for parents, such as a "Protecting your Child Guide" (i.e., Q&A on warning signs of sexual and physical misconduct, roles and responsibilities of parents in interactions with sports organizations, top-ten tips to ask coaches and staff at training facilities).

- Resources for athletes outlining appropriate behavior for athlete to authority figure relationships.

#### Links to External Resources

- Links to the appropriate sites for reporting abuse in each state.
- Links to hotlines and professional resources that provide counseling and support services for victims.
- Links to professional services that provide treatment for sexual and physical abuse victims.
- Links to professional services for individuals with questions about reporting incidents.
- Links to professional services with expertise to help articulate an approach to sexual and physical misconduct within sport.

Providing this type of toolkit in a centralized location will help NGBs and clubs adopt and implement tools that will help them address sexual and physical misconduct in an efficient and cost effective manner. The Working Group will provide a set of materials that provide a starting point for many of the resources listed above.

#### **5. *The USOC should work with NGBs to centralize and standardize the delivery of services designed to promote safe training environments.***

The Working Group recommends that the USOC and NGBs work together to centralize and standardize the delivery of key services that will leverage the collective efforts of the sports community. Using criminal background checks as a near-term example, we recommend that the USOC:

- Establish a criminal background check “preferred provider network” of commercial vendors with proven track records within sport. The USOC could issue a request for proposal for qualified vendors and work together with NGBs to select a set of primary vendors.
- Work with the primary vendors to create a minimum standard for criminal background check criteria (e.g., types of criminal references searched, number of counties searched, number of years searched, number of databases searched) that can be applied across all sports.
- Work with vendors to establish reasonable volume discounts for the USOC, NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations to ensure participants have access to the best rates for criminal background checks and providers are compensated for their services.
- Standardize procedures and develop a common methodology for addressing violations found during the search process across sports organizations.

Volume efficiencies may drive cost savings such that a collection of sports organizations could obtain better rates than each NGB could obtain on its own. Additionally, standardization across sports, to the extent logical, can help guard against “sport jumping” by persons who are trying to find a loophole or an entry point of least resistance.

Over the longer-term, the USOC and NGBs may consider centralizing and standardizing other key services, such as investigative services and additional training and education services.

**6. *The USOC should encourage NGBs to adopt policies, practices, programs and tools to address sexual and physical misconduct, and NGBs should, in turn, encourage clubs and other grassroots organizations in its sport to adopt similar measures.***

The Working Group was charged with delivering a set of recommendations to the USOC Board of Directors for its consideration of actions that the USOC can undertake in addressing sexual and physical misconduct in sport, and we have done so in this report. However, because the issue of sexual and physical misconduct exists at multiple levels within sport, NGBs, clubs and other grassroots sports organizations are critical partners in promoting safe training environments for our athletes. Thus, the Working Group recommends that the USOC encourage NGBs to adopt policies, practices, programs and tools that address sexual and physical misconduct in sport. We also recommend that NGBs encourage clubs and other grassroots organizations to adopt these types of measures as well.

The Working Group recommends that the USOC encourages NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations to:

- Adopt language in their code of conduct prohibiting sexual and physical misconduct.
- Conduct commercial criminal background checks for staff, coaches, volunteers, chaperones and other participants who regularly work directly with athletes and/or minors upon entry into the organization and on a regular ongoing basis as appropriate. Conduct commercial criminal background checks for members of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and other participants who do not regularly work directly with athletes/minors on a regular ongoing basis as appropriate. Conduct new background checks on all members that are re-entering the organization.
- Implement the centralized training and education curriculum (or other training that they may have developed) for athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, NGB staff and any other persons within the NGB and club organizations who regularly work directly with athletes and/or minors.
- Utilize the centralized toolkit of resources outlined in the recommendations above.

- Regularly evaluate themselves, as appropriate, regarding qualifications and criteria for club membership in an effort to increase the standardization and adoption of best practice policies, practices, programs and tools across all associated clubs and grassroots organizations.

### ***Other Recommendations***

#### **External Knowledge Sharing Groups**

As a result of the Working Group's outreach efforts, we have established relationships with several high profile organizations that are in the process of tackling similar issues related to sexual and physical misconduct. The USOC has an opportunity to cultivate these relationships in a more formal manner to create a venue in which we can work together to share best practices, evaluate current research, discuss current trends and evolve the collective thinking on the topic of sexual and physical abuse. Potential knowledge sharing groups includes the following:

- Groups with Related Missions and Goals -- to provide an ongoing venue for leaders addressing sexual and physical abuse issues to continue to share ideas and innovative thinking on the topic.
- Prevention and Detection Groups -- to provide a venue to work with other organizations and professional groups focused on sexual and physical abuse prevention.
- International Sports Organizations with the goal of promoting safe training environments -- to establish a venue for international organizations focused on sexual and physical misconduct issues to discuss and share ideas.

The Working Group is able to share preliminary suggestions resulting from our communications with other organization for potential partners for each of these knowledge sharing groups.

#### **Venues for Ongoing NGB Discussions on Promoting Safe Training Environments**

Based on the feedback the Working Group received in this process, NGBs expressed a desire to continue to share best practices, discuss current challenges/ opportunities and evolve the collective thinking on this topic with other NGBs. Thus, the Working Group recommends that the USOC provide a venue (e.g., a forum at the Olympic Assembly) for the ongoing NGB discussion on the topic of safe training environments.

### **Longer-Term Vision for the USOC Creating Awareness for Sexual and Physical Misconduct in Sport**

The Working Group believes the USOC has the potential to play an even greater role in raising awareness of sexual and physical misconduct in the future, with the potential for the model to evolve into something much broader than just supporting the sports organizations within the Olympic Family. In the future, the USOC's role may evolve to provide the highest quality education and supporting resources that address safe training environments and are available for use by a large and diverse set of sports organizations. Longer-term efforts could have potential implications on promoting child safety well beyond the sports environments.

## VI. Areas for Further Development

The Working Group encountered several areas that have a significant impact on promoting safe training environments, however, were considered to be longer-term areas for development. These areas of focus include:

- **Addressing bullying and emotional abuse as an important topic for promoting safe training environments**

The Working Group believes these is a key issue to be further addressed in promoting safe training environments, but was not able to fully assess these specific issues given the other topics that we were tasked to address. We recommend that a further review of bullying and emotional abuse in sport be conducted to ensure that we are promoting safe training environments for our athletes.

- **Providing a centralized hotline as an educational and support resource for victims or other parties that require information related to sexual and physical abuse**

The feedback that the Working Group received from both athletes and coaches was that an anonymous hotline that served as an educational and support resource would be of great benefit. There were several different models suggested for the implementation of such a hotline, but it was collectively seen as a third party vendor that provided advice and guidance to individuals on issues related to sexual and physical misconduct (e.g., reporting barriers, reporting to local authorities, confronting abusers, discussions with parents, dealing with guilt, education on treatment resources).

- **Providing further guidance and resources for NGBs in navigating the adjudication process, including the potential to provide centralized investigative services for NGBs**

The Working Group believes that there may be a benefit to providing further best practice templates and tools within the adjudication process and a potential benefit to providing a centralized set of investigative resources.

- **Establishing a coaches' code of conduct that prohibits sexual and physical misconduct**

The Working Group believes that the further development of the USOC's current draft of the coach's code of conduct would be a beneficial tool that NGBs, clubs and grass roots organizations could adopt to help to increase awareness of sexual and physical conduct in sport.

- **Developing a system for a club certification**

The Working Group recommends that the USOC and NGBs examine the merits of establishing a certification / accreditation process that would allow clubs and grassroots organizations to receive a "seal of approval" if they followed a high standard of policies, practices, trainings and programs.

## **VII. Other Prominent Issues Addressed by the Working Group**

The Working Group addressed several other key issues, but ultimately did not include them in the recommendations to the USOC Board. While the Working Group acknowledges that many of these issues can be powerful tools in promoting safe training environments, it was the consensus of our group that these issues were not viable to be addressed at this point. However, we recommend that the USOC continue to monitor the following:

- **Banned lists / non-eligible lists**

The Working Group discussed the merits and issues of a consolidated banned list and determined that this was not the best solution for all sports organizations at this time. Given the resources across all sports organizations, the Working Group believes that there may be more effective ways to address "sports jumping" in the near-term.

- **Other evolving background check technologies**

While it was brought to the attention the Working Group that while commercial background checks are a good first step in screening candidates, there may be other recognition technologies that are more useful in verifying a person's identity. We recommend that the USOC should be continuously analyzing background check technologies to identify new and innovative methods for helping to screen the individuals that sports organizations employ.

- **Requirement that all clubs become members of NGB organizations**

When assessing the broad range of NGB organizations, it became apparent to the Working Group that requiring all NGBs to implement a "club member organization"

model was not feasible. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Working Group recognizes that this model, if implemented, affords the NGBs greater collaboration with its clubs and members, which in turn could be beneficial in implementing effective policies regarding safe training environments.

## **IV. Conclusion**

Sexual and physical misconduct is a very real issue within our society and, therefore, within sport. This type of abuse is inconsistent with the Olympic Ideals and needs to be addressed at all levels within sport to ultimately be successful in promoting athlete safety. We believe that USOC, as the nation's elite sport organization, is positioned to help create a call to action for all NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations to work together to help promote safe training environments for athletes.

Upon the completion of our five month review on sexual and physical misconduct in sport, the Working Group believes that the USOC should play a leadership role in promoting safe training environments for athletes. We recommend that the USOC implement the set of six recommendations outlined in this report as a first step in providing leadership and resources to combat sexual and physical abuse in sport. We also recommend that the USOC continue to work collaboratively with NGBs, clubs and grassroots organizations to evolve the model to ensure we continue to have the most efficient and effective structure in place to promote safe training environments for our athletes.