Coaching Boys INTO MEN®

CoachesCorner.org

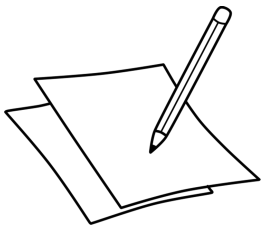
Advanced Coaches Clinic

Creating Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes

Time: 2 hours and 15 minutes

Goals:

1. **Deliver Coaching Boys Into Men sessions using gender and sexuality-inclusive and affirming language.**
2. **Positively intervene when witnessing anti-LGBTQ language and behaviors, including harassment and bullying.**
3. **Create and explain the importance of LGBTQ+ affirming environments in sports through an understanding of the history and harm of anti-LGBTQ+ oppression.**



Worksheets Included:

1. Warm Up Questions and Important Statistics
2. Timeline of LGBTQ+ Issues in Sports
3. The Gender Unicorn and LGBTQ+ Definitions
4. Practices to Create Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes
5. Best Practices for Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances & Scenarios

Additional Resources of Note:

- One Love's Education Center, including an "LGBTQ Inclusive Facilitation Toolkit" and more.
- LGBTQ+ Athletics & Education Teen Toolkit by Micah Porter https://www.micahporter.com/post/lgbtq-youth-resources
- Athlete Ally: https://www.athleteally.org/resources/
- Films: Changing the Game (2021, Hulu), Disclosure (2020, Netflix)

For training demos and additional guidance on delivering Advanced Coaches Clinic materials, check out our Learning Collaborative recordings at:

https://www.coachescorner.org/healthy-relationships-advocates/#collab

! *Important Note:*

Because this training is meant to be implemented in the context of Coaching Boys Into Men, the examples and references have a focus on boys and mens sports.

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Acknowledgments:

FUTURES extends special appreciation to the **One Love Foundation** who provided critical support in writing, revising, and sharing content. More One Love content can be found at JoinOneLove.org.

Section 1 Warm Up and Reflection

15 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read aloud the introduction to section 1 and shared expectations. Begin by asking Warm Up Question 1 (Coach Handout Page 1). Answer questions and note that later, you will define LGBTQ+ in more detail. Then, ask "Warm-Up Questions 2 +3" and have all respond (or only few in a larger group). Host discussion and then share key talking points. Although long, the Talking Points are very important. You can consider only sharing a few.

Introduction to Section 1: Warm Up and Reflection

Today, we're going to discuss how our coaching practices (and athletic environments as a whole) can contribute to healthy, and sometimes harmful, effects for LGBTQ+ athletes. We'll discuss our language, our actions, gain best practices, and talk through some scenarios. Before getting into how we can improve our coaching practices, though, let's discuss why we're discussing LGBTQ+ issues in athletics.

Shared Expectations:

Beforehand, it's important that we set a few shared expectations for our discussion to make sure we can all learn and speak openly, as this conversation is very personal and respect is primary.

- **No shaming or blaming.** We're not here to create an environment where "you know it or you don't." We're here to learn how to be the best coaches we can be.
- **Take personal responsibility for learning and respect**. Because we are not blaming one another, it is important that we take responsibility for our impact on others and when we have done wrong.
- **Speak from personal experience and avoid generalization.** Use "I" statements to prevent assuming what others are thinking and feeling.
- **Acknowledgement of how personal this topic is.** We will respect and listen openly to others, not be defensive, and speak as openly as possible about our own experiences.
- Finally, we will **start from the place of acknowledging that discrimination against LGBTQ+ people exists.** We can come from different experiences and amount of time spent discussing this topic, but this is a space where we will work constructively towards how we, as coaches, can address this abuse.

Warm Up Questions:

Coach Handout - Page 1

Warm Up Question 1.

Who knows what LGBTQIA+ stands for?

- LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer and/or Questioning. LGBTQ+ refers to those groups that have been marginalized and discriminated against on the basis of sexuality and gender-identity. The + at the end refers to other queer identities that we will define later such as Pansexual, Intersex, Asexual, and Two-Spirit.

Warm Up Question 2:

Why focus today on LGBTQ+ athletes and relationships in sports and CBIM?

Talking Points

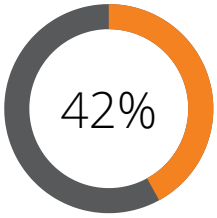
- **Fewer than one-third of LGBTQ youth—only 32%—reported that they had ever participated in sports for a school or community league or club**… fewer than their straight, cisgender peers (1). This points to unwelcoming or unsafe environments.

- **Over 15% of young people are LGBTQ+** (2). Whether our teams have athletes who are out, there are LGBTQ+ athletes on our teams. If our athletes can't be their authentic selves, our teams can't excel.

- **80 percent of LGBQ teenagers and 83 percent of transgender teenagers are not out to their coaches** (3), representing a lack of trust and safety. It's important to create spaces that are affirming and supportive for each of your athletes, because it not only affects the player, but also the team.

- **84% of gay athletes and 82% of lesbian athletes report being targeted with abusive language** such as "faggot" and "dyke." (4) These microaggressions and stereotypes reinforce sexism and harmful gender-related messages, often by falsely equating those with LGBTQ+ identities as more feminine.

- **42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year**, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth (1). Creating affirming environments for LGBTQ+ athletes is critical, especially because sports can play a key role in supporting the health of LGBTQ+ people. Sports positively impact self-esteem, academic success, and sense of belonging (5).



- **There are higher rates of domestic violence and abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships** due to discrimination and trauma (6). It's critical to address LGBTQ+ relationships and be inclusive in our language to teach healthy relationship behaviors and prevent abuse.

Warm Up Question 3:

Surveying in 2021 showed that only 4% of out LGBTQ student-athletes reported feeling comfortable turning to a sports leader or coach for help when they were feeling sad, stressed, or depressed. Why might an LGBTQ+ player feel uncomfortable reaching out for support or sharing their identities with you and/or their teammates?

Talking Points

- **75% of LGBTQ youth reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime**. Additionally, 50% of households don't respect or affirm LGBTQ+ identities or correct gender pronouns. Discrimination and harassment create trauma and distrust, even before looking at sports, specifically.

- **18% of LGBTQ+ athletes reported they heard a sports leader or coach say negative things about people who are LGBTQ**, and 16% reported that they had heard positive things about LGBTQ people from a sports leader or coach (1)

- Even if we as individuals consider ourselves to be supportive of LGBTQ people, **the broader culture of your community or the attitudes of your players can make LGBTQ athletes on your team feel unsafe**. As a coach, you want your team to feel safe and supported.

- During this training, we're going to discuss the history of LGBTQ+ athletes, common LGBTQ+ terminology to know and use, and ways to create a safe and inclusive environment for athletes. Showing your willingness to acknowledge and support LGBTQ+ relationships as a coach is imperative to not only the success of your team, but also the success of your athletes long-term.

Sources for statistics: 1. The Trevor Project; 2. Gallup; 3. Human Rights Campaign; 4. Out on the Fields; 5. Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network; 6. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

Section 2 History of LGBTQ+ Athletes in Sports

20 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the Introduction to Section 2 out loud. Use Pages 2a and 2b of the Coach's Handout to go through the history content with coaches. Popcorn-read the timeline in chronological order so that each coach gets an opportunity to read a bit of the content. Then, debrief using the discussion questions and close with the Talking Points.

Introduction to Section 2 : History of LGBTQ+ Athletes in Sports

- In order to understand how we can grow our coaching practices to better support LGBTQ+ athletes and stop abuse, it's important to look at the history of discrimination and athletes' courage to defy this abuse throughout sports.
- Our history in sports represents the impacts and normalcy of anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and behaviors within sports, the risks that LGBTQ+ athletes have taken to build a safer world, and the ways that we can coach with courage towards equity and justice.
- There have always been, and continue to be, gifted and talented LGBTQ+ athletes from all gender identities. Due to societal norms, laws, and penalties against LGBTQ+ people, it wasn't until the 1970's that more LGBTQ+ athletes began making public statements about their sexual orientation.
- This list of LGBTQ+ sports history moments is meant to capture some key moments, both good and bad, including those of advocacy and legislation, the stories of important LGBTQ+ athletes, and the impacts of anti-LGBTQ+ abuse.

United States LGBTQ+ Sports Timeline:

Coach Handout - Page 2

1972

Title IX is passed, mandating equality for women and girls in education and athletic programs that receive federal funding, making discrimination “on the basis of sex” illegal.

1975

David Kopay, retired NFL running back, becomes the first American professional athlete to publicly identify as gay. Despite his compelling story and LGBTQ+-advocacy post-retirement, this did not change the highly homophobic culture of the NFL.

1976

Renee Richards, a professional tennis player, was outed as transgender and barred from competing in major competitions. She went on to become a major trans rights pioneer.

1981

Billie Jean King, the nationally acclaimed tennis star, was outed by her ex-partner. King said later that the disclosure that she was a lesbian resulted in her losing about $2 million in commercial endorsements from companies that dropped her immediately after learning she was gay.

1982

Olympian Tom Waddell organizes the first Gay Games to create a safe space where LGBT athletes can compete. The International Olympic Committee sues to prevent the games from being called the “Gay Olympics.”

1988

MLB Commissioner Bart Giamatti fires Dave Pallone–an umpire–for being gay, cloaking this reason in unsubstantiated allegations that Pallone had sex with a minor. Despite authorities dropping the investigation, Pallone’s firing reinforced harmful stereotypes of gay men and that the MLB would not employ gay players or umpires.

1998

ESPN airs their special on TV, “The World of the Gay Athlete,” making the issue of LGBT athletes in sports the centerpiece for their coverage in ‘98 and ‘99, a new feat for a major news outlet.

2000

With the help of Martina Navratilova, one of the greatest tennis players of all time who came out as Lesbian in 1981, the Women's Sports Foundations starts the Project to Eliminate Homophobia. The effort was a major collaboration across partners such as the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Gay and Lesbian Education network.

2002

New York Giants tight end star Jeremy Shockey declares on national radio that we would not stand for having a gay teammate, citing that having gay men in the showers with the team, "wouldn't work."

2003

The NCAA initiates their first "sexual orientation in sports" training.

2008

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association enacts the first state-wide policy enabling the participation of transgender athletes in high school sports according to their identified gender.

2013

Jason Collins, an NBA player, becomes the first active athlete to come out as gay in one of the major men's sports (basketball, football, baseball, hockey). Despite praise from peers and President Obama, Collins remains the only active gay player to have been out in the NBA (as of 2021).

2020-2021

In 2020, 18 states introduced legislation that would ban transgender student athletes from participating in school sports. In 2021, 31 states introduced similar legislation, marking a severe uptick in anti-trans.

2021

- 186 openly-LGBTQ+ athletes compete at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, more than all previous Summer Olympics combined. This number included the first openly transgender athletes to compete at the Olympics. Of these 186 athletes, women outnumbered men 9-to-1.
- Many professional teams in the U.S. celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month. While some leagues had celebrated for years with shirts or events, 2021 marked a large increase. The NFL temporarily changed its logo's colors to rainbow, which many fans threatened to boycott the league over.

Timeline Sources: Out on the Fields; Iowa Safe Schools; OutSports

Discussion Questions:

1. W***hat trends or observations did you make throughout the timeline?***
2. ***Were there any events that were new or stood out to you? Why or why not?***

Conclusion

- While great progress has been made toward LGBTQ+ inclusion in sports, many sports institutions (particularly men's) still condone harmful attitudes and behaviors towards LGBTQ+ athletes and fans. Support from institutions is often performative, rather than systemic, focusing on image rather than broad education or accountability for abusive fans, for example.

- Positive changes and representation are still very recent and there are still almost no professional men's athletes who are openly gay or bisexual. Anti-LGBTQ harassment and language remain. Anti-trans regulations are more severe than ever.

- Young people are growing up within this context and history. As coaches and role models, it's important to have this history to share with our athletes, uplift the stories of LGBTQ+ athletes, and continue to push our culture to be free from abuse.

Section 3 Discussing Coaches' Backgrounds on LGBTQ+ Athletes in Sports

10 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction to this section. Spend 1 minute each reading and reflecting on the silent prompts. Then, enter into a group discussion and allow coaches to share their reflections while the trainer takes notes on butcher paper / white board.

Introduction to Section 3: Discussing Coaches' Backgrounds on LGBTQ+ Athletes in Sports

Now that we've discussed why athletics & our coaching can have major positive and negative impacts on our athletes and how our current sports climate was created, let's discuss more about our own experiences and coaching. This will help set the stage for how we can grow and reflect on our own coaching practices to be affirming of LGBTQ+ athletes.

Reflection Prompt 1:
How comfortable do you feel using LGBTQ+ terminology personally? How comfortable do you feel using this terminology with your team?

Reflection Prompt 2:
Have you ever coached any openly LGBTQ+ athletes? Do you know what their experience was like on your team?

Talking Points

- Wherever you are coming into this training is the right place: If you have these conversations every day; if you hear anti-gay language from others but don't know how to respond; if you have used this language yourself; if you've worked with many LGBTQ+ athletes, none, or somewhere in between.

- The purpose of this training is to focus on the health and safety of our athletes and their peers. Faced with a culture and history of discrimination and anti-LGBTQ+ harassment in sports, we bear the responsibility as adults, mentors, and coaches to advocate for healthy relationships and against abusive behavior. We have the power to be strong and caring role models in the lives of their athletes.

- It's important to reflect on how we can grow in our practices to build safer environments and prevent abuse.

Section 4 LGBTQ+ Terminology (Gender Unicorn Activity)

25 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the Introduction out loud and follow steps 1-4, below:

1. **Ensure coaches have access to the Gender Unicorn handout or image (Coach Handout 3a).**
2. **Go top to bottom through each identity aspect (Identity; Expression; Sex; Physical Attraction; Emotional Attraction).**
3. **For each aspect of identity, ask coaches to try to define the term. Then, share the definition and ask coaches if they have any questions (Coach Handout 3b).**
4. **One you have reviewed all the definitions, ask coaches the Gender Unicorn Activity Closing Question.**

Note: The gender unicorn is important, but can take a long time. If you feel that your coaches already understand these definitions and that it would be more useful to go straight to the "Best Practices" and "Scenarios," consider skipping this activity.

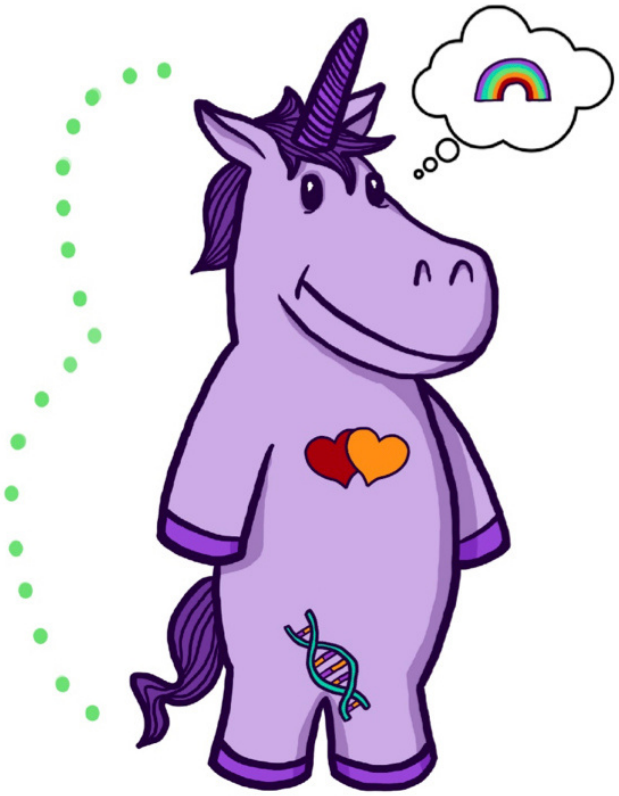
Introduction to Section 4: LGBTQ+ Terminology

To transition to looking at our practices as coaches, let's first discuss our language and understanding of LGBTQ+ terminology. Coaches set the tone for what language is acceptable on their teams and can create an open environment for learning about others and supporting everyone. Using accurate language and understanding LGBTQ+ terminology ensures that athletes feel affirmed and supported by their team. To cover terminology, we will use the Gender Unicorn activity.

Coach Handout - Page 3

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: TSER Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

Female | Male | Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Gender Identity:	One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same. Common gender identities include man, woman, and non-binary.
Non-binary or Genderqueer:	Nonbinary is an umbrella term for people whose gender is beyond the binary of woman or man. Nonbinary people may or may not transition physically, legally, or socially. Generally, nonbinary people are considered under the transgender umbrella because they do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, but may or may not identify as transgender specifically.
Gender Expression /Presentation:	The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.
Sex Assigned at Birth:	The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" because chromosomes do not always determine genitalia, sex, or gender.
Physically Attracted To:	Sexual orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. Sexual orientations include: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Pansexual.
Emotionally Attracted To:	Romantic/emotional orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. There are other types of attraction related to gender such as aesthetical or platonic. These are simply two common forms of attraction.
Pansexual:	A person who experiences sexual, romantic, or physical attraction to members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

Discussion Question:

Why could you see it being important to understand and use these terms with your athletes?

Definition Sources: Definitions from One Love's LGBTQ+ Workshop, Trans Student Educational Resources, and the LGBTQIA Resource Center at UC Davis.

Section 5 Practices to Create Healthy Team Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes

25 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the Introduction out loud. Tell coaches to flip to the "Practices to Create Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes" handout (Page 4). For each Practice, have one coach read the Practice out loud and ask coaches to respond to the two discussion questions. End by sharing the Additional Considerations for Schools and Athletic Departments.

Introduction to Section 5: Practices to Create Healthy Team Environments for LBGTQ+ Athletes

In this section of the training, we will move into what coaches can practically do to create healthy environments for athletes. We will seek to answer the question:

What are the core elements of creating healthy team environments for LGBTQ+ athletes?

To answer this question, we will discuss our language, our team culture, our power as role models and caring adults, support resources available, and how we can always commit to ensuring positive health and safety for our teams. We will also briefly address how our systems and departments can support LGBTQ+ athletes, beyond just our teams.

Practices to Create Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes:

Coach Handout - Page 4

Discussion Questions for Each Practice:

1. ***What do you think this looks like in practice?***
2. ***What parts of this practice do you feel comfortable with and which feel challenging?***

Provide Ongoing Support for Athletes, Discreetly and Publicly
Building trust with your athletes through consistently showing you care and will check-in on their wellbeing is a good step towards supporting LGBTQ+ athletes, even if they are not out. When athletes do choose to share their sexual or gender identities, it's important to respect their choices about who knows this information and ask questions like, "Do you want to be connected to more resources?."

Make It Clear that Homophobic and Transphobic Language and Behaviors are Unacceptable
The coach establishes the norms for what is ok and not on their team. By stepping in when you hear terms used derogatively like "gay," "pussy," "dyke," or "tranny," you can affirm for LGBTQ+ athletes that they have advocates in their corner and prevent this abuse from happening again.

Use Gender and Sexuality-Inclusive Language When Discussing Relationships

When only heterosexual relationships are referenced, it makes these relationships the norm, excluding queer relationships. Unhealthy and abusive dynamics also occur within LGBTQ+ relationships, so it is important for our scenarios and language to discuss what healthy and safe relationships look like for everyone. Don't assume the gender of your team's romantic partners.

Affirm All LGBTQ+ Athletes Through Terminology, Education, and Resources

Make it clear that everyone is included on your team (within, or regardless of, the bounds of your local policies). Using LGBTQ+ terminology accurately, educating on LGBTQ+ issues, and having affirming messages/posters communicates your support, even if athletes don't mention it. Providing LGBTQ+ resources (local and national) during practice or in your office can be life saving.

Normalize Sharing Gender Pronouns & Acknowledging Our Mistakes

Trans and non-binary youth are much more likely to experience depression or attempt suicide if their households or other adults don't use or affirm their correct gender pronouns (*Trevor Project)*. Sharing gender pronouns (at the beginning of the season, for example) and addressing mistakes demonstrates that we understand the importance to trans and non-binary athletes (and, that it's ok to not know everything!)

- Note: If useful, go over examples of how to use gender-neutral pronouns such as They/Them. Ask coaches who are comfortable to share their pronouns.

Take the Lead from LGBTQ+ Athletes and Educators

Just like we want athletes to mirror a coach's instructions, it's important to mirror the language people want to describe their gender and sexuality (it's always ok to ask!). Addressing requests or issues from LGBTQ+ teammates also shows that you take the issue seriously. Additionally, consider partnering with local LGBTQ+ organizations or student groups who can provide education or resources for your team.

★ Additional Considerations for Schools & Athletic Departments

- Creating Athletic Department or Team videos (PSAs) that show your support for LGBTQ+ people and student-athletes.
- Supporting LGBTQ+ events on campus (such as National Coming Out Day or Pride Week) by encouraging athletes to attend and contribute.
- Create partnerships with local LGBTQ+ organizations or student groups to provide resources, share events, and offer educational sessions.

Section 6 Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances - Best Practices and Role Plays

30 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction out loud. Ask coaches to turn to the Best Practices for Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances handout (Page 5a). Have coaches popcorn-read the best practices. Then, split the coaches into small groups of 2-3 to act out how they would each respond to the Role Play scenarios (Page 5b) (10 min). Come back to the full group and have a few coaches share their responses to each scenario. Conclude with a few additional ideas of how to respond in alignment with the Best Practices.

Introduction to Section 6: Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances

As discussed in the list of key elements of creating healthy environments for LGBTQ+, one important responsibility that coaches have is to stop homophobic and transphobic behavior when they witness it. To remain silent in these situations condones the behavior, and it will only continue.

Intervening can be difficult and often, it's hard to know what to say to do in these moments. Now, we will imagine a few scenarios within our time and think about how we would respond. Beforehand, let's talk through a few practices we can employ in these instances.

Best Practices for Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances

Coach Handout - Page 5

1. Use Different Techniques To Match The Situation

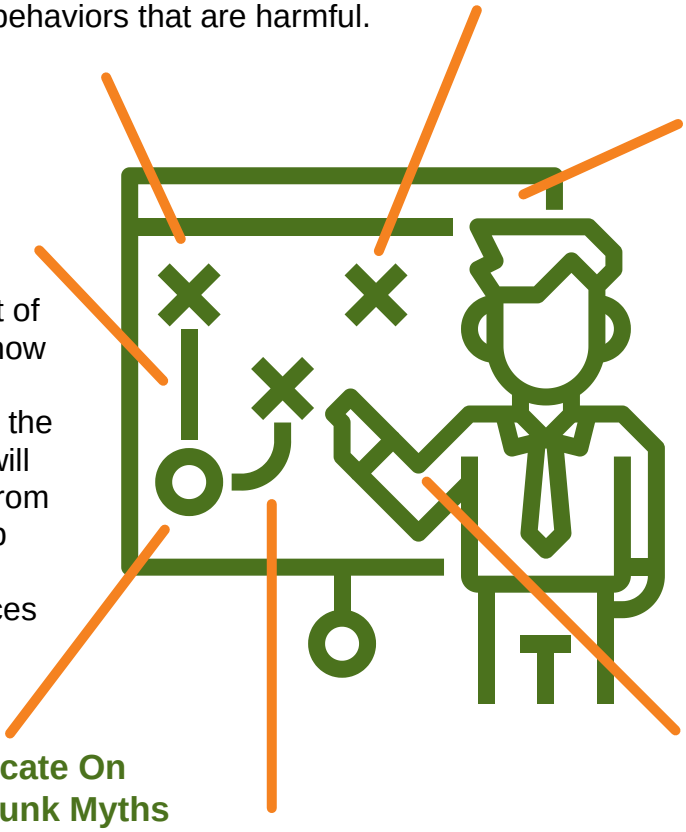
Direct response, redirection, public statements, and separate conversations are all important tools. It's critical to never let a moment of anti-LGBTQ+ language, assumptions, or general disrespect go unaddressed. Sometimes this means speaking out in the moment and sometimes it means addressing these situations after the fact. It can be as simple as saying, "That's not ok"." It can (and should) be as deep as opening conversation to learn, educate, and change ideas and behaviors that are harmful.

2. Use Your Own Style & Language

There is no "perfect" response to these and other situations. Everyone will respond in our own ways based on our personalities and our identities. Every situation is contextual to our relationships with the others involved--refs, coaches, athletes, parents, and more. All our responses must represent integrity, respect, and the intention to positively address anti-LGBTQ+ abuse.

3. Check-In With And Provide Support For Those Hurt

If someone uses anti-LGBTQ+ language in front of or to someone who you know is LGBTQ+, check in with them, affirm their place on the team, let them know you will take actions to prevent it from happening again, and help them seek out gender or sexuality-affirming resources if needed.



4. Explain The Difference Between Intent And Impact

Regardless of someone's intent, it does not negate the impact that it might have on someone else. It's important to acknowledge the harm that the comment had. Instead of correcting someone outright, try to make it a learning moment and break down why the comment was harmful and build the social-emotional skills of your athletes.

5. Be Prepared To Educate On LGBTQ+ Issues & Debunk Myths

Often, harassment comes from insecurity and is learned behavior. Ask players why they used hurtful language and address the emotions and stereotypes underneath. As an advocate for LGBTQ+ players, it's important to be ready with statistics and information to prevent the spread of stereotypes and myths. Check out One Love's LGBTQ-Inclusive Facilitation Toolkit for a list of statistics.

6. Focus On The Behavior, Not The Person

People often shut down when someone points out the harm they may have caused in a comment. The goal of being an advocate for LGBTQ+ players isn't to shame others for causing harm. When addressing gay-bashing or anti-trans myths, for example, focus on the impact of the specific behavior rather than what is wrong with the individual.

7. Find Others Who Can Support You And Your Values

As a coach, you are not expected to always know the right thing to do or say in the moment. Find support from others in your life as local partners like counselors and advocates who can talk through questions or even support your facilitation.

Role Play Scenarios

Scenario 1: One of your athletes yells "you're so gay!" to a teammate in the locker room..

Potential response(s): Immediately respond by saying that that language won't be tolerated. Later, pull the one who made the comment aside to ask where the comment come from and if they know the impact on others. Check in with the one who the comment was directed at and, depending on their wishes, have the other apologize, either in private or if appropriate, in front of the whole team to set a future tone.

Scenario 2: One of your athletes comes out on social media. You know (but don't necessarily hear directly) that other athletes are making fun of them.

Potential response(s): Have an individual conversation with the player who came out to let them know you have their back and that they can come to you if they experience any negative actions from other teammates or anyone else. Ask if they'd feel comfortable with you addressing the full team at the next practice to set team norms. If they do, address the full team. If they do not, pull aside the players you hear are making fun of them and have a direct conversation with them about what it means to be respectful.

Scenario 3: You overhear one of your athletes say that a "boy turned into a girl is still a boy" and shouldn't be allowed to play on the girl's team.

Potential response: Address the comment in the moment by asking more questions of the player. Explain the term transgender and that someone's gender identity does not always reflect the sex they were assigned at birth. Consider bringing a training or facilitating a larger conversation to your team about LGBTQ+ identities.

Section 7 Conclusion

10 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Share that you've come to the end of the training where you will solidify learning and next steps. Ask and discuss the first, then second Discussion Question. Conclude by emphasizing appreciation for coaches and coaches' ability to take small and meaningful actions. Share that you are available to keep supporting them.

Discussion Questions:

1. ***What is one way that can commit to being a stronger advocate for LGBTQ+ athletes on your team or beyond?***
2. ***What is one question you still have?***

Coaching Boys INTO MEN®

CoachesCorner.org

Creating Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes

COACH HANDOUT

Warm Up Questions and Important Statistics

Who knows what LGBTQIA+ stands for?

- LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer and/or Questioning. LGBTQ+ refers to those groups that have been marginalized and discriminated against on the basis of sexuality and gender-identity. The + at the end refers to other queer identities that we will define later such as Pansexual, Intersex, Asexual, and Two-Spirit.

Why focus today on LGBTQ+ athletes and relationships in sports and CBIM?

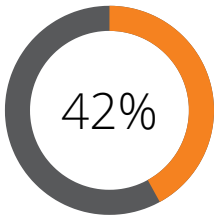
- **Fewer than one-third of LGBTQ youth—only 32%—reported that they had ever participated in sports for a school or community league or club**… fewer than their straight, cisgender peers (1). This points to unwelcoming or unsafe environments.

- **Over 15% of young people are LGBTQ+** (2). Whether our teams have athletes who are out, there are LGBTQ+ athletes on our teams. If our athletes can't be their authentic selves, our teams can't excel.

- **80 percent of LGBQ teenagers and 83 percent of transgender teenagers are not out to their coaches** (3), representing a lack of trust and safety. It's important to create spaces that are affirming and supportive for each of your athletes, because it not only affects the player, but also the team.

- **84% of gay athletes and 82% of lesbian athletes report being targeted with abusive language** such as "faggot" and "dyke." (4) These microaggressions and stereotypes reinforce sexism and harmful gender-related messages, often by falsely equating those with LGBTQ+ identities as more feminine.

- **42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year**, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth (1). Creating affirming environments for LGBTQ+ athletes is critical, especially because sports can play a key role in supporting the health of LGBTQ+ people. Sports positively impact self-esteem, academic success, and sense of belonging (5).



- **There are higher rates of domestic violence and abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships** due to discrimination and trauma (6). It's critical to address LGBTQ+ relationships and be inclusive in our language to teach healthy relationship behaviors and prevent abuse.

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Warm Up Questions and Important Statistics

Surveying in 2021 showed that only 4% of out LGBTQ student-athletes reported feeling comfortable turning to a sports leader or coach for help when they were feeling sad, stressed, or depressed. Why might an LGBTQ+ player feel uncomfortable reaching out for support or sharing their identities with you and/or their teammates?

- **75% of LGBTQ youth reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime**. Additionally, 50% of households don't respect or affirm LGBTQ+ identities or correct gender pronouns. Discrimination and harassment create trauma and distrust, even before looking at sports, specifically.

- **18% of LGBTQ+ athletes reported they heard a sports leader or coach say negative things about people who are LGBTQ**, and 16% reported that they had heard positive things about LGBTQ people from a sports leader or coach (1)

- Even if we as individuals consider ourselves to be supportive of LGBTQ people, **the broader culture of your community or the attitudes of your players can make LGBTQ athletes on your team feel unsafe**. As a coach, you want your team to feel safe and supported.

Sources for statistics: 1. The Trevor Project; 2. Gallup; 3. Human Rights Campaign; 4. Out on the Fields; 5. Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network; 6. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

United States LGBTQ+ Sports Timeline

1972 Title IX is passed, mandating equality for women and girls in education and athletic programs that receive federal funding, making discrimination "on the basis of sex" illegal.

1975 David Kopay, retired NFL running back, becomes the first American professional athlete to publicly identify as gay. Despite his compelling story and LGBTQ+-advocacy post-retirement, this did not change the highly homophobic culture of the NFL.

1976 Renee Richards, a professional tennis player, was outed as transgender and barred from competing in major competitions. She went on to become a major trans rights pioneer.

1981 Billie Jean King, the nationally acclaimed tennis star, was outed by her ex-partner. King said later that the disclosure that she was a lesbian resulted in her losing about $2 million in commercial endorsements from companies that dropped her immediately after learning she was gay.

1982 Olympian Tom Waddell organizes the first Gay Games to create a safe space where LGBT athletes can compete. The International Olympic Committee sues to prevent the games from being called the "Gay Olympics."

1988 MLB Commissioner Bart Giamatti fires Dave Pallone–an umpire–for being gay, cloaking this reason in unsubstantiated allegations that Pallone had sex with a minor. Despite authorities dropping the investigation, Pallone's firing reinforced harmful stereotypes of gay men and that the MLB would not employ gay players or umpires.

1998 ESPN airs their special on TV, "The World of the Gay Athlete," making the issue of LGBT athletes in sports the centerpiece for their coverage in '98 and '99, a new feat for a major news outlet.

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2000

With the help of Martina Navratilova, one of the greatest tennis players of all time who came out as Lesbian in 1981, the Women's Sports Foundations starts the Project to Eliminate Homophobia. The effort was a major collaboration across partners such as the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Gay and Lesbian Education network.

2002

New York Giants tight end star Jeremy Shockey declares on national radio that we would not stand for having a gay teammate, citing that having gay men in the showers with the team, "wouldn't work."

2003

The NCAA initiates their first "sexual orientation in sports" training.

2008

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association enacts the first state-wide policy enabling the participation of transgender athletes in high school sports according to their identified gender.

2013

Jason Collins, an NBA player, becomes the first active athlete to come out as gay in one of the major men's sports (basketball, football, baseball, hockey). Despite praise from peers and President Obama, Collins remains the only active gay player to have been out in the NBA (as of 2021).

2020-2021

In 2020, 18 states introduced legislation that would ban transgender student athletes from participating in school sports. In 2021, 31 states introduced similar legislation, marking a severe uptick in anti-trans.

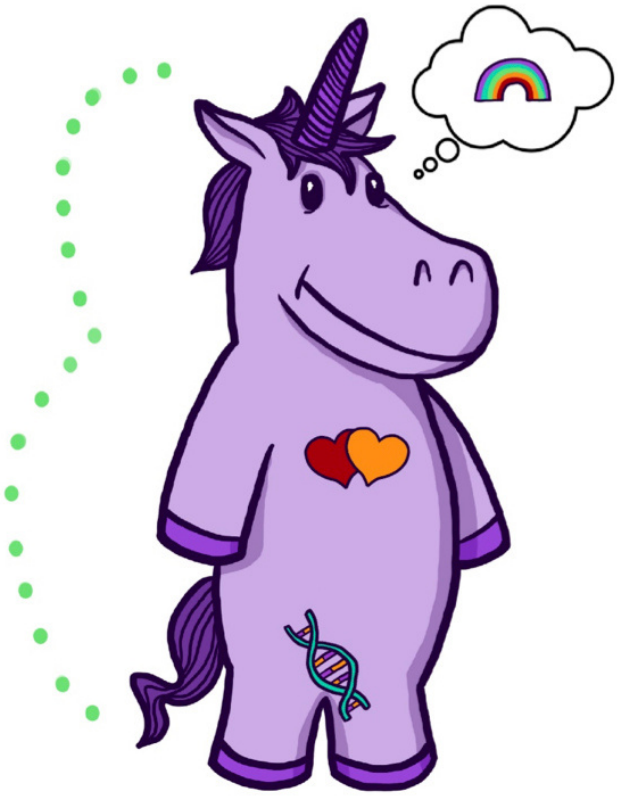
2021

- 186 openly-LGBTQ+ athletes compete at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, more than all previous Summer Olympics combined. This number included the first openly transgender athletes to compete at the Olympics. Of these 186 athletes, women outnumbered men 9-to-1.
- Many professional teams in the U.S. celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month. While some leagues had celebrated for years with shirts or events, 2021 marked a large increase. The NFL temporarily changed its logo's colors to rainbow, which many fans threatened to boycott the league over.

Timeline Sources: Out on the Fields; Iowa Safe Schools; OutSports

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: TSER Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

Female | Male | Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

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Gender Identity:	One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same. Common gender identities include man, woman, and non-binary.
Non-binary or Genderqueer:	Nonbinary is an umbrella term for people whose gender is beyond the binary of woman or man. Nonbinary people may or may not transition physically, legally, or socially. Generally, nonbinary people are considered under the transgender umbrella because they do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, but may or may not identify as transgender specifically.
Gender Expression /Presentation:	The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.
Sex Assigned at Birth:	The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" because chromosomes do not always determine genitalia, sex, or gender.
Physically Attracted To:	Sexual orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. Sexual orientations include: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Pansexual.
Emotionally Attracted To:	Romantic/emotional orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. There are other types of attraction related to gender such as aesthetical or platonic. These are simply two common forms of attraction.
Pansexual:	A person who experiences sexual, romantic, or physical attraction to members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

Definition Sources: Definitions from One Love's LGBTQ+ Workshop, Trans Student Educational Resources, and the LGBTQIA Resource Center at UC Davis.

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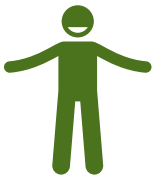
Practices to Create Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes:

Provide Ongoing Support for Athletes, Discreetly and Publicly
Building trust with your athletes through consistently showing you care and will check-in on their wellbeing is a good step towards supporting LGBTQ+ athletes, even if they are not out. When athletes do choose to share their sexual or gender identities, it's important to respect their choices about who knows this information and ask questions like, "Do you want to be connected to more resources?."

Make It Clear that Homophobic and Transphobic Language and Behaviors are Unacceptable
The coach establishes the norms for what is ok and not on their team. By stepping in when you hear terms used derogatively like "gay," "pussy," "dyke," or "tranny," you can affirm for LGBTQ+ athletes that they have advocates in their corner and prevent this abuse from happening again.

Use Gender and Sexuality-Inclusive Language When Discussing Relationships
When only heterosexual relationships are referenced, it makes these relationships the norm, excluding queer relationships. Unhealthy and abusive dynamics also occur within LGBTQ+ relationships, so it is important for our scenarios and language to discuss what healthy and safe relationships look like for everyone. Don't assume the gender of your team's romantic partners.



Affirm All LGBTQ+ Athletes Through Terminology, Education, and Resources
Make it clear that everyone is included on your team (within, or regardless of, the bounds of your local policies). Using LGBTQ+ terminology accurately, educating on LGBTQ+ issues, and having affirming messages/posters communicates your support, even if athletes don't mention it. Providing LGBTQ+ resources (local and national) during practice or in your office can be life saving.

Practices to Create Healthy Environments for LGBTQ+ Athletes:

Normalize Sharing Gender Pronouns & Acknowledging Our Mistakes
Trans and non-binary youth are much more likely to experience depression or attempt suicide if their households or other adults don't use or affirm their correct gender pronouns (*Trevor Project)*. Sharing gender pronouns (at the beginning of the season, for example) and addressing mistakes demonstrates that we understand the importance to trans and non-binary athletes (and, that it's ok to not know everything!)

- Note: If useful, go over examples of how to use gender-neutral pronouns such as They/Them. Ask coaches who are comfortable to share their pronouns.

Take the Lead from LGBTQ+ Athletes and Educators
Just like we want athletes to mirror a coach's instructions, it's important to mirror the language people want to describe their gender and sexuality (it's always ok to ask!). Addressing requests or issues from LGBTQ+ teammates also shows that you take the issue seriously. Additionally, consider partnering with local LGBTQ+ organizations or student groups who can provide education or resources for your team.

★ Additional Considerations for Schools & Athletic Departments

- Creating Athletic Department or Team videos (PSAs) that show your support for LGBTQ+ people and student-athletes.
- Supporting LGBTQ+ events on campus (such as National Coming Out Day or Pride Week) by encouraging athletes to attend and contribute.
- Create partnerships with local LGBTQ+ organizations or student groups to provide resources, share events, and offer educational sessions.

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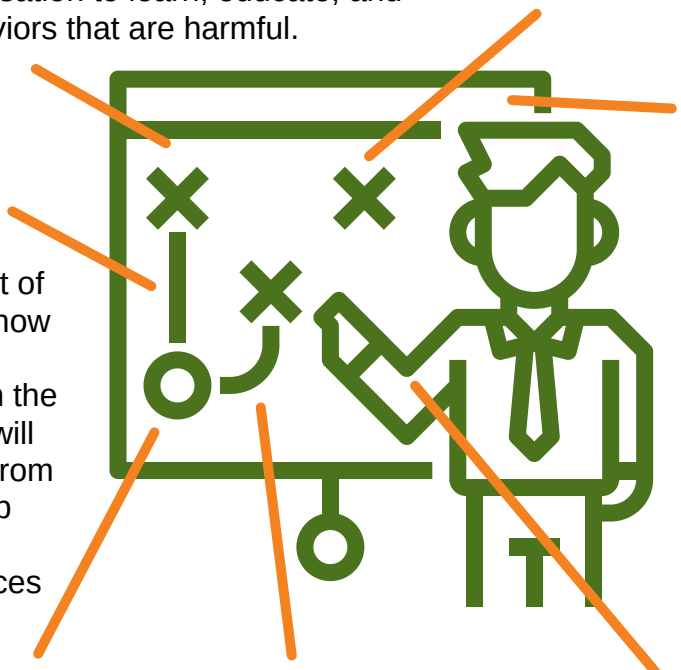
Best Practices for Intervening in Anti-LGBTQ+ Instances

1. Use Different Techniques To Match The Situation

Direct response, redirection, public statements, and separate conversations are all important tools. It's critical to never let a moment of anti-LGBTQ+ language, assumptions, or general disrespect go unaddressed. Sometimes this means speaking out in the moment and sometimes it means addressing these situations after the fact. It can be as simple as saying, "That's not ok"." It can (and should) be as deep as opening conversation to learn, educate, and change ideas and behaviors that are harmful.

2. Use Your Own Style & Language

There is no "perfect" response to these and other situations. Everyone will respond in our own ways based on our personalities and our identities. Every situation is contextual to our relationships with the others involved--refs, coaches, athletes, parents, and more. All our responses must represent integrity, respect, and the intention to positively address anti-LGBTQ+ abuse.



3. Check-In With And Provide Support For Those Hurt

If someone uses anti-LGBTQ+ language in front of or to someone who you know is LGBTQ+, check in with them, affirm their place on the team, let them know you will take actions to prevent it from happening again, and help them seek out gender or sexuality-affirming resources if needed.

4. Explain The Difference Between Intent And Impact

Regardless of someone's intent, it does not negate the impact that it might have on someone else. It's important to acknowledge the harm that the comment had. Instead of correcting someone outright, try to make it a learning moment and break down why the comment was harmful and build the social-emotional skills of your athletes.

5. Be Prepared To Educate On LGBTQ+ Issues & Debunk Myths

Often, harassment comes from insecurity and is learned behavior. Ask players why they used hurtful language and address the emotions and stereotypes underneath. As an advocate for LGBTQ+ players, it's important to be ready with statistics and information to prevent the spread of stereotypes and myths. Check out One Love's LGBTQ-Inclusive Facilitation Toolkit for a list of statistics.

6. Focus On The Behavior, Not The Person

People often shut down when someone points out the harm they may have caused in a comment. The goal of being an advocate for LGBTQ+ players isn't to shame others for causing harm. When addressing gay-bashing or anti-trans myths, for example, focus on the impact of the specific behavior rather than what is wrong with the individual.

7. Find Others Who Can Support You And Your Values

As a coach, you are not expected to always know the right thing to do or say in the moment. Find support from others in your life as local partners like counselors and advocates who can talk through questions or even support your facilitation.

Role Play Scenarios

Scenario 1: One of your athletes yells "you're so gay!" to a teammate in the locker room..

Scenario 2: One of your athletes comes out on social media. You know (but don't necessarily hear directly) that other athletes are making fun of them.

Scenario 3: You overhear one of your athletes say that a "boy turned into a girl is still a boy" and shouldn't be allowed to play on the girl's team.