

# YOUNG ATHLETE: SPEAKING UP IN BASKETBALL

## Barriers to speaking up in basketball

There are many barriers to speaking up and raising concerns in basketball. We want to reduce or remove these barriers, so you feel comfortable and confident to tell us about your experiences, especially if those experiences have made you or someone else feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Perhaps these examples are familiar to you:

- Being unsure about whether the behaviour or experience is wrong
- Second guessing yourself
- Fear of not being believed
- Trying to raise concerns before and being shut down
- Shame, guilt, embarrassment
- Fear of further harm
- Fear of retribution
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of impact on career

## Power imbalances.

There is a huge power imbalance in sport, particularly in the elite or semi elite environment. This power imbalance makes it **easier** for poor, inappropriate or prohibited behaviour to occur and **harder** for young athletes to speak up and raise concerns or issues, big or small.

You have the right to be heard and have your views taken seriously in basketball. The adults in basketball must reduce or remove barriers to make it safe for you to speak up.



## Tips for speaking up in basketball

*The following section was developed in consultation with former athlete Sam. Sam played basketball at community and state representative level in Australia and spent three years in the US college system. Sam is a psychology student and shares his personal and professional insights into improving the safety and wellbeing of young athletes in basketball.*

### Raising concerns with teammates:

- Lean on your teammates for guidance. They may have the same concerns and together you can navigate a way to approach it.

### Approaching the Coach:

- Approaching the coach respectfully, when you are calm and at a time where they are not distracted by other things or people.
- Speaking up can be intimidating, so you could write down your concerns or questions, on paper or in a text or email.

### Utilising Moderators:

- Sometimes, in high-stakes situations (e.g., scholarships, job opportunities), you may feel like too much is at stake to raise issues, and it could influence your coaches' decisions.
- Utilising a moderator or neutral third party—like a mentor or team manager—can help mediate the conversation. Maybe avoid using parents as a moderator, they might advocate for you, but they can also be quite emotive and create further challenges.

### Speaking to a Professional:

- Seeking professional advice from a therapist, psychologist or the Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement (AWE) team can help you organise your thoughts and concerns in a neutral space. This allows you to focus on your well-being and gain perspective, especially when the pressure feels overwhelming.

### Talking to teammates or other athletes:

- Speaking to people who understand your situation can be incredibly valuable, as they can empathise with you and validate your feelings. This kind of connection can help alleviate sadness, guilt, and shame, while also fostering friendships and promoting a more positive outlook on life.
- It is important to ensure that this kind of conversation does not undermine the team, your teammates, or the coach, as that can be harmful to the team dynamic.

### If you feel the urge to talk about someone, that is great. Be mindful of:

- who you speak to (someone trustworthy and independent)
- where you are saying it (a space that is confidential and private) and
- what it is you are saying (clear, non-judgmental, and respectful).

## 1. CHECK IN:

Regardless of where it might be happening, the first thing you should do is CHECK IN with that person and see if they are ok or if there is anything you can do to help.

**Call 000 if immediate risk to safety**

## 2. LISTEN IN:

- Provide a safe and confidential space
- Reassure them they are doing the right thing
- Don't make promises especially promises to keep secrets
- Just listen, avoid questions all together, especially those that can be leading
- Remind them it's not their fault and that you will take it seriously

## 3. STEP IN:

If you have information that a child or young person has been harmed, or is at risk of harm or abuse, you are required to step in.

There are several ways you can do this:

- Raise it internally at your club or association – a Child Safeguarding Officer or Member Protection Officer, a committee member or your president.
- Contact your state/territory association.
- Contact Basketball Australia
- Report to Basketball Australia Integrity Unit via email [integrity@australia.basketball](mailto:integrity@australia.basketball)
- Report via STOPLINE, Basketball Australia's independent reporting hotline which at the discretion of the reporter may be made anonymously:



Scan the QR code for more information or to make a report.

