Investigating Equity-Denied Sport Stakeholders' Perspectives of the Barriers and Facilitators to Experiencing Safe Sport

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Abstract

Despite Canada's increasing efforts to advance Safe Sport through education, policy development, and the establishment of an independent reporting mechanism, maltreatment persists in sport, disproportionately impacting equity-denied groups such as women, persons with disabilities, and individuals from the 2SLGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. To better understand the apparent ineffectiveness of Safe Sport in protecting equity-denied groups, this study aimed to explore the barriers and facilitators to experiencing Safe Sport as perceived by equity-denied sport stakeholders. Conducted using a mixed-methodology approach, data were collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews. In total, 71 participants, including high-performance athletes, coaches, and sport administrators, completed a 15-minute online survey, while 23 participants, including 8 sport administrators, 3 sport administrator/coaches, 5 coaches, and 7 athletes, participated in individual semi-structured interviews ranging between 36 to 118 minutes. Both survey and interview data identified numerous barriers, including limited support for equity-denied groups, inadequate funding and resources, patriarchal structures in sport, educational and policy gaps, conflicting definitions of Safe Sport, fragmented approaches to Safe Sport, tokenism, and inequitable hiring practices, to name a few. Conversely, identified facilitators included improving representation, conducting community outreach, mandating training, maintaining an open mind, providing mentorship, and centring equity-denied voices in Safe Sport decisions. Informed by the data, recommendations to advance Safe Sport for equity-denied sport stakeholders encompass reconceptualizing Safe Sport as Safeguarding Sport, designing, implementing, and enforcing comprehensive EDI policies, prioritizing EDI in leadership positions, developing comprehensive and mandatory education, and increasing knowledge mobilization and dissemination efforts.

Introduction

In response to growing public awareness and research concerning maltreatment in sport, there has been an increase in legislative and organizational initiatives worldwide aimed at advancing Safe Sport[1] (MacPherson et al., 2022). While the development of these initiatives is seen as progress, ongoing reports of harm suggest inadequate enforcement and integration in practice (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Kerr et al., 2020; Willson et al., 2022). More specifically, there is growing apprehension that such initiatives do not extend to, or consider, the unique safety needs of athletes, coaches, and sport administrators from equity-denied groups[2] (Gurgis et al., 2022b). Despite equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies being justified as tools to reduce exclusion (Frisby & Ponic, 2013), increase participation (Spaaij et al., 2014), and minimize self-selection out of participation (Shahzadi, 2018), EDI policies have done little to enhance experiences of inclusion or affirmation (Peers et al., 2023). Education has also been recommended as a way in which to encourage prevention, intervention, and behavioural change in the sport context, yet several limitations persist (Brackenridge & Rhind 2014; Kerr et al. 2014; Willson et al., 2022). For example, education about EDI and how to foster positive environments in sport for all participants remains largely absent and thus has been criticized for enforcing a 'one size fits all' approach to advancing Safe Sport (Gurgis et al., 2022b; MacPherson et al., 2022). Further, independent reporting mechanisms developed in various countries to provide sport participants

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[1] Safe Sport is understood as the collective and interdependent measures to prevent relational harm (e.g., maltreatment), prevent environmental and physical harm (e.g., antidoping, injury prevention, ensuring safe equipment), and optimize the sport environment (e.g., ensuring sport is fair, accessible, respectful, and rights-based) (Gurgis et al., 2023).

[2] Equity-denied refers to a group of individuals who, due to systemic forms of discrimination, experience barriers that interfere with their ability to access resources and opportunities typically accessed by other members of society. These groups include, for example, those who identify as women/girls, and/or part of the BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+, and parasport communities (Government of Canada, 2024).

with a safe place to report various instances of harm without fear of repercussions, have been criticized for the inequitable access to all sport stakeholders and levels (MacPherson et al., 2022).

The exclusion of equity-denied participants' voices in the development and advancement of Safe Sport initiatives challenges the ability to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive experiences for all and is deeply concerning when considering these individuals are at increased risk of experiencing various types of harm including maltreatment (Dixon & Kerr, 2023; U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021). For instance, parasport athletes endure numerous incidences of interpersonal and systemic violence, including psychological abuse, financial abuse, neglect, exclusion, and disability stigma (Dixon, 2023; Gurgis et al., 2022b; Kerr et al., 2019; Rutland et al., 2022). Women also report significantly more experiences of all forms of maltreatment compared to men (U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021) and have consistently been excluded from positions of leadership in sport (Burton & Leberman, 2017). Researchers examining the perspectives of gender and sexual minority athletes (i.e., 2SLGBTQI+) across several countries have found that more than 80% of these athletes experienced homophobia in sport (Denison & Kitchen, 2015; Menzel et al., 2019). Further, racialized athletes, coaches, and administrators have reported experiencing anti-inclusive behaviors such as exclusion, invalidations, discrimination, and culturally insensitive sport programming (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Joseph et al., 2021; U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2021). These findings point to the violation of human rights experienced by equity-denied groups in sport, resulting in physically and psychologically unsafe sporting environments (Heerdt & Rook, 2022).

In Canada, the country of focus in the current research project, several efforts have been made to advance Safe Sport for all. Safe Sport initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS), education (e.g., Safe Sport Training), independent complaint management pathways (Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner; OSIC), and support services (e.g., Abus-Free Sport Helpline; Gurgis & Kerr, 2021; Kerr et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been called into question. Canada's independent reporting mechanism OSIC, which was established to offer a secure avenue for reporting harm without the fear of retaliation (MacPherson et al., 2022; Strashin & Ward, 2023), has recently faced scrutiny for its responses to recent allegations of coach misconduct (Westhead, 2023) and remains limited it terms of its coverage across all Canadian sport levels (Baxter, 2023). Challenges in effectively addressing the complex and systemic issues of maltreatment in Canadian sport for those who identify as equity-denied specifically, persist (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Joseph et al., 2021; Willson et al., 2021). Across Ontario University Athletics (OUA) only 28.7% of student-athletes were BIPOC (Joseph et al., 2021) and more broadly among the 56 Canadian universities that compete in U Sports, about 10% of 400 leadership positions were held by BIPOC individuals and only one of the 56 schools had a non-White athletic director (Heroux & Strashin, 2020). Further, a recent report revealed that 25% of Canadians felt racism and discrimination were problems in sport; racialized individuals (26%) were more likely than their non-racialized counterparts (15%) to have experienced or witnessed racism, discrimination or unfair treatment while playing a sport (Statistics Canada, 2024). Collectively, these findings highlight disparities in the extent to which equity-denied sport stakeholders may experience safe, welcoming, and inclusive sport in Canada.

Rationale and Objectives

The maltreatment experienced by equity-denied groups have been labeled as a continuous infringement of human rights that disregards the arduous experiences endured by stakeholders with marginalized intersecting identities (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Kidd & Donnelly, 2000). The existence of inequitable power dynamics within sport, as well as the documented experiences of maltreatment among equity-denied sport stakeholders, highlight the urgent need for effective Safe Sport initiatives to confront the systemic and oppressive barriers that prevent these groups from accessing safe, equitable, and inclusive sport. To address research gaps related to the perceived ineffectiveness of Safe Sport in facilitating optimal sport experiences for equity-denied groups (Gurgis et al., 2022b), this study aimed to identify equity-denied stakeholders' perspectives on the barriers and facilitators that influence overall Safe Sport experiences. The research questions guiding this study are as follows: 1) What barriers prevent equity-denied sport stakeholders from experiencing Safe Sport? 2) What facilitators promote Safe Sport experiences for equity-denied sport stakeholders? and, 3) What recommendations do equity-denied stakeholders have for enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of Safe Sport initiatives in Canada?

Methodology

A pragmatic paradigmatic approach**,** which encourages researchers to select methodologies and methods appropriate to the specific problem and/or research questions (Smith et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014) was adopted for this project. This approach views knowledge as grounded in experience, contextual, and action-based and is consistent with studies implementing mixed-methods research designs (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Accordingly, the study used a sequential mixed methods design; the use of mixed methods

research provides researchers with the flexibility to employ both quantitative (e.g., surveys) and

qualitative (e.g., semi-structured interviews) methods, allowing for a more comprehensive

approach to meet the study's objectives (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, in a sequential mixed

methods research design, the data collected through one approach inform the data collection of

the other approach (Venkatesh et al., 2013). The present study utilized both quantitative

(surveys) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods and provided both breadth and

depth of information regarding the barriers and facilitators to advancing safe, inclusive, and

equitable sport, for equity-denied stakeholders. As such, a sequential mixed methods design

informed by a pragmatic paradigm was deemed appropriate.

Participants

Survey

Collectively, the survey sampled included 71 respondents. See Table 1. Survey

Participant Demographics, for a breakdown of who participated in the online survey.

Table 1

Survey Participant Demographics

Group/Sample	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Ethnicity	Disability	Level
Athlete: 52	18-29: 50 30-39: 1 40-49: 1	M: 17 W: 35	Asexual: 1 Bisexual: 5 DND: 2 Heterosexual: 44	Arab: 1 Black: 2 Chinese: 4 Filipino: 3 Indian: 1 Indigenous: 2 Latin American: 1 Southeast Asian: 15 Vietnamese: 1 White: 22	DND: 2 ID: 1 MHD: 3 No: 45 VD: 1	National: 5 PS: 42 Provincial: 3 Professional: 2
Coach: 12	18-29: 5 30-39: 3 40-49: 1 50-59: 2 60+: 1	M: 3 W: 9	Bisexual: 1 Gay: 1 Heterosexual: 9 Lesbian: 1	Chinese: 1 Filipino: 1 Indigenous: 1 Latin American: 1	ID: 1 MHD: 2 No: 9	National: 3 PS: 2 Professional: 1 Provincial: 6

				White: 8		
Sport Admin.: 7	40-49: 5 50-59: 1 60+: 1	M: 3 W: 4	DND: 2 Gay: 1 Heterosexual: 4	Chinese: 1 Indigenous: 1 White: 5	ID: 1 MHD: 1 No: 5	National: 1 PS: 1 Provincial: 5

Note: DND: Did Not Disclose; ID: Invisible Disability; MHD: Mental Health Disability; PS: Post-secondary; VD: Visible Disability

Among the three groups, several sports were represented, including: Artistic Swimming (2), Athletics (5), Badminton (10), Baseball (2), Basketball (3), Canoe (1), Climbing (2), Cricket (5), Cross-Country Skiing (2), Curling (2), Field Hockey (2), Figure Skating (1), Football (3), Hockey (11), Judo (1), Lacrosse (3), Rowing (2), Rugby (3), Soccer (6), Softball (2), Squash (1) Swimming (4), Table Tennis (2), Tennis (3), Volleyball (6), Water Polo (2), and Wrestling (1).

Semi-Structured Interviews

A total of 23 equity-denied sport stakeholders participated in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. See Table 2. Interviewee Demographics, for more detail.

Table 2

Interviewee Demographics

Pseudonym	Role	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Ethnicity	Level of Sport	Sport
Amy	Administrator	50	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Provincial	Multisport
Olivia	Administrator	34	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Professional	Wrestling
Laniece	Administrator	41	Woman	Heterosexual	Black	Post-Secondary	Multisport
Mackenzie	Administrator	26	Woman	Heterosexual	White	National	Nordiq Skiing
Janice	Administrator	63	Woman	Heterosexual	Black	Provincial, Post-Secondary, National	Swimming
Habiba	Administrator	50+	Woman	Heterosexual	South Asian	National	Golf
Betty	Administrator	46	Woman	Queer	Black	Post-secondary	Athletics
Eunice	Administrator	44	Woman	Heterosexual	Indigenous	Provincial	Multisport
Emma	Administrator/ Coach	30	Woman	Heterosexual	White	National	Water Polo

Maria	Administrator & Coach	54	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Provincial	Softball
Jordan	Administrator & Coach	32	Man	Gay	White	National	Water Polo
Abbie	Coach	30	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Post-Secondary	Lacrosse
Lana	Coach	31	Woman	Bisexual	Black	Post-secondary	Swimming
Saffiya	Coach	55	Woman	Heterosexual	Black	National	Volleyball
Riham	Coach	19	Woman	Heterosexual	White/Filipino	Post-Secondary	Basketball
Albert	Coach	52	Man	Heterosexual	Indigenous	Provincial	Hockey
Janvi	Athlete	19	Woman	Heterosexual	Indian	Post-Secondary	Badminton
Robert	Athlete	24	Man	Heterosexual	Black	Post-Secondary	Basketball
Kim	Athlete	22	Woman	Lesbian	Chinese	Post-Secondary	Rowing
Ted	Athlete	18	Man	Heterosexual	Black	Post-Secondary	Baseball
Monica	Athlete	23	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Post-Secondary	Para-Swimming
Katrina	Athlete	21	Woman	Heterosexual	White	Post-Secondary	Hockey
Jamie	Athlete	22	Man	Gay	White	Post-Secondary	Swimming

Recruitment

Following ethical approval from the Research Ethics Boards of Nipissing University, Ontario Tech University, and the University of Toronto, efforts were made to contact a diverse sample of equity-denied sport stakeholders, including athletes, coaches, and administrators who identify as women or with the BIPOC, 2SLGBTQI+, and Para-communities to participate in an online anonymous survey and/or semi-structured interview[3]. Several sport organizations (e.g., Coaching Association of Canada, Canadian Olympic Committee, Coaches Association of Ontario, Ontario University Athletics EDI Committee, as well as every NSO funded by Sport

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[3] While our initial plan was to organize focus groups, logistical challenges (e.g., PI changing institutions, delayed ethics approval, conflicting schedules among participants) hindered our coordination efforts. Consequently, we opted for semi-structured interviews as we deemed this method a suitable alternative for generating in-depth insights to enhance our comprehension of the research questions at hand.

Canada[4]) were contacted to promote study information through their email listserv and social media accounts[5]. Prior to completing the online survey, participants were required to complete a pre-screening eligibility checklist. Once eligibility was confirmed, participants were directed to a separate page where they were required to read a letter of information, which further addressed their rights as participants and study requirements. Consent to participate in the evaluation was assumed if the participants completed the survey. Following the completion of the survey, interested participants were asked to provide their contact information for a follow up semi-structured interview. Participants who met the following criteria were eligible to participate in the survey and semi-structured interview: 1) Canadian resident; 2) 18 years or older; 3) Current high-performance athlete, coach, or sport administrator; and 4) Identify with an equity-denied group (e.g., woman, person with a disability, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQI+).

Data Collection

Online Surveys

An anonymous online survey was used to gather data from equity-denied athletes, coaches, and sport administrators to examine their perspectives on the barriers and facilitators to advancing Safe Sport for marginalized groups. A combination of closed-ended Likert scale questions (i.e., Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither disagree nor agree, Agree, Strongly agree) and open-ended survey questions were asked. Specifically, the athletes', coaches', and administrators' perspectives on topics which included but are not limited to the extent to which EDI is prioritized in sport, Safe Sport experiences, and recommendation to advance Safe Sport,

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[4] https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/sport-organizations/national.html
[5] Despite numerous efforts to recruit a large sample of equity-denied participants, we saw limited uptake for the survey portion of the study. There are several plausible explanations for this outcome including survey fatigue post-COVID as well as recent reports that equity-denied participants are hesitant to devote time and effort to share their experiences when they feel as though little change has occurred in sport.

were examined. The survey was disseminated via Google Forms which was linked to the

principal investigator's secure university account and was available from (August 22, 2023, to

March 15, 2024[6]). Surveys took approximately 15 minutes to complete and were completely

anonymously.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a common qualitative research method; specifically, for

the purpose of the current study semi-structured interviews were used to generate in-depth

information on the barriers and facilitators to Safe Sport for equity-denied stakeholders and,

more importantly, to empower their voices. (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). All 22 interviews were

conducted online and ranged between 36-118 minutes. With the participants' consent, each

interview was audio recorded. To assist in developing the rapport necessary for open dialogue,

interviews were led by the primary author and research assistants who identify as members of

equity-denied groups. Open-ended questions were asked throughout the semi-structured

interview providing participants an opportunity to share their perspectives on barriers and

facilitators to the advancement of Safe Sport. Broadly, topics of interest focused on

understanding their perspectives of Safe Sport, the nature and quality of their Safe Sport

experiences as well as challenges and recommendations for advancing safer sport environments.

Sample questions include, "What are the perceived barriers to experiencing Safe Sport?" "What

are the perceived facilitators to experiencing Safe Sport?" "What are your recommendations to

enhance the representation of equity-denied sport stakeholders in sport?"

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[6] For this report, data collection for the survey concluded on March 15th to allow ample time for interpreting the findings. However, we intend to keep the survey open in hopes of gathering additional responses.

Data Analysis

Surveys

Descriptive and inferential analyses were employed to analyze the survey data (Thomas et al., 2022). The results from the survey helped to inform the interviews questions and discussions; specifically, this approach allowed the research team to probe emerging areas of interest and revise questions, ensuring that a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and facilitators to the advancement of Safe Sport and equity-denied stakeholders' perspectives were adequately represented (Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Upon completion of each interview, data were transcribed verbatim. All personal identifiers were removed, and pseudonyms were used at the point of transcription and during the interpretation of results. Data were interpreted using a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun et al., 2019). Researchers who use reflexive thematic analysis are often motivated by social justice matters and endeavour to give voice to equity-denied research participants (Braun et al., 2019). As such, a reflexive thematic analysis approach was appropriate for the current study as the research team recognized the inequities affecting certain individuals and/or groups in sport and were motivated to analyze the research findings with these participants to improve understanding of ways in which to foster Safe Sport for all. The reflexive thematic analysis approach consisted of six-steps: familiarizing oneself with the data, developing systematic and succinct codes, constructing preliminary themes, revising themes, defining themes, and eventually writing the final report (Braun et al., 2019). Data retrieved through participant interviews were organized and interpreted into meaning units, categories, and overarching themes.

Results

The following results section presents data collected from the anonymous online survey and the semi-structured interviews regarding equity-denied stakeholders' perspectives on the barriers and facilitators that influence overall Safe Sport experiences. The survey data outlined here refer to specific topics/data points (e.g., experiences of harm in sport, perceptions of Safe Sport, barriers to achieving Safe Sport) and additional survey data are available upon request. Please note that the survey data should be interpreted within the context of the limited sample size. Further, the data from the semi-structured interviews are organized into the following higher-order themes: Conceptualizing Safe Sport, Barriers to Safe Sport, Facilitators to Safe Sport, and Recommendations for Advancing Safe Sport.

Survey Data

Addressing Issues of Harm in Sport

Athletes, coaches, and sport administrators were asked to reflect on the extent to which they felt comfortable discussing issues of discrimination and/or maltreatment within their current sport environment. Across the sample groups, most of the participants did not feel comfortable (i.e., disagreed or strongly disagreed) addressing issues of discrimination or maltreatment (e.g., abuse, neglect, harassment, hazing, assault) in sport (Figures 1 & 2). These findings highlight the culture of silence in sport; specifically, athletes, coaches, and sport administrators often fear the potential or actual repercussions for speaking out (Lang & Hartill, 2015; Willson et al., 2021).

Figure 1

Perceived Comfort in Addressing Discrimination (n=71)

I feel comfortable raising issues of discrimination within my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Athlete	2	5	5	21	19
Coach	0	2	1	6	3
Sport Administrator	1	1	1	2	2
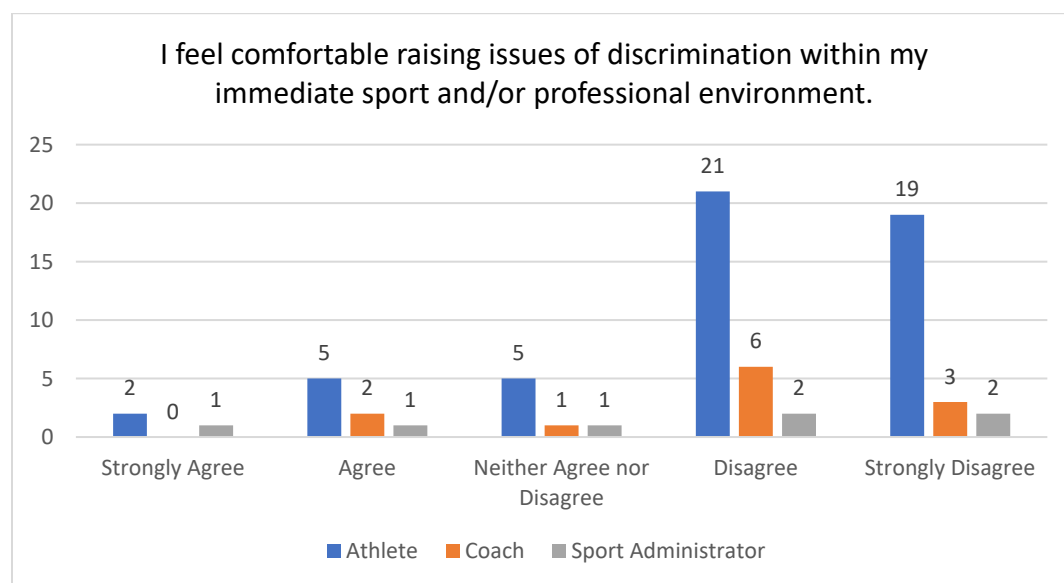
Figure 2

Perceived Comfort in Addressing Maltreatment (n=71)

I feel comfortable raising issues of maltreatment (e.g., abuse, neglect, harassment, hazing, assault) within my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Athlete	2	3	4	15	28
Coach	1	2	1	3	5
Sport Administrator	0	2	1	3	1
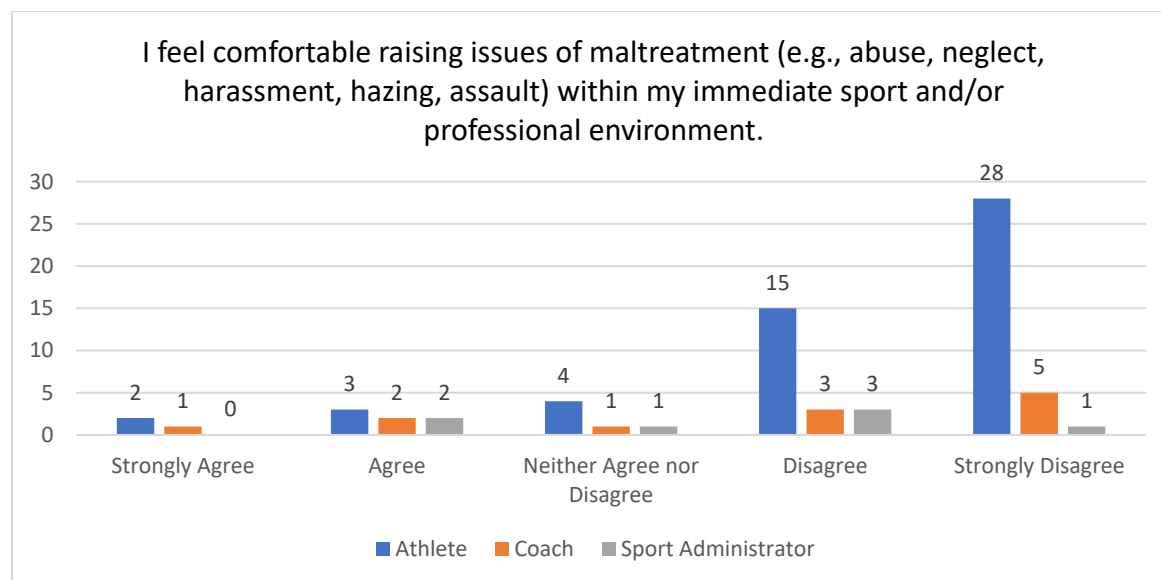
Experiences of Harm in Sport

The athletes, coaches, and sport administrators were asked to reflect on their personal experiences within the sport context. Across the various questions asked, name calling, insults,

or discriminatory jokes (Figure 3); criticisms (Figure 4); and microaggressions (e.g., covert, subtle, or brief interactions that communicate hostile, stigmatized or negative attitudes) related to their identity (Figure 5), were the most common forms of harm experienced by the participants. These experiences of harm support previous findings which highlight discrimination, stereotypical attitudes, and microaggressions as prevalent experiences for equity-denied stakeholders in high-performance sport contexts (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Joseph et al., 2021; U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2021).

Figure 3

Experiences with Name Calling, Insults or Discriminatory Jokes (n=71)
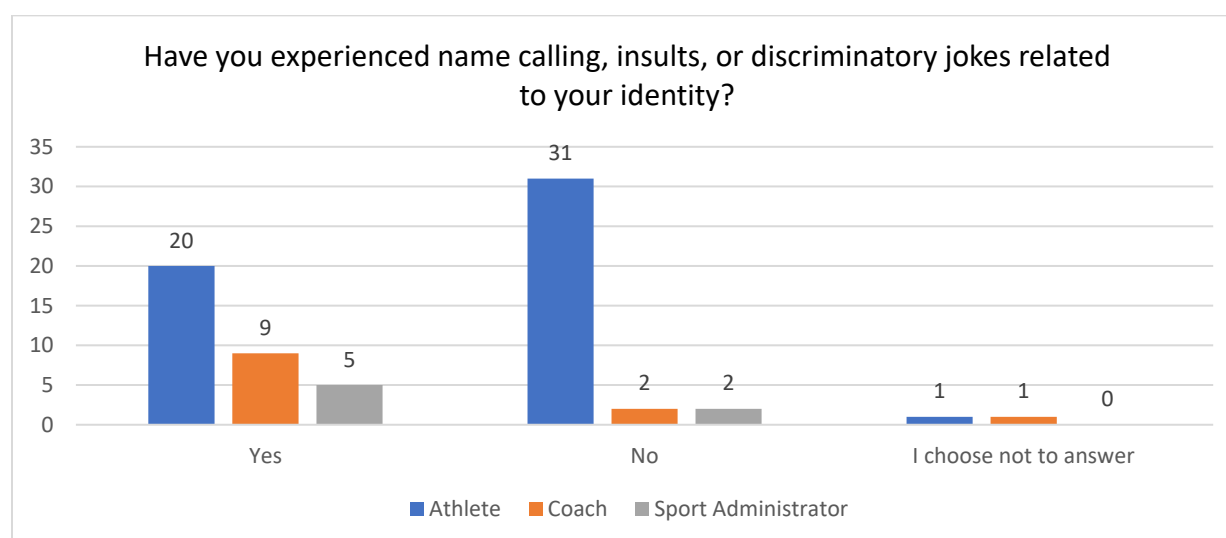
Figure 4

Experiences with Criticism (n=71)

Have you experienced criticism related to your identity?
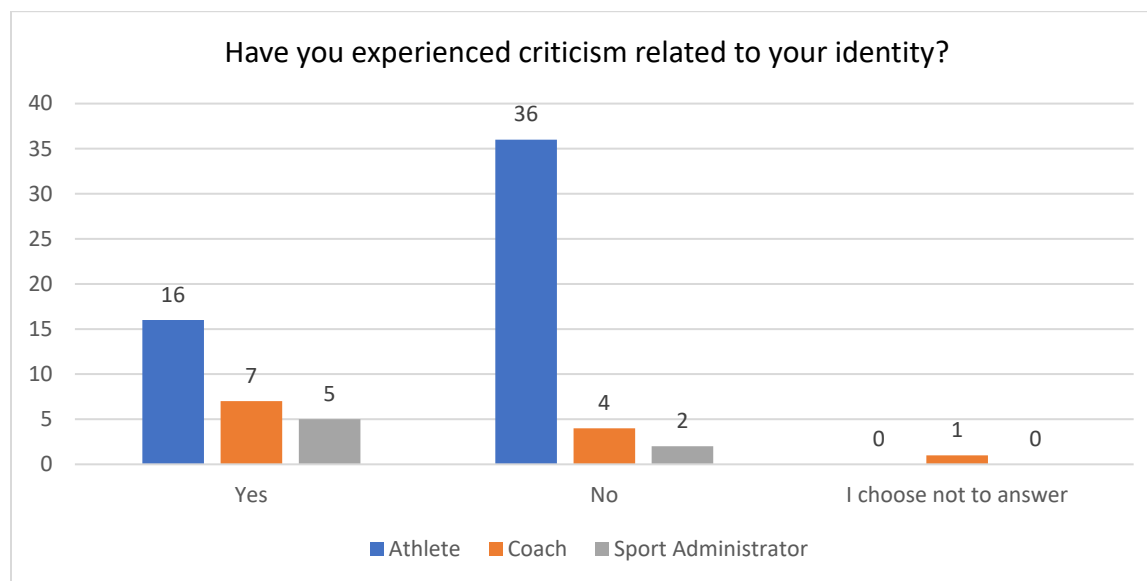
Figure 5

Experiences with Microaggressions (n=71)

Have you experienced microaggressions related to your identity?
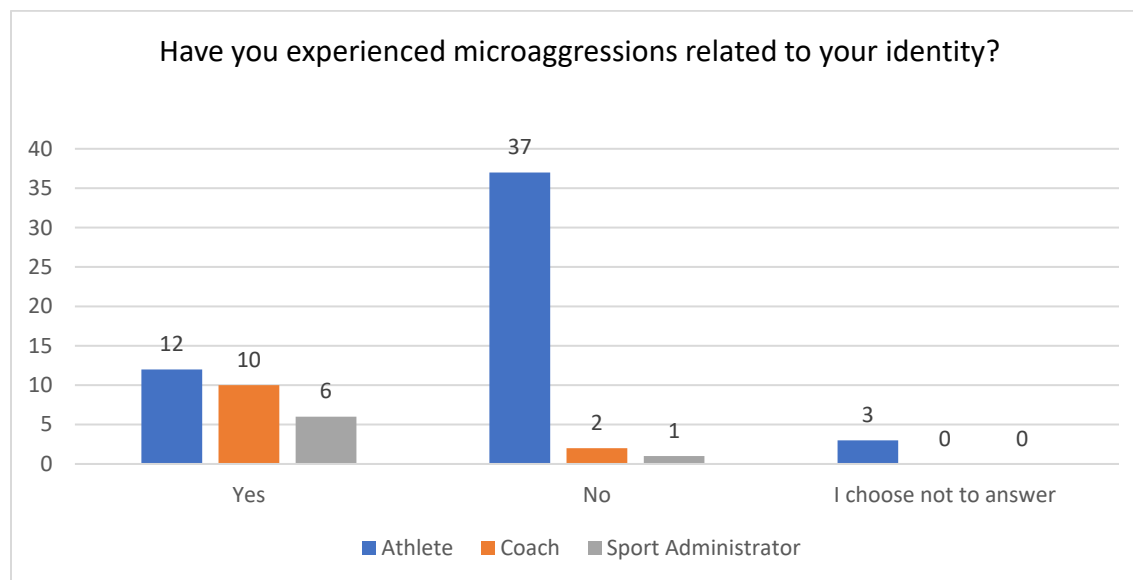
Other forms of harm that were experienced less frequently by the athletes, coaches, and sport administrators included being intentionally ignored (Figure 6), degrading and humiliating acts (Figure 7), and physical aggression or threats (Figure 8) related to their identity.

Figure 6

Experiences Being Intentionally Ignored (n=71)

Have you been intentionally ignored due to your identity?
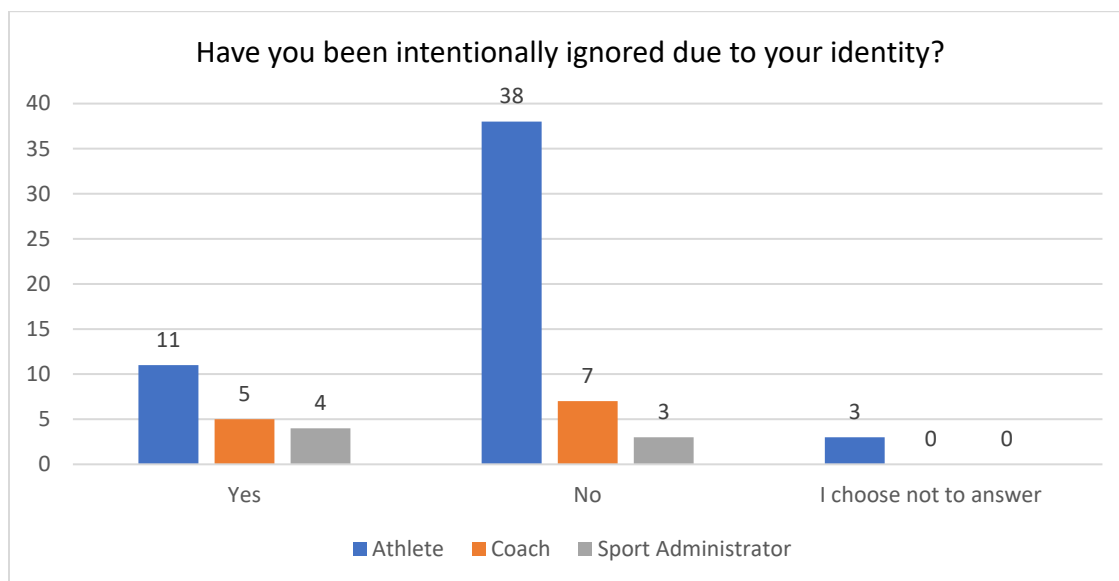
Figure 7

Experiences Engaging in Degrading/Humiliating Activities (n=71)

Have you been forced to engage in degrading/humiliating activities as a result of your identity (e.g., hazing)?
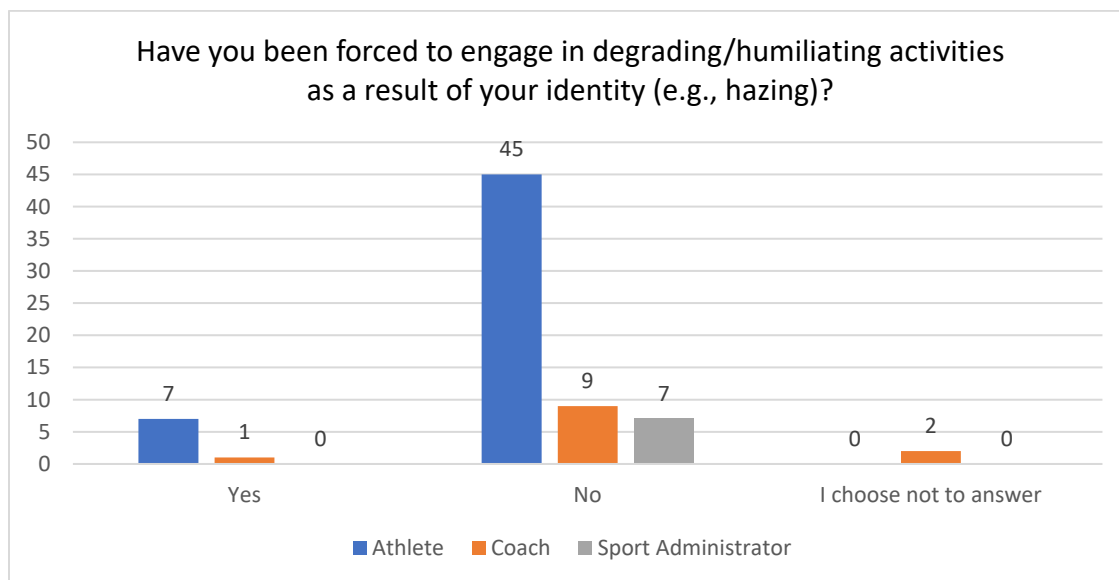
Figure 8

Experiences with Physical Aggression and Threats (n=71)

Have you experienced physical aggression or physical threats due to your identity?
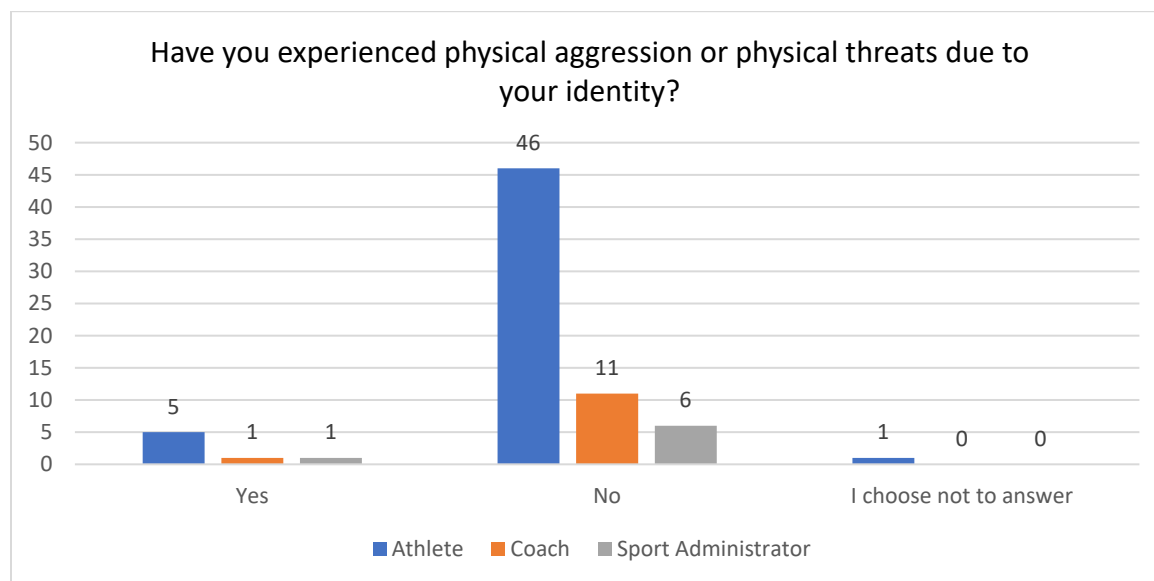
Athletes, coaches, and sport administrators were also asked if they experienced a lack of opportunities for personal, professional, or athletic development (Figure 9), felt unable to bring their whole or true self to sport (Figure 10), and received accommodations for personal needs when requested (Figure 11).

Figure 9

Experiences with the Lack of Opportunities for Development (n=71)

Have you experienced a lack of opportunities for personal, professional or athletic development due to your identity?
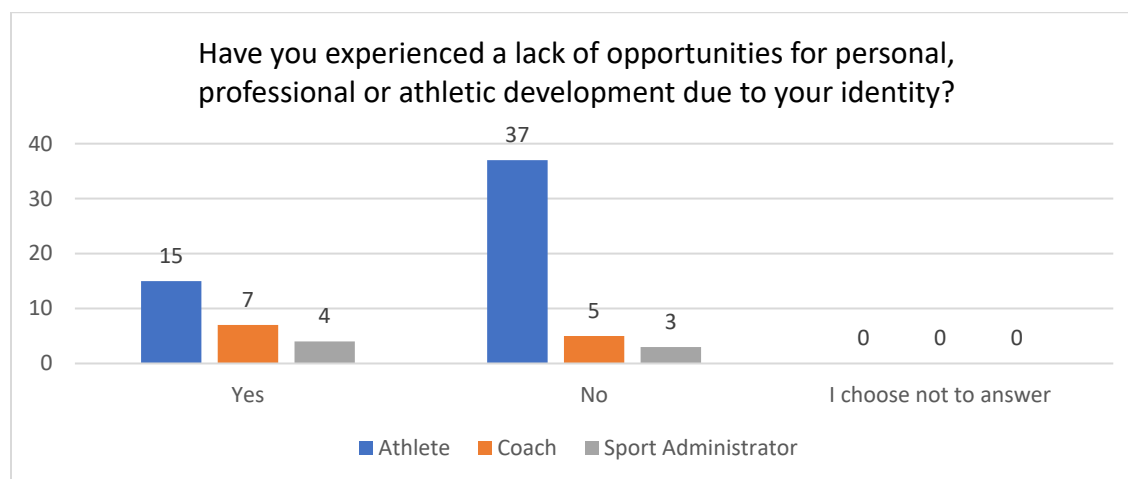
Several of the participants suggested that they are unable to bring their whole or true self to the sport environment (e.g., felt pressure to present oneself as more masculine or feminine than one is naturally, felt pressure to hide spiritual beliefs, etc.) (Figure 10). While most athletes indicated that they had received accommodations for personal needs (e.g., attire, facilities, equipment, time for spiritual/religious practice), there were still several athletes, coaches, and sport administrators who had not experienced such accommodations in sport (Figure 11).

Figure 10

Experiences with Being Unable to Display Whole or True Self (n=71)
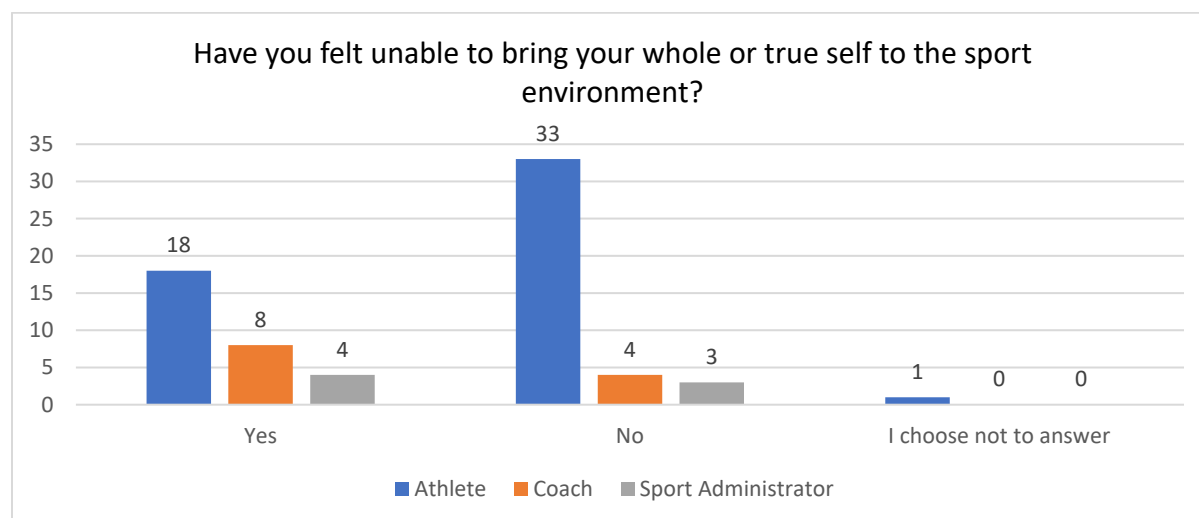
Figure 11

Experiences with Receiving Accommodations (n=71)

Have you received accommodation(s) for personal needs when requested?

(Athlete, Coach, Sport Administrator)

- Yes: Athlete 29, Coach 5, Sport Administrator 0
- No: Athlete 21, Coach 6, Sport Administrator 6
- I choose not to answer: Athlete 2, Coach 1, Sport Administrator 1
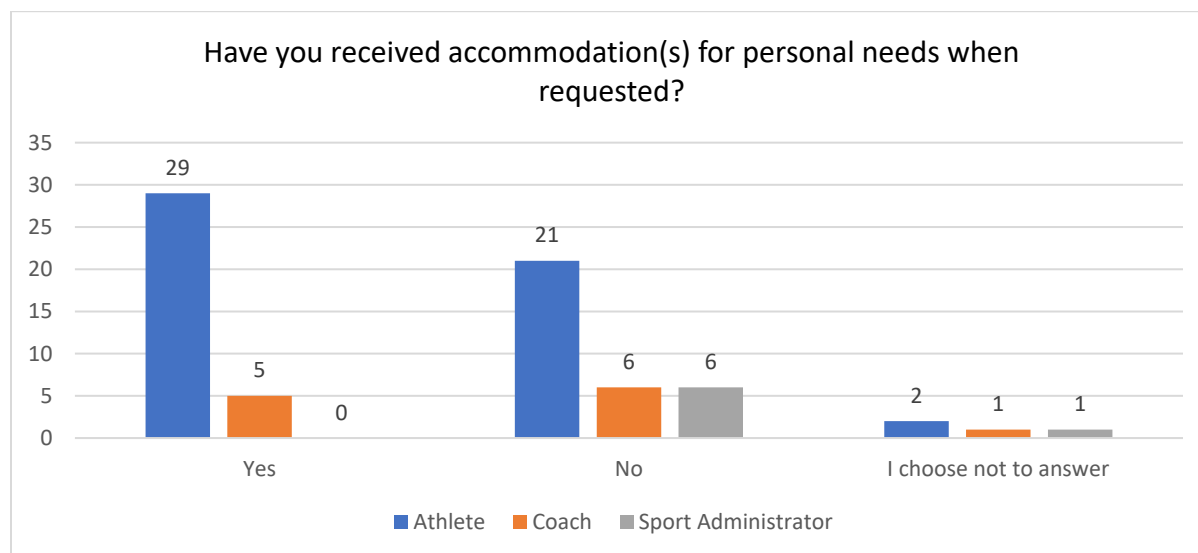
Conceptualizing Safe Sport

Most athletes, coaches, and sport administrators, strongly agreed or agreed that they were familiar with the term Safe Sport (Figure 12.)

Figure 12

Familiarity with Safe Sport (n=71)

I am familiar with the term Safe Sport.

(Athlete, Coach, Sport Administrator)

- Strongly Agree: Athlete 23, Coach 9, Sport Administrator 4
- Agree: Athlete 17, Coach 2, Sport Administrator 3
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: Athlete 4, Coach 0, Sport Administrator 0
- Disagree: Athlete 2, Coach 1, Sport Administrator 0
- Strongly Disagree: Athlete 6, Coach 0, Sport Administrator 0
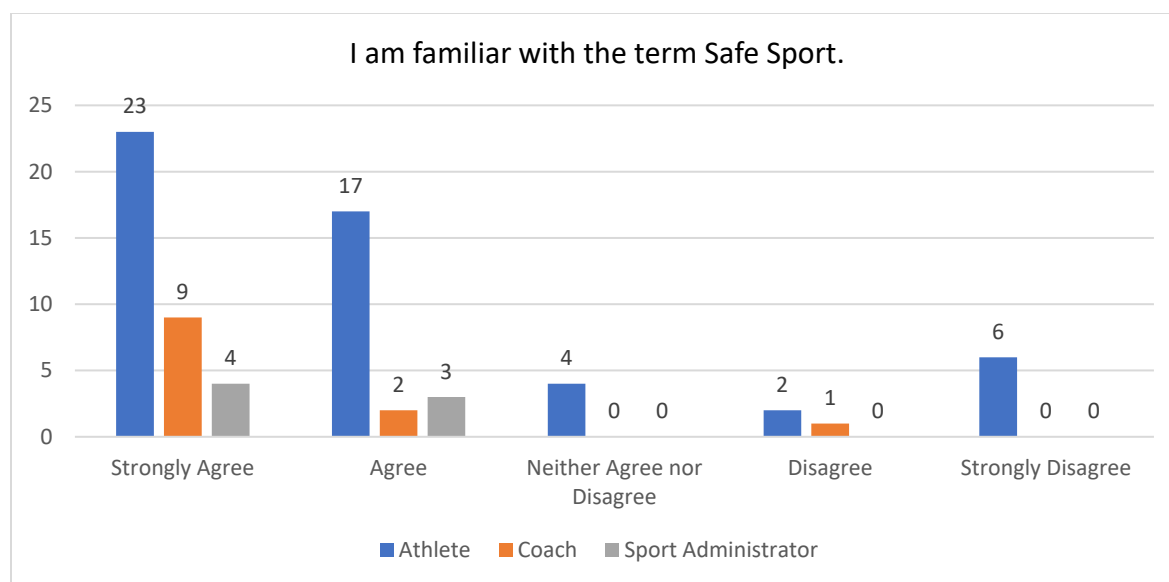
The participants were also provided an opportunity to expand on their interpretations of Safe

Sport in the survey. Table 3 depicts common responses across the sample groups, from the open-

ended survey question: "In your opinion, what is the purpose of Safe Sport?"

Table 3

Sport Stakeholders' Perspectives on the Purpose of Safe Sport

Theme	Evidence
Prevention of Harm	"To protect athletes from maltreatment and abuse" (A). "Establishing a sports community where players may collaborate and learn from one another without experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual mistreatment" (A). "Safe sport is when an individual is able to participate in a sport safely without harm or judgement" (A). "Safe Sport is a policy put in place to educate and improve awareness of the various types of maltreatment, and what we can do on the event Safe Sport principles are not being followed" (C). "Protecting against abuse and ensuring fair treatment of all in sport" (C). "It's about preventing harm of others" (SA). "Safe Sport is about improving awareness of the various types of maltreatment, and what we can do on the event Safe Sport principles are not being followed" (SA).
Safeguarding Sport	"To include everyone in a welcoming environment that makes everyone feel safe" (A). "To ensure that everybody is treated fairly and with respect in appropriate matter" (A). "To protect and respect all individuals involved in the field of sport regardless of their gender, race, etc" (A). "The purpose of safe sport to me is that all sports should be inclusive to everyone no matter the differences. Everyone should feel as if they belong in the sport/team they are participating in and should never feel left out or unsafe under any circumstance" (A). "A safe environment for every person athlete irrespective of their orientation, identity, religion, race etc. and be able to fully express them as an individual in the same" (A). "Protecting against abuse and ensuring fair treatment of all in sport" (C). "Create a safer environment for all stakeholders in sport to thrive, learn, and have the rights to play. Make sure that EDIA concerns are addressed" (C). "The purpose of safe sport is to foster a positive sport experience for all people" (C). "To ensure everyone can engage in sport as their authentic selves safely, with respect, and with the accommodations to be successful" (C).

	• "Creating safe and welcoming environments where all Canadians can practice their sport and reach their own high-performance levels" (SA). • "To create safe and welcoming environments for everyone" (SA).
"Band-aid" Solution	• "I wish it meant to provide everyone with a respectful place to play sport where they feel belonging, but it seems to be a policy 'tickbox' that is tokenism in organizations to say they're doing something without addressing real challenges in their organizations" (A). • "It's bullshit" (A).
Lack of Knowledge	• "I don't know" (A). • "I have no clue" (A). • "I've never heard of safe sport before" (A). • "I am unsure what it is" (C).

Note: A (Athletes), C (Coaches), & SA (Sport Administrators)

Safe, Inclusive, and Welcoming Experiences in Sport

Participants were asked to reflect on the extent to which persons with a disability (Figure 13), persons associated with the 2SLGBTQI+ community (Figure 14), persons of all genders (Figure 15), and persons who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour (BIPOC) (Figure 16) experience Safe Sport. Collectively, the responses suggested that several participants neither disagreed nor agreed that equity-denied stakeholders experience Safe Sport. As such, stakeholders remain uncertain on the extent to which sport is safe for all.

Figure 13

Experiences of Safe Sport for Persons with Disabilities (n=71)

In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons with disabilities DO experience Safe Sport.

Response	Athlete	Coach	Sport Administrator
Strongly Agree	10	2	0
Agree	17	4	4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	0	3
Disagree	5	5	0
Strongly Disagree	0	1	0
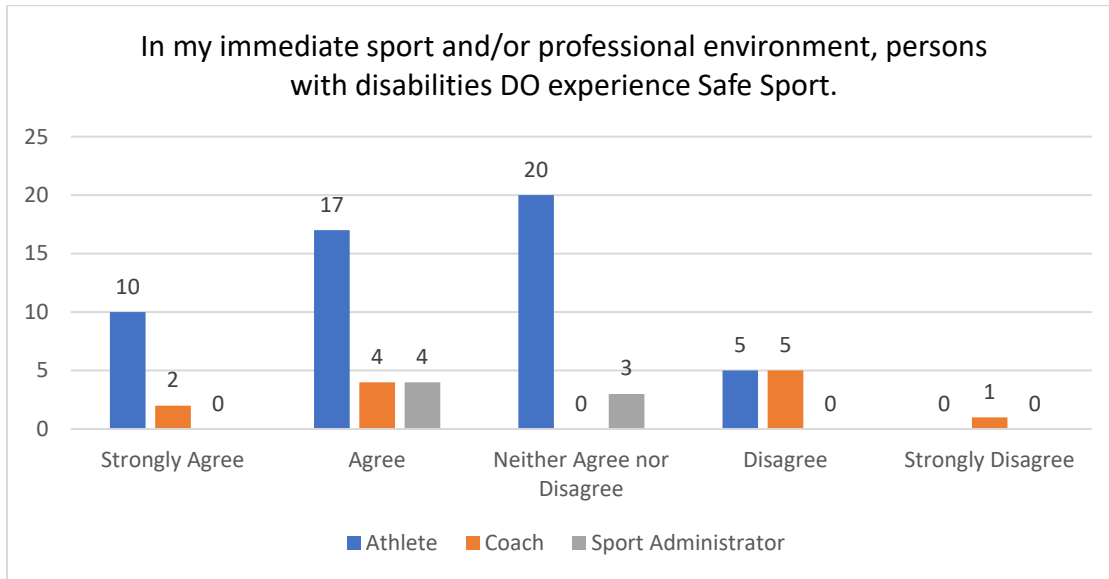
Figure 14

Experiences of Safe Sport for 2SLGBTQI+ Community Members (n=71)

In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons persons associated with the 2SLGBTQI+ community DO experience Safe Sport.

Response	Athlete	Coach	Sport Administrator
Strongly Agree	11	1	0
Agree	21	3	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	3	3
Disagree	6	2	2
Strongly Disagree	0	3	1
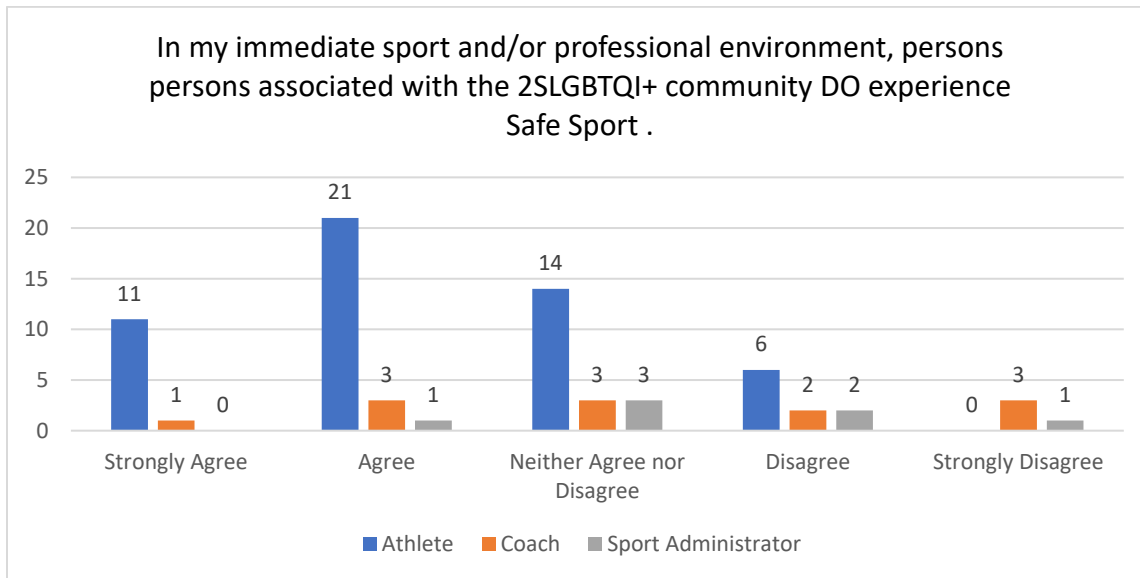
Figure 15

Experiences of Safe Sport for Persons All Genders (n=71)

In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons of all genders DO experience Safe Sport.
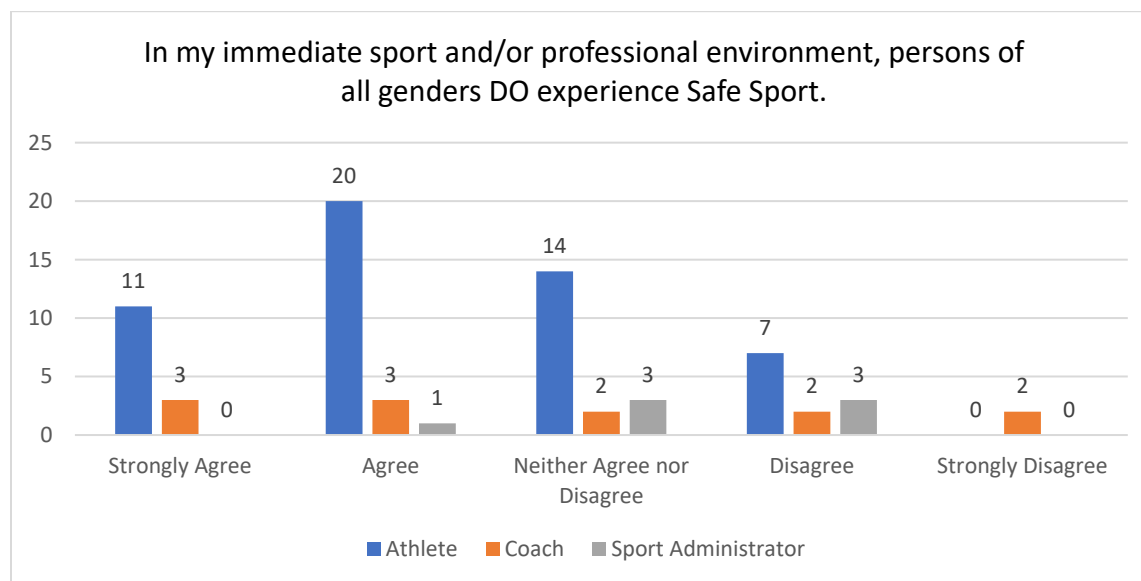
Figure 16

Experiences of Safe Sport for BIPOC Persons (n=71)

In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons who identify as racialised, Indigenous, or a person of colour DO experience Safe Sport.
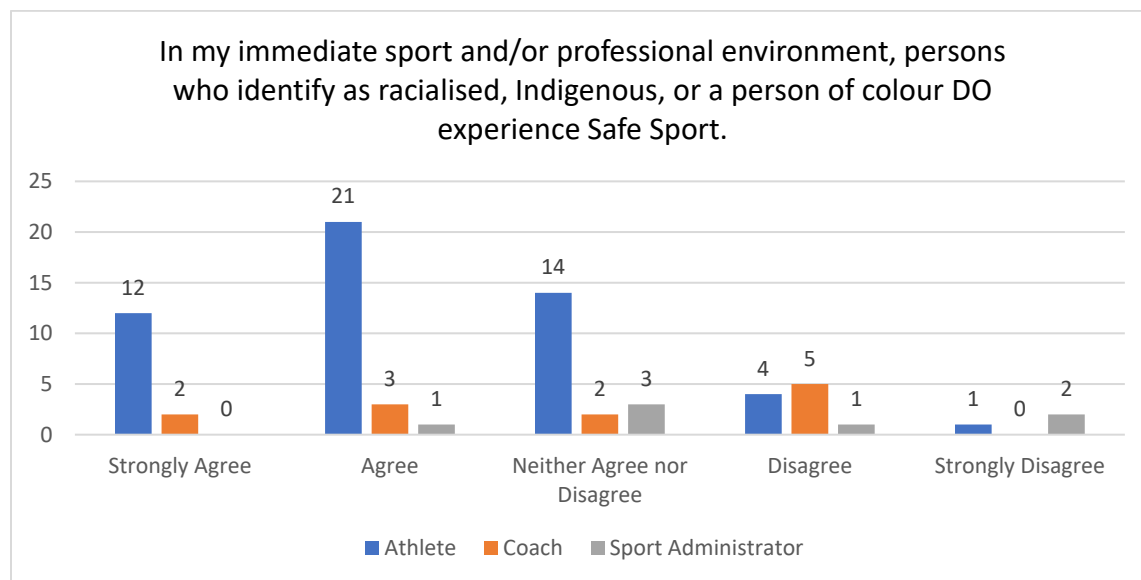
The participants were also asked about their own personal experiences of Safe Sport. Most

athletes and coaches strongly agreed or agreed that they can experience Safe Sport. However, the

sample group of sport administrators were less certain that they were able to experience Safe

Sport.

Figure 17

Personal Experiences of Safe Sport (n=71)

I feel I am able to experience Safe Sport in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.
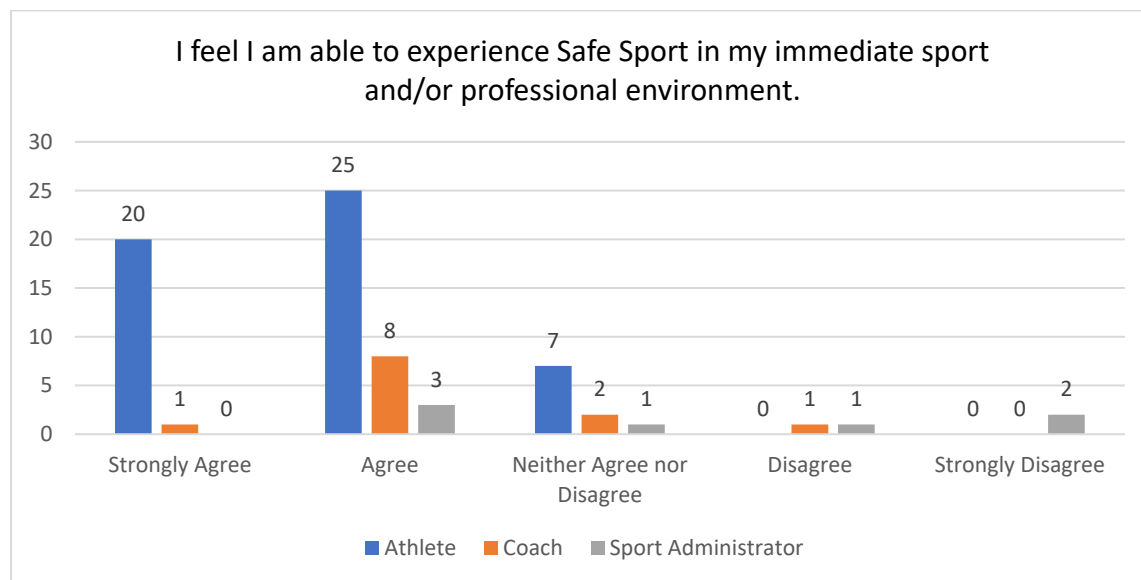
Barriers for Equity-Denied Stakeholders Experiences of Safe Sport

The participants were provided an opportunity to outline perceived barriers for Safe

Sport. Specifically, Table 4 depicts common responses across the sample groups, from the open-

ended survey question: "Please outline any relevant barriers you perceive may prevent equity-

denied sport stakeholders from experiencing Safe Sport."

Table 4

Barriers to Experiencing Safe Sport

Theme	Evidence
Limited Support for Equity-Denied Groups	• "Possible not enough support to the [transitioning] athletes" (SA).
Ineffective Leadership	• "People make decisions about safe sport seem to come from a homogenous intersectional lens - cisgender, usually White (Caucasian), able-bodied, heterosexual, and from privileged groups. When they

	define safe sport, they define it in a way that suits their needs or perceived needs of others, without asking what's needed from the minority groups" (A).
	• "I personally felt like [other] coaches all hated me due to my Indigenous background and it prevented me from fully allowing myself to feel comfortable and participate" (C).
	• "Individuals in power are afraid to lose said power, therefore protect themselves from change" (C).
	• "Too much personal bias can easily impact sport stakeholders at the ground level" (C).
	• "Lack of female coaches at higher level in the sport lead to dropout rate of female athletes. Need for more diversity" (C).
	• "There are specific leaders of sport and around safe sport who should not be leading our country" (SA).
	• "I think Safe Sport is too white-washed and the efforts of our government are weak like it has been for other issues affecting marginalized groups. Canada isn't serious about helping us and neither are leaders in sport" (SA).
Lack of EDI/Sport is Culturally Insensitive	• "For hockey as an example, there is not very many people of colour who are represented since many coloured people do not partake in sports. This makes it difficult to promote diversity especially with such an expensive sport" (A).
	• "My race is biggest reason individual discriminate entire sport, less funding from school and coaches treat us as unwanted group of athletes who are there just because school had to offer such sport" (A).
	• "People make decisions about safe sport seem to come from a homogenous intersectional lens - cisgender, usually white (Caucasian), able-bodied, heterosexual, and from privileged groups. When they define safe sport, they define it in a way that suits their needs or perceived needs of others, without asking what's needed from the equity-denied groups" (A).
	• "As an Indigenous woman, I feel my safety needs are very different from the rest of the Canada and the colonial and patriarchal makeup of my environment prevents me from experiencing that form of safety. Especially as a sport administrator, I feel that I'm expected to comply with requests, without people considering how it affects me. People aren't serious about Indigenous issues and don't understand the challenges our people had. People are less serious about Indigenous issues in sport" (SA).
	• Sport organizations don't care about Indigenous people. They just care about convincing others that they care. We don't see ourselves in the sport system and none of the resources for Safe Sport acknowledge our needs and beliefs. I think Safe Sport is just for show, just like everyone's outward commitment to reconciliation. It's just for show. No one is serious about making the changes necessary to fix sport" (SA).

|	
	• "Specific people in the sport and current areas with little diversity" (SA).
Inadequate Funding & Resources	• "Safe sport is for athletes and most of us don't even know what it is because we don't see how things have changed for the better in sport" (A).
	• "Often at the provincial level, there is a lack of funding and resources to equitably support all athletes, and the variation in club funding and accessibility can make it challenging for individuals to get the assistance they need to not only excel, but also experience safe coaching environments and Safe Sport" (A).
	• "Socioeconomic barriers to participation, limited local para-sport/safe sport programs" (A).
	• "Discrimination in terms of better skilled athletes is given more attention" (A).
	• "Race and status. Some individuals are more favoured, and others have more financial support to have more opportunities and more safe than others" (A).
	• "The resources are useless. How will 30 minutes of online training stop abuse. The funny thing is people are proud of this accomplishment as if they've found a cure for sport's cancer" (C)?
	• "Lack of empathy from others in positions of privilege, too many resources, but not enough focus on marginalized group" (C).
	• "There is limited funding and resources available to every sport entity in Canada responsible for transforming sport to align with safe sport" (SA).
	• "Not enough support to trans athletes" (SA).
Lack of Knowledge & Education	• "Hazing continues as coaches let it happen. Coaches coming from a different day and age implement abuse that worked in their age but has caused mental and psychological abuse to athletes" (A).
	• "The lack of knowledge and education (not available but encouraged to learn)" (A).
	• "Many coaches or staff or even athletes have grown up in environments where jokes are very common, and some don't understand the lasting effects on the individuals" (A).
	• "It is embedded into the system so deeply that now athletes don't see coaches or teammates' abuse, verbal comments as criticism, and have made it common. Now, it's hard to experience what Safe Sport feels like, as we all have normalized inappropriate behaviors" (A).
	• "Lack of knowledge and lack of respect for safe sport among coaches" (C).
	• "Education is key, but making sure people are getting the right education is the main barrier" (C).
	• "Lack of knowledge and lack of respect for safe sport among coaches" (C).

	• "Uneducated athletes and coaches may display negativity and prevent everyone from experiencing safe sport" (C).
Sport is Patriarchal	• "Excluded from discussions around Safe Sport, and not consulted when decisions/solutions are being made that often involve them" (A). • "The inequality I experience is within our provincial sport body. It is male dominated, we…are the only female NCCP certified [sport] coaches in [province] and we are unheard, left out and ignored" (C). • "Lack of female coaches at higher level in the sport. Look at the dropout rate of female athletes? Need for more diversity" (C). • "Individuals in power are afraid to lose said power, therefore protect themselves from change" (C).

Note: A (Athletes), C (Coaches), & SA (Sport Administrators)

Facilitators and Recommendations for Advancing Safe Sport

Athletes, coaches, and sport administrators were asked to select facilitators they perceived as important for promoting Safe Sport among equity-denied sport stakeholders (Figure 18). Collectively, education, policy development and implementation, and inclusions of equity-denied stakeholders' voices were highlighted as the most important facilitators to achieving Safe Sport. Compulsory Safe Sport education for all sport stakeholders (e.g., coaches, athletes, support staff), accountability and monitoring associated with Safe Sport policies, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices in the development of Safe Sport initiatives remain recommendations advocated by researchers and sport stakeholders alike to address existing Safe Sport challenges (Kerr & Kerr, 2020; MacPherson et al., 2022).

Figure 18

Facilitators to Experience Safe Sport

Facilitators to Advance Safe Sport
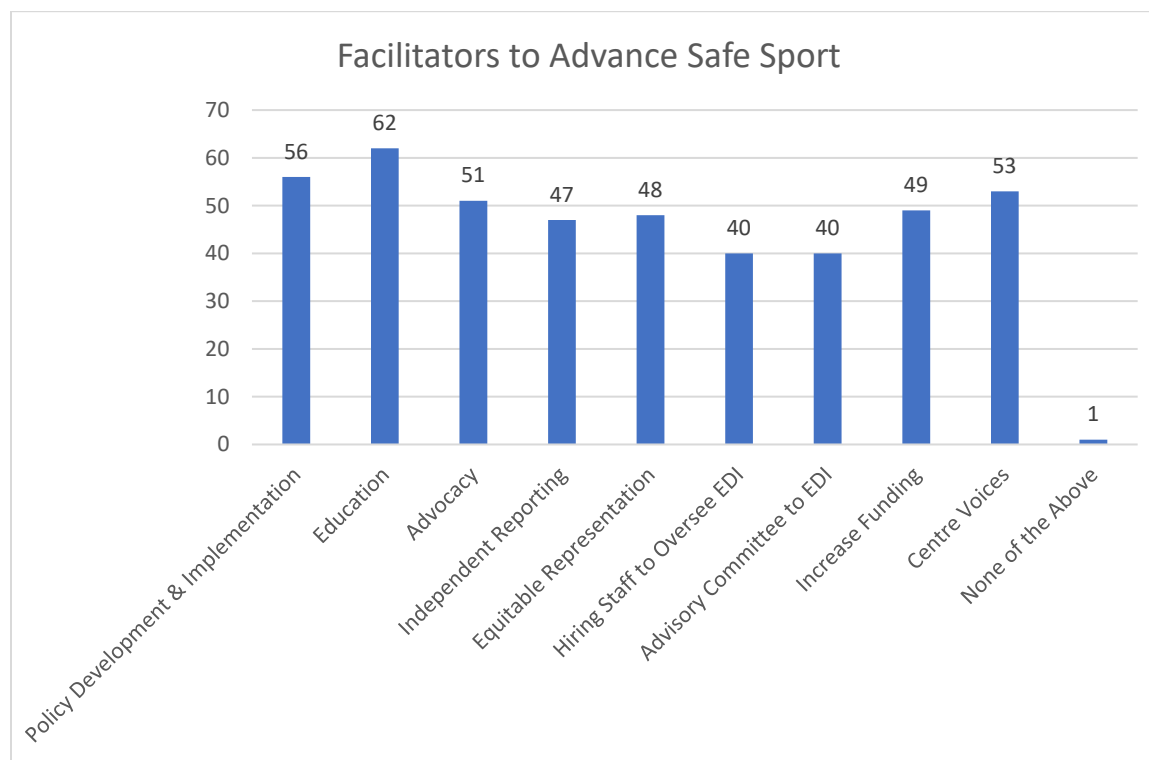
Participants were also provided an opportunity to highlight any other recommendations they believe to be important for advancing Safe Sport initiatives for equity denied stakeholders. Table 5 depicts common responses across the sample groups, from the open-ended survey question: "Please outline any other recommendations for advancing Safe Sport initiatives for equity-denied sport stakeholders."

Table 5

Recommendations for Advancing Safe Sport

Themes	Evidence
Comprehensive Safe Sport Education for All	• "Having educational opportunities for those equity deserving groups on how they might advocate for themselves" (C). • "Please get educated on diversity and inclusion before learning the sport itself" (A).

	• "Educational programs and training, competitive environments for athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers that are involved within sports. Optimizing the sport experience for all" (A). • "Talking about awareness, most of the time people themselves don't understand that such behavior is not acceptable in sports, and they think that it is how it should be" (A). • "Include Indigenous teachings in the safe sport resources being developed. Nothing about safe sport has addressed the needs of Indigenous people" (SA). • "Every person who has a stake in sport or who is involved in sport in some capacity should complete safe sport education" (SA).
Increase Leadership Opportunities for Equity-Denied Stakeholders	• "There is a lot of "boys clubs" with universities and that's what continues to deny the voices to be heard. Especially with male coaches and females in sports" (A). • "Hiring more female coaches to display diversity within gender in sports. This way society can slowly start to normalize female coaches and less negative comments towards female coaches may apply" (C). • "There needs to be more Indigenous leaders or voices part of this discussion. In the absence of representation, we will never be heard" (SA).
Improve Accountability Measures	• "Hold stakeholders more accountable for promoting and ensuring Safe Sport within their sport environments" (A). • "Having an open mind and breaking the system. Many complaints over the past with the athletic directors were always overlooked and complained about to board staff instead of listening and fixing the problem" (A). • "Having mandatory youth advocate for team in administration who help communicate teams issue and rights and help us both grow effectively" (A). • "There should be a public registry of everyone who was accused, investigated, or found guilty of maltreatment in sport" (SA). • "Sport Canada needs to audit sport organizations and have the power to fire people who aren't complying with safe sport. There needs to be a system that better manages NSOs and PTSOs because if left to them, nothing will truly change" (SA).
Professionalize Safe Sport	• "Form a professional union to manage safe sport" (A). • "Everyone involved in sport has the responsibility to work collectively to foster a positive culture that works towards everyone" (A). • "Giving a healthy space for athletes to grow and learn from each other" (A).

	• "Both physical and mental wellbeing should be a top priority, with teams in place to ensure the players get the care they need" (A). • "Focus on fostering a positive sport experience for all people" (C). • **"**Experts of abuse should be responsible for developing education and policies, not people with a sport background. We should have a professional body of experts who determine what education, policies, resources, etc. are advanced across sport" (SA).
Prioritize Positive Development	• "Encouraging positive physical and mental well- being. TRUST in all. Make sure everyone feels comfortable being who they are, while empowering the best they can be" (C).

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data are categorized into four sections: Conceptualizing Safe Sport, Barriers to Safe Sport, Facilitators to Safe Sport, and Recommendations for Advancing Safe Sport. Each theme is supported by numerous quotations derived from the semi-structured interviews.

Conceptualizing Safe Sport

Aligned with the survey findings, the interview data indicate the varied interpretations of Safe Sport among equity-denied sport stakeholders. While some viewed Safe Sport primarily as the prevention of harm, such as maltreatment, many others suggested Safe Sport encompasses efforts to create an environment that is welcoming, equitable, inclusive, accessible, and diverse. Within this comprehensive perspective, Safe Sport goes beyond mere harm prevention; instead, it aims to foster an environment where individuals feel empowered to bring their authentic selves to sport. This perspective aligns with the survey data and reinforces the conceptualization of safeguarding sport proposed by Gurgis et al. (2023).

Protection from Harm.

- "I believe safe sport is about the prevention harm, including psychological, physical, sexual. Whether it's the apparent stuff or even the little things you see from those old school coaches, it's all gotta go" (Monica).

- "I think of creating a safe environment, the basics, you know. That everybody is going to be safe in terms of nobody is going to hurt themselves or nobody is going to get hurt from somebody else" (Janice).

- "When I look at safe sport, there's three main things. There's physical or sexual abuse and then you have the neglect and then you kind of have this psychological piece of it. Safe sport is about protecting people from all that" (Jordan).

Safeguarding Sport.

- "So safe sport provides a safe, welcoming, inclusive, environment to all participants in our sport" (Eunice).

- "When I think about safe sport I think about my daughter. I like making sure that she [daughter] has a certain playing environment that is going to be inclusive and provide opportunities for people to be themselves and not be afraid to be different from anybody else and not be judged because they're different from anybody else" (Laniece).

- "Safe sport is about operating in sport as authentically as possible, as your true self, without limitation or fear. I can be gay or Black or disabled and I should still have the same opportunities and be celebrated the same" (Riham).

- "It's more about EDI than it is about preventing abuse and harassment because if we're inclusive and respect people for their differences, then they probably won't be at risk of anything harmful" (Jamie).

Barriers to Safe Sport

The participants identified numerous barriers hindering the advancement of Safe Sport, with many aligning with research that addresses the shortcomings of various safeguarding measures aimed at combating social injustices in sport (Donnelly et al., 2016; Gurgis et al., 2022b; Kerr et al., 2020; Lang & Hartill, 2015; Peers et al., 2023; Rajwani et al., 2021). Urgent systemic changes within the sporting community are needed to address these barriers and cultivate a culture of safety, inclusivity, and equity.

Competing Definitions of Safe Sport. Participants' diverse interpretations of Safe Sport raised concerns about the coherence and efficacy of the movement.

- "I think the first thing is that it means different things to different people, which as a researcher and a practitioner like working in the field makes things difficult. So, I do think it's important to have kind of a common understanding of safe sport" (Mackenzie).

- "There's a million different ways people have talked about safe sport and with that comes a million ways do something. Add into the mix that with different cultures, races, abilities, genders, there comes many more considerations for safety, many that aren't include in current safe sport conversations" (Betty).

- "My issue with safe sport, well, there's many, but it basically implies sport is inherently unsafe. So why participate in the first place? People are so concerned with making sport safe, we should be focused on helping people realize the inherent potential for sport to be good" (Albert).

Educational and Policy Gaps. Participants identified deficiencies in Safe Sport education and policies, highlighting the need for comprehensive training programs and policies that are applicable across all levels of sport.

- "I don't really know of any safe sport efforts. Like, I know we have to do some modules, but I don't think that does anything to be honest. I don't think it does a single thing…a module that people click through in five minutes won't make people better aware or ready to address issues of sexual abuse or discrimination" (Katrina).

- "More content needs to be in it [safe sport education] when considering diverse groups. So, it's coming from a very general and standard kind of viewpoint. It's not really helpful or all-inclusive of all athletes. There's no actual depth about discrimination either other than broad reminders of 'accept others.' It shows we still have a long way to go before our education in this space is impactful" (Lana).

- "The Safe Sport module itself is quite finger pointy. The *Respect in Sport* modules, especially the one for parents, are basically saying you are horrible people, don't be horrible. People aren't horrible. They don't need to hear that. Right. It's not helping. And then the OSIC process, there's no restorative justice option. It's very 'you're right. You're wrong. You're in, you're out. Find the bad guys.' There are so few actual bad guys out there and the stuff they're doing is criminal. How do we address the actual harm that's going on? How do we help people heal from it? I don't think our systems are set up to do that at all" (Amy).

- "The CAC courses are something else and I don't mean that in a good way. I get the need for online courses during COVID-19, but to roll that out still, even in spite of the feedback they've received about how education has become a 'tick a box' kind of thing for coaches…When discrimination becomes a 'tick a box' item, it will never actually be addressed, which is why education has become so ineffective in creating change" (Saffiya).

- "Did you see this new accreditation program? Just another measure to try and legitimize this space more. It distracts others from the real problems because they see a program like Safe Sport Training has been accredited and think, 'oh, it must be good.' I've yet to see a good online course dealing with the issues encountered by Black people or other minority groups" (Laniece).

- "We need one policy sweep not just for safe sport and it should be developed for community level clubs and applied up the system, rather than from the NSO down. The NSOs are dealing with 2% of sport, and they have mostly adult participants, and they have a lot of control over them. We need policies for good governance. Something that is wrapped up in a bow like the Canadian anti-doping program which is one document" (Emma).

- "The UCCMS is great, but now we need something like that around EDI, and it needs to be available and applicable across every level of sport. Maybe even more like the Calls to Action, but for EDI generally, so it includes everyone else who's marginalized" (Eunice).

Fragmented Safe Sport System. Participants suggested the lack of alignment in Canada's Safe Sport approach contributes to a fragmented and confusing system characterized by inconsistencies.

- "Something that I struggle with often is alignment and jurisdiction. So, we have now as an NSO…the abuse free sport mechanism, so some of our participants are in Canada, they're under that jurisdiction. If an incident of maltreatment occurs, who does someone report that to and who is responsible for it? So, we have some provinces have their own provincial mechanism or their own independent third party, but others don't. And then if they're a resident of Quebéc, they have their own reporting mechanism. And then if

you're at the local club level, where do you report? Do you report it to your province? Do you report it to us? There is no alignment and information for people to navigate. And for someone who may have just suffered an injustice, it becomes confusing to navigate…navigating the process can be even more of a barrier to reporting it, than you know the injustice itself…It can be harder on emotionally…The process itself is a punishment and I think a lot of people fall through the cracks because of how confusing it is" (Habiba).

- "Out of nowhere there's been an influx of resources created and shared. Some of these resources are nationally recognized but others aren't and so it creates this real disjointed system when we have club members in Quebéc following one system, and then club members out in Alberta doing their own thing. And then sport to sport. Some of our athletes are multisport athletes and they see the differences in how sports are talking about issues of abuse or EDI. There's really no consistent messaging around safe sport" (Emma).

Organizational Silence in Reporting. Participants expressed frustration with the passive responses of several organizational leaders in addressing issues of harm or the challenging structure surrounding the submission of formal complaints.

- "Yeah, so I've had unpleasant situations with reporting as a coach. Without going into too many details, the coach was male, and the team was female, and when I reported misconduct to our PSO, the President of our PSO and this coach were best friends. So you can imagine how that turned out. It was horrible. It was horrible. I was asked to resign all because I had blown the whistle on him and to me, I was following protocol. Eventually our NSO got involved and the coach did resign. What got told around was that I pushed

him to resign. He never apologized. He never, there were no ramifications for him other than he left coaching that summer. But last year I saw he returned, and it really disappointed me. So, when I say to you, we're checking off all the boxes, if you go to our PSO's website, you'll see safe sport. You do this, this, this, this. But when it comes down to it, we're not doing it right" (Maria).

- "I've seen one too many minorities leave their jobs because they didn't have anywhere to go to report a safe sport issue. Sport organizations are just not equipped with the right people to handle the gravity of what's at the core of safe sport" (Betty).

- "And so, the first time this [racial discrimination at another institution] happened, my response was, you know, I went to my athletic director at the time and I said, 'Hey, this happened and I'm not OK with this happening.' And I was told it would be handled appropriately, but you know, I was never given an apology. It was never really handled, so I knew then I was on my own, like I knew that moving forward I couldn't rely on [university]" (Lana).

- "We had 15 athletes submit different reports, and we all made a complaint, we all had different examples about a coach who was displaying inappropriate behavior, whether the weight comments, flirting with athletes, whether that be just inappropriate behavior in general, but because we didn't have it on a voice recording or because we didn't have actual text messages, our side of things just didn't mean anything. And so, it ended up just being a verbal warning and the club saying we will try our best, we'll have a sit-down and then after that, just nothing happened, and the same type of behavior happened the next summer, but we knew that if we reported again nothing's gonna happen" (Kim).

Tokenism. Participants' responses illustrate instances where superficial efforts at inclusion fail to address systemic barriers and provide meaningful opportunities for equity-denied individuals.

- "I am not sure that we've done enough. I think we've only just barely scratched the surface when we're talking about gender equity, and I think safe sport right now is at a very broad and doesn't address these issues fully. Now inclusion and all of those things, there's webinars and stuff popping up all the time. And I know the intent is for it to cover it, but I'm not sure that it's thorough enough yet to cover everything that every ethnicity and every gender identity would feel constitutes as safe" (Habiba).

- "The federal government said by 2035 they're hoping that they'll see gender equity across all levels of sport. But you have, like, that's great that you put it out there, and you see it, but they didn't create an actual policy to implement it. So, it's one thing to say it, but if you hope that everyone is just going to snap their fingers and agree with you, that's not going to happen" (Laniece).

- "There's a lot of talk of policy. "Everything will be written right in the policy. And we have all these codes of conduct and policies on inclusion, but it seems like they're written for the sake of someone saying we have it, instead of it being written to instill change" (Janice).

- "I think again on paper, safe sport does commit to being inclusive and addressing EDI, but I don't always see that in practice. Like, I don't see inclusive language in policies or education. I think it's getting a lot harder as sport kind of progresses. Like, for example the stuff with transgender athletes, I think that's been a hard one for a lot of sport bodies to kind of address and also just adapt to. So, I think that's one aspect where safe sport is kind of missing that EDI component because especially the coaching language that's used

when talking to- especially athletes that don't identify as male or female and being able to use that type of inclusive language, it's there, but not really there" (Abbie).

Lack of Awareness of Needs and Struggles. The interviews highlighted gaps in understanding and addressing the unique needs and experiences of equity-denied individuals within the context of Safe Sport.

- "Spirituality is really important for us in all aspects of life, including sport. I can facilitate those experiences for my athletes, but I don't expect a White man to. I don't expect non-Indigenous people to understand how or why to smudge or the reverence we have for nature and the creator…Safe sport doesn't facilitate those conversations and so I don't expect safe sport to really facilitate inclusive experiences for [Indigenous people]" (Albert).

- "Safe sport hasn't really touched on those distinctions in beliefs and practices that make safety so different for many of us. It's really like they've thrown everyone in the same pot and said this is what it means to be safe for everyone" (Janice).

- "I don't think people responsible for safe sport know what it means to be a Black male. It comes with different stereotypes and missed chances because White people don't see your worth" (Ted).

- "So, when you look at the design processes of attire, design process of equipment, those are things that sometimes need to be re-evaluated, because a lot of the times diverse persons were not even considered in the initial creation…in the initial research of these things. And even just understanding that skin types vary within our space, that's something to be mindful of. And even understanding why if I was to go to, like, really grassroots, if I was to even understand why you may not have a higher population of

certain communities within the sport, having that knowledge, having that history base could possibly indicate what we as coaches need to do differently when trying to grow the sport" (Lana).

- "Well, it's not everyone like some people get it. But when you work in a sport like I do, that's an old boys club and everyone on staff on the high-performance side are a bunch of middle-aged men who have worked there since I would literally since I was born. They have a, I mean again, part of that is because I'm younger, but still they have a more like kind of close-minded mentality because like as middle-aged white men, they have not experienced any safe sport challenges. Our sport, so they don't think they don't even understand or comprehend that it could possibly be an issue that they need to deal with and there's people who on our staff saying like. "Why are we talking about or spending so much time focusing on this? We need to focus on high performance. These conversations distract from the focus on high performance or take away time and other like financial resources from high performance" and it's like, the fact that people are still saying that like they don't get it" (Mackenzie).

- "The reason why you can't make this racist joke is because you never lived in racism, right? So, it's like they don't even see it. And the other thing is, I like to remind myself that ignorant people are not bad people. They just don't know. But know when you must do better, right? So, I think there's some parts of it that are ignorance nowadays with all the education that's out there. People might choose to stay ignorant as opposed to trying to change and challenge their beliefs" (Jordan).

Inequitable Hiring Practices. Participants' experiences revealed systemic biases and discriminatory practices in the recruitment and hiring processes within organizations.

- "I refer back to like these middle-aged men in my sport…If those are the people sitting around the table writing a policy, then it's not going to serve everybody else who doesn't live in that privileged space. And yeah, we have an example of that in our end…we have a policy right now about safe sport and gender equity. It's like touching a bit of both and it's like the old boys club are all kind of like pushing to get rid of it. They're like, 'we don't need this'" (Mackenzie).

- "I think that one of the biggest problems there is not creating diversity in those who are creating the environment… How do we get more admins and coaches who look like the people we want to take part, who will understand, you know what it takes to be there? Their awareness of the whole safe sport is going to be more than your average White person, and I think it comes from your administrators. It comes back to the same thing, just having diversity within" (Olivia).

- "Hire. Hire. Hire. Right. Like, I really, I really, for me, honestly, I think at the end of the day, it's going to come down to putting people- marginalized, racialized communities in places of power. Right. Like having more people sitting at the table that have a voice and have power to make decisions. Decision making roles like power is not the right word, but we need more racialized people in decision making roles across the country. Like there are zero Black athletic directors. Zero. Really" (Saffiya).

Resistance to Change. The data highlighted a perceived reluctance among various leaders and participants around changing behaviours to make sport more inclusive.

- "How the actual F is anyone supposed to feel safe in our sport environment when the top-ranking leaders, not me or the operational staff, top-ranking males in positions of leadership are just minimizing the experiences of us as women, or others also

experiencing identity-based harms? How can anyone feel safe in our sport when you've got like, men in these positions? They don't see the value in what's being done here or else they'd use their position to push it forward" (Mackenzie).

- "I get frustrated with people sometimes in administration who aren't willing to think outside the box. Who think, 'We have done it like this for the last 100 years, so we don't need to change it' (Eunice).

- "Far more entrenched individuals who grew up in that environment who are now, you know, part of our challenges…they typically are not very progressive in their thinking. So, you get this tension between their standards of safety and new standards of what a safe, quality sport experience should look like" (Habiba).

Lack of Appreciation for Diverse Leadership. Participants emphasized the importance of diverse representation in leadership roles to foster inclusive and equitable sport environments.

- "So, when I first started coaching…there were a couple times where we would go to matches and there was one [team] in particular that was very bad, and it was a very White [team]. So, they first started out with them calling me Whoopi Goldberg. So, that was their chant. That was their chant, and until every time something happened, they started yelling 'Whoopi!' Like, just like trying to get in my head. And I remember that it was like, in the moment. I thought, you know, there's one or two ways I can handle this…I can just be angry and be frustrated or I can embrace it" (Saffiya).

- "I saw male athletes treat female staff horrifically. It was a game between some of our male athletes to see who could expose their genitals for the longest to a massage therapist in their sessions. Frequency and length of time" (Amy).

- "I'd say when I coach with male varsity teams, that's where more of those unsavoury situations come up because as a female coach navigating those spaces it's already hard in gaining their respect and getting them to listen to you. So, it's a hard process. Especially when the head coach is a male coach. I find that that's the hardest because those male coaches sometimes they don't even realize, but they enforce some behavior that is not acceptable, especially language that is inappropriate" (Lana).

- "It's really important for others to see people like me in a leadership position. To be the dominant voice and really shape sport for our people, to do things over, it's the do-over we all need in sport" (Betty).

Normalization of Harmful Behaviour. Participants' accounts shed light on the acceptance and normalization of harmful behaviours within sport, thus contributing to unsafe environments.

- "It came out that [coach] referred to the other team as the, forgive me, but the 'gimps and the wobblies'…It was so derogatory…[Another time], I was the only other one in there and [coaches] were talking about their female world champion and how her mental state wasn't very good, and she kept falling apart, and she cried too much, and she was too much work, and maybe they should kick her off the team and their solution was "No, she just needs to get laid. Who can we set her up with? Who on the team would take one for the team" (Amy)?

- "I feel like if I'm coaching, and I call them the dad coaches, but when the dad coaches or the male coaches who are taking on this coaching role, and maybe their daughter's on the team…I see them screaming at athletes and abusing athletes and are saying derogatory and belittling comments. I'm like, you are an adult and you're screaming at a young girl, regardless if it's your daughter or not. I don't think that creates a safe environment, and I

see how it riles the girls on the team, and then I see how the emotion of the game gets

elevated because of the behaviour of the coach on the bench and I think that that can

create unsafe sport" (Abbie).

- "There's just a lot of yelling and sometimes it comes with really insensitive comments, like asking the girls if they're on their period when they're not playing well. And no one ever says anything, but it's all the time" (Janvi).

- "My coach told me to run like a Black man…this man is White; you shouldn't be saying things like that" (Robert).

EDI Not Prioritized. Participant insights underscore the marginalization of EDI initiatives within the broader landscape of Safe Sport practices.

- "In my opinion, equity, diversity and inclusion should be a priority. Is it a priority? No" (Laniece).

- "I find people are starting to recognize the importance of EDI in sport. Is it a top priority? No, I'd say not. So, unfortunately, I think there's pockets of people trying to do the right thing, but at the same time, I think there's associations that just check off the boxes and then move on with their other performance-related responsibilities" (Maria).

- "I think that sport is still based on a very White patriarchal structure…There's nothing about inclusivity in our code orientation. I don't even think within the safe sport training that the CAC gives us there is anything really about EDI. There's the 'identify marginalized populations' section but by no means are they speaking about what to do and how to create more inclusive spaces" (Abbie).

- "People don't really think about EDI unless they are personally affected by EDI. Unless you live with racism or sexism, you don't think about those issues, and you don't actively

think through how to address those issues. So, when you think about that, you realize why EDI in sport is so poor; most of sport is run by people not affected by EDI" (Betty).

Safe Sport Not Taken Seriously. Participants expressed a concern that Safe Sport measures have not been taken seriously, consequently exposing individuals, especially those who identify as equity-denied, to increased risks of harm.

- And so, there's more and more education coming all the time. The problem is that not everybody's as [thrilled] about it as I am. I'm like, 'There's a webinar, I gotta go!' And to be honest, I feel that some of the male coaches are just like 'ehh' [Waves hand], and they don't take it serious" (Emma).

- "So, I think the safe sport module that the CAC has developed, the intention is good. It creates some kind of common language and understanding but it's also made safe sport a joke particularly within national sport teams. 'Oh, you can't say that, you're going to get safe sported'" (Jordan).

- "I think people are tired of safe sport. It's just been forced down our throats and it hasn't really changed anything. And to be honest I think the foot is slowly coming off the pedal, at least in terms of new and impactful changes. Every now and then you see a new module, maybe another club policy, but we still see the same types of problematic behaviours in sport. Canada isn't so transformational in this space, things still seem the change, with obviously more rules, but that hasn't meant much" (Amy).

Lack of Accountability Measures. The participants highlighted gaps in accountability mechanisms within sport organizations, revealing challenges in holding individuals and institutions responsible for safety lapses.

- "We can be told to complete safe sport training or consent with the UCCMS, but it doesn't mean we have to operate within the confines of those measures each day, which what makes this an ineffective process. There's no accountability. There's no one assessing compliance, which is why you get sports such as Hockey get away with so much crap for years" (Jordan).

- "It boils down to accountability. But it's impossible. How do you hold an entire culture accountable? When a coach leads their team to a championship, but is just a terrible, terrible person, no one will care because they won. They'll justify it as being necessary for winning. So, you need to change an entire culture around how people think about sport and also how they think about reaching certain goals in sport. It's not easy, which is why maybe we haven't seen real change" (Betty).

Lack of Diversity. Participants described the added pressures and challenges faced operating in a sport environment with very little diversity.

- "If I'm the only gay person in the room, I need a straight boy to stand up for me, right? And help me, right? It's challenging because that straight boy's sexuality is going to be challenged. 'You're standing up for him. You must be a fag too, right?' I've heard that before. So, to have those non-minority people stand up and help the minorities, it's so important but people are afraid sometimes to stand on the side of those oppressed. Maybe out of fear of inheriting by association the issues we experience daily" (Jordan).

- "I don't want to be the ground breaker anymore. I'm tired, it's exhausting. And that is a lot of weight to put one person. Yeah, like I had this whole analogy with my team. I call it the backpack analogy, and so we talk about, you know, every time something happens, and you put it on your back, and you put it on your back, and you can't play because

you're weighted down. But all these backpacks so when you start to realize I need to take one off, so it's a little lighter. And they take one off, and I said, 'that's how I feel.' Like, why does it have to be me? But again, being a Black female coach, there aren't very many of us females coaching at the [sport], we're a dying breed in general" (Saffiya).

Lack of Representation in Sport. Participants shared the ongoing struggle for representation and inclusion of equity-denied individuals within sport, highlighting the need for proactive efforts to address systemic barriers.

- "Like I said, ideally, it would be great to have more representation kind of sitting at the table. Like, let's say a board, everyone on our board is White. Maybe you can bring someone in, at least for like a talk or a consult. Invite our Indigenous national team alumni to come speak to the board about what it's like to participate in sport when you're not White and privileged…So, I think representation at the table is important, and then I think, yeah, there does need to be like allies and champions who stand up and support because, again, since sport is still really lacking diversity at the kind of decision-making tables, then there does need to be an onus on the folks that are sitting on the table to then recognize that and advocate as much as they can" (Mackenzie).

- "Representation in the sport itself, when you go to the field of play, whatever the field of play is, and you don't see anyone that looks like you, or if it's very homogeneous and you feel like you stand out like a sore thumb, I think it's very difficult to feel safe in that environment. So, I think the environment itself is a barrier to participation" (Habiba).

- "I don't like to make it a colour thing, but I think it's the idea that when you place a White woman in a position of power and think that they represent all people… 'look, we hired a White woman.' She might be gay. She might not be. Whatever capacity, you feel, you've

checked the box, right? Like, I feel like there's box checking, box ticking. That happens. 'Look, we've hired three of the four or two of the three.' So, yes, it increases representation, but it's not authentic. And sometimes it's done, but the person isn't qualified, so a board has grounds to fire them, like basically labelling that person has unqualified" (Amy).

- "Representation is a barrier. So, let's say having one gay coach on team, that's not representation to people. That is the exception. So, I don't think that has the same power as opposed to having representation, having equity, having more. I think that's what representation is. Having one person might help people here and there, but I don't think so. Representation would be a good one, or many good ones" (Jordan).

Facilitators to Safe Sport

The participants identified fewer facilitators in comparison to barriers, shedding light on the persistent challenges faced by equity-denied sport stakeholders. This discrepancy highlights the continued struggle for inclusivity and equity within the sport community, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to address these challenges comprehensively.

Improved Representation. The theme of improved representation underlined the importance of increasing the presence and visibility of equity-denied groups within the sport community.

- "Granted, people are making facilities more inclusive. I will say that, like when you go to the facilities, you will see all gender, neutral changing rooms or bathrooms. You will see some places will put up the pride flag or they'll put up safe space stickers to say this is a safe environment, so people know. It serves as a good reminder to the public about the importance of respecting others, despite being different" (Laniece).

- "We have groups on campus now specifically for those who identify as BIPOC. It's been really great and has had impacts beyond our university too; other universities have reached out asking for tips on what we do…really, it's an opportunity to bring people together with shared struggles to discuss what we need to feel safe and included across varsity sport and recreation. It's been helpful in helping our athletes realize that there are supports available to them, you know, if they're gay or have a mental disability, we help them find the right help. But also, it's helped educate the campus community about these topics we've discussed like inclusion in sport" (Janvi).

Engage the Community. Participants discussed the value of engaging the community in supporting initiatives that promote EDI in sport, emphasizing the importance of fostering collaboration and collective action to drive meaningful change.

- "When our players get up to, U17, U19 age, we encourage them to help coach because we think the little girls look up to them and they're players not, you know, 'adults', so it becomes really influential for our younger girls who are in sport or on the fence about remaining in sport" (Maria).

- "It's not uncommon for a sporting event to bring an entire Indigenous community together. Unlike North American sport, we don't value competition the same way. Competition for us is more about being challenged and showing appreciation for others who've perfected their craft. I think this can become a good example for moving EDI forward in sport, but it takes an entire community, you know? You can't have one hockey dad shouting at the refs, while everyone else is cheering for both teams. Everyone needs to be on the same page, everyone needs to be involved to ensure sport is safe and welcoming" (Albert).

- "I'd say university sport is really unique because the university community is typically very supportive of EDI because it affects student learning and campus experiences. So, I find many athletes and even students are already very aware of the value of creating an inclusive environment because the university is already pushing it so hard. We don't have to beg if we want to put the pride flag up or positivity signs, we've had guest speakers come talk about racism and social biases, and are athletes seem to enjoy it" (Janice).

Open-mindedness. Participants voiced their need for greater openness among coaches and sport administrators. They emphasized that embracing intersectionality and understanding the diverse lives of individuals can enhance participation and retention in sport.

- "But I think the biggest thing is people have to be willing to change. So again, as long as we keep having old guards that are there, that will block some of the changes. It will be hard, but eventually people have to retire, or people will move on and there's opportunity for change. And I think that's what's going to be telling in time as you see these new leaders and this new like, you know, next generation of sport administrators coming into play. Are we looking to change or are we looking to keep the status quo…time will tell" (Laniece).

- "People have all or nothing thinking, and I think that's what holding sport back from really being inclusive. Like, they feel the only way to be inclusive for trans-women is to have gender-neutral bathrooms. Ok, but there's other things we can do. We can at the very least just start by having a conversation and trying to understand each other. It doesn't have to be 100% one way or another; we can meet in the middle and negotiate, as long as we're open and respectful" (Mackenzie).

- "There's just so much resistance from this old school generation that think there's only one way to play and manage sport. The old boys club with the 'no pain no gain' mentality of sport. It's just so archaic, we need to think a bit more progressively. Times are changing and sport, or the leaders and followers of sport, need to catch up" (Amy).

- "There's one board member in particular I can think of who used to say things like, 'what does EDI mean? Why are we talking about this? Like, why are we talking about, safe sport?' And he's not perfect now, but he's come a long way. He's shown greater commitment to bettering himself in this space knowing that his experiences as a White man are not indicative of everyone else" (Mackenzie).

- "Creating that open dialogue in an open space is so key. Knowing that you can approach a teammate or colleague and just authentically express yourself without judgement, that's so important to create a safe space. That's how you build trust, knowing that there's people in the organization who got your back" (Emma).

- "I did go to my lead, which is my manager, at one point because I was being mistreated by one of the coaches, and they told me to stay home, and they told me they would pay me for the full day. So, I mean they do listen, and they do talk to them after about that. So, I think my opinion is heard by the people higher up from me for sure" (Kim).

- "I don't think there's a science to it really. Just be a good person. Listen, validate, respect, it's just basic courtesy in a professional workspace. I'm not asking you to march for me or change your belief system, but just be open and understanding that there are people who have different lived experiences, different struggles, interests, likes" (Riham).

Confronting Issues Directly. Participants described their experiences of directly addressing issues within their sport environment and how these actions contributed to promoting Safe Sport for all stakeholders.

- "It was a joke about grooming and like, I've experienced grooming. So, I was triggered, and it sucked. I had to stand up and say, 'That wasn't nice.' But if someone else had stood up and said the grooming joke is not appropriate and you shouldn't have laughed at that, that would have made my feeling of safety in that room go up immensely if someone else had called that out" (Mackenzie).

- "A big thing that he mentioned is for people to come out and talk about situations. And so, our athletic director is also a big advocate for that. He wants people to come to him with issues, and he wants to change things that aren't going right, and he wants just the most positive atmosphere for all teams" (Katrina).

- "So, this particular athlete, this particular sport…this person was called a monkey and like, it was at the opposing venue, so it wasn't a home game. It was an away game, and [fan] had a banana peel and kind of flashed it in [athlete's] direction. I will applaud the athlete's coach for the way it was dealt with. Long story short, but he got the fan kicked out of the venue" (Laniece).

- "I've had to learn how to deal with racism in a way that doesn't reinforce the stereotypes people have of me as a Black man. So, if I overreact, I'm aggressive or violent, but if I stay quiet, the violence continues. It's hard because you feel stuck between a rock and a hard place. I've learned to just ask people, 'why did you say that?' When someone makes a joke about running fast or jumping because I'm Black, I'm like, 'why did you say that?'

They usually get embarrassed and realize how their words are hurtful, without me having to tell them they're hurtful" (Robert).

Recommendations for Advancing Safe Sport

The recommendations suggested by participants for advancing Safe Sport align closely with those outlined in the existing literature (Gurgis & Kerr, 2021; Gurgis et al., 2022b; Kerr & Kerr, 2020; Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018; Willson et al., 2021). For equity-denied sport stakeholders, this alignment further validates their experiences and perspectives within the broader discourse of Safe Sport. Further, it reinforces the urgency for collaborative efforts to implement evidence-based solutions that prioritize the safety, well-being, and participation of all individuals in sport, particularly those who have historically, and continue to experience, social injustices.

Make Safe Sport Training Mandatory Across Sport. Participants advocated for the mandatory implementation of Safe Sport training across all levels of sport, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive training program that assesses participants' understanding and retention of essential knowledge pertaining to the protection of others and promotion of EDI. This approach ensures that all individuals involved in sports are equipped with the necessary tools and awareness to uphold a safe and inclusive sport environment.

- "It's a great first step to mandate education for national level stakeholders, but it should really be across the board. Maltreatment is a systemic issue, so we know it's affecting people top to bottom" (Abbie).

- "There're problems all over sport and a lot of it stems from people just not knowing better. It's not an excuse, but a fact of the matter that people operate in sport the way they were brought up in sport. So, we need education to correct some of the false teachings

people had growing up…education needs to be on what you can and can't do and it needs to be comprehensive, you know, full of everything covered across Safe Sport' (Amy).

- "We need a suite of education that all builds on each other. So, you have your module of preventing maltreatment, sort of like safe sport training. But then you have a course on discrimination of gender, another on race, another on disability, another on creating a positive sport culture. I know these exist in some capacity, but most of them are online and delivered by different people. I'm talking about a one stop shop for all safe sport education, inclusive of everything and mandated across the system" (Janice).

Uphold Organizational Accountability. Participants explained the importance of holding organizations accountable for their failure to prioritize inclusion and effectively implement Safe Sport practices.

- "Yeah, I think administrators need to be accountable to somebody, I feel like they aren't. But if that's the case, then maybe I don't want to say checks and balances system, but somewhere, if an administrator sucks for lack of better word, who's going to do something about it" (Maria).

- "Before the varsity season starts our [athletic director] tells us he needs to see we completed safe sport training. At the same time, I hear how some of my colleagues talk, about the things they do and just the hate they have for safe sport. So, do you really think there's any change happening on their team? That's on the [athletic director]. But it's not just him, it's probably happening across sport" (Lana).

- "There's a lot of hate towards Sport Canada, CAC, all these groups that have declared to be the leaders of safe sport, but then haven't really done anything effective to ensure people are complying with said standards. They gotta be better" (Mackenzie).

Provide Mentorship. Participants discussed the significance of mentorship programs for equity-denied groups, emphasizing their potential to facilitate upward mobility and access to leadership roles across sport.

- "There needs to be more mentorship, you know, for people to have visibility and like, increase their skills and all that" (Robert).

- "I know one of the reasons young girls drop out of sport early is because they don't have any female role models to look up to. I'm sure the same can be said of other disadvantaged groups, so I think it's important to have strong mentors who can guide the next generation of sport leaders" (Saffiya).

- "I'd say my career has changed drastically, for the better, because of the positive mentorship I received coming up as a coach. Any doubt I had in myself was completely gone when I was with [mentor]. To see another Black woman, who much older than me and in the game for a while, so you know she struggled…it's just given me such courage and hope for sport and my role in it" (Lana).

Participate in Community Outreach. Participants stressed the importance of organizations engaging in community outreach initiatives to deliberately encourage equity-denied groups to participate in sport.

- "If you want to get down to the heart of things, then bring cultural groups to the table and ask them for their lived experiences. Because numbers and studies will tell you what numbers and studies will always tell you. But if you want to get to the heart of the problem, you need to put yourself in those uncomfortable conversations and talk to people of colour to have that understanding. And we need to stop going to the same pool of people. Every time things come up, where do they always go? Toronto, Vancouver.

They go to the big cities. It's not just the big cities that have these issues of inequality in sport. Those big cities have more resources, and they have more opportunities to do things for their culturally underrepresented groups. Go to those other groups who do not have those resources and who do not have those same capabilities of those bigger cities. And then you'll have a better understanding of what groups are going through all the time" (Laniece).

- "Let's go to clubs and talk to people. Let's go to clubs and see what they actually have been offered. Talk to people within their environment. By providing more grassroots opportunities, that encourages groups to participate. Also with your marketing team, go into communities, into community organizations, and invite these people to take part" (Janice).

- "They don't realize that maybe outreach requires going out there, bringing some athlete ambassadors with you to talk to community leaders, making sure that the individuals understand that there is a place for them in our sport, and also I think, understanding the amount of work that needs to be done to engage marginalized individuals in our sport" (Amy).

- "Change should be bottom-up, not top-down, because the people at the top like to control the story, convince you things are better than they actually are. Real change starts at the bottom, in the community, with the real people impacted by exclusion and racism, who don't have the resources or means like our national teams. So, start in the community, get the media involved to cover stories, make calls to action, and force these big names to do something that benefits everyone in sport, not just those at the top" (Eunice).

Recommendations

Drawing from insights gathered from the survey and interview data, as well as relevant literature

on Safe Sport or adjacent to Safe Sport, this section will explore recommendations aimed at

promoting Safe Sport for equity-denied sport stakeholders.

Reconceptualize Safe Sport as Safeguarding Sport

A major criticism of Safe Sport has been the lack of a universal definition (Kerr et al., 2020),

consequently influencing various governing sport bodies to create their own versions of Safe

Sport in their prevention and intervention initiatives. The findings of this study indicate that the

prevailing discourse on Safe Sport, focused solely on harm prevention, is incomplete. While a

prevention of harms approach provides understanding of *what not to do*, many sport stakeholders

lack understanding regarding the optimisation of sport experiences that are safe inclusive and

welcoming through the promotion of positive values as well (what *to* do; Gurgis et al., 2023;

Lang & Hartill, 2015), sentiments shared by the participants in the current study. This

consideration echoes the concept of safeguarding which is characterized by a rights-based

approach and efforts to protect participants from maltreatment, prevent impairment against a

participants' health and development, the assurance that all participants receive safe and

effective care, and the commitment to action that ensures every participant experiences the best

outcomes in sport (Hedges, 2015; Lang, 2021; Lang & Hartill, 2015; Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere,

2018). To advance a safeguarding approach to sport the following actions are recommended.

  o Adopt a safeguarding framework and evaluate sport organizations and its stakeholders'

    ability to implement in practice.

  o Advocate for the optimization of the sport environment (safeguarding approach)

    throughout all sport levels and organizations. Such a focus will help to shift away from a

prevention of harms approach and win-at-all-costs mentalities that often supersedes the health, well-being, and development of all participants.

Design, Implement and Enforce Comprehensive EDI Policies and Initiatives

While the athletes, coaches, and administrators in the current study identified that efforts to enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion are essential for advancing Safe Sport, they also acknowledged that EDI policies and initiatives had several shortcomings. In fact, the design and enforcement of such policies in Canada, aimed at safeguarding sport stakeholders from harm or advancing EDI, have proven unsuccessful (Donnelly et al., 2016; Rajwani et al., 2021). Peers and colleagues (2023), who analyzed 143 Canadian national-led EDI sport policies and found that many merely pay lip service to inclusivity without implementing substantive changes or accountability measures (e.g., NSOs make sweeping statements about their commitment to EDI without providing evidence of concrete actions to fulfill these commitments; Peers et al., 2023). To advance the principles of EDI in sport the following actions are recommended.

- o Implement a collaborative and transparent approach to EDI policy/initiative development and enforcement that involves equity-denied sport stakeholders in decision-making processes within sport organizations.

- o Implement policies and initiatives that enforce equitable hiring practices (see positions of leadership below), effective integration of quotas for equity-denied groups, and cultivating equity champions.

- o Policies designed to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in sport should be empirically evaluated. For example, annual audits examining the effectiveness of such policies are needed to ensure regular amendments are made based on evaluations of an organization's progress towards EDI goals.

○ Implement a diverse Task Force comprising policy experts, but also those with lived

experiences of discrimination in sport. The mandate would be to create comprehensive

EDI policies and initiatives, modeled after the UCCMS. This policy would be mandated

for adoption by all sport organizations throughout Canada. By implementing universal

EDI policies and initiatives that addresses the needs of all equity-denied groups, we can

establish a systematic, yet inclusive approach across the entire sport system to advance

EDI.

Prioritize EDI in Positions of Leadership

In terms of sport leadership (e.g., coaches, athletic directors) in Canada, such positions are overwhelmingly held by white, heterosexual men (Heroux & Strashin, 2020; Joseph et al., 2021). The disregard for EDI in selecting sport leaders embodies access and treatment discrimination for equity-denied participants in sport, which entails excluding members of certain groups as well as denying individuals of certain groups a voice in decision making, access to resources, rewards, or on the job opportunities that are deserved (Evans & Pfister, 2021; Howe & Rockhill, 2020). Subsequently, lack of EDI in positions of leadership create experiences where sport is not safe for all participants (Gurgis et al., 2022b). The participants in the current study highlighted the need for EDI in positions of leadership; organizations that promote diversity, inclusivity, and equity in leadership roles often report safer environments and lower rates of harassment, discrimination and abuse (Adriaanse, 2017; Gurgis & Kerr, 2021). To advance EDI in positions of leadership, the following actions are recommended.

○ Increase employment opportunities for equity deserving groups, such as women,

Indigenous and racialized individuals and those who are part of the LGBTQ

community, in leadership (e.g., coaching, management, etc.). Having diversity

represented in leadership positions helps to challenge organizational norms and traditional sport cultures, increases awareness about and promotes positive environments, and equitable policies, practices, and experiences. Further, prioritizing EDI in leadership may help to enforce inclusive polices mentioned above.

o Ensure EDI representation on committees/governing bodies of sport organizations. For example, by 2025, Sport Canada has required that no more than 60% of board members can be of the same gender. This should be expanded to include other equity-denied groups.

o Increase opportunities for equity-denied sport stakeholders to access professional development opportunities (e.g., education, mentoring) which may help to streamline their advancement to leadership positions in sport.

Develop Comprehensive and Compulsory Education

The emergence of Safe Sport has spurred the creation of various educational initiatives, such as the Coaching Association of Canada's (CAC) Safe Sport Training, Anti-Racism in Coaching, and NCCP Creating a Positive Sport Environment. These initiatives align with efforts by international bodies, such as Safe Sport International and the US Center for SafeSport, as well as recommendations in the literature advocating for safeguarding education (Gurgis & Kerr, 2021; MacPherson et al., 2022). However, despite the emphasis on education for promoting prevention, intervention, and behavioural change in sport, several limitations persist (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Kerr et al., 2014; Willson et al., 2022). There is a notable absence of discussions around EDI in current educational initiatives, leading to criticism for promoting a 'one size fits all' approach to Safe Sport advancement (Gurgis et al., 2022b; MacPherson et al., 2022). For instance, Indigenous coaches have voiced concerns about the culturally insensitive Aboriginal

Coaching Modules developed by the CAC, which make broad assumptions about Indigenous culture and beliefs (Gurgis et al., 2022a). While the participants in the current study recognized the increase of Safe Sport education in recent years, they still emphasized the importance of educating all stakeholders and providing education in sport that is culturally sensitive. To address shortcomings of Safe Sport Education, the following actions are recommended.

- o Develop comprehensive and compulsory EDI education programs. These programs should be research informed and designed to incorporate diverse perspectives, including input from equity-denied communities, to ensure cultural sensitivity and relevance.

- o Ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to assess the effectiveness of the education programs (i.e., are the education programs leading to changes in practice) and inform necessary adjustments based upon participant input and outcomes.

- o To ensure stakeholder knowledge and comprehension and that all stakeholders are up to date with Safe Sport related education, annual or biannual renewal of training is suggested. Specific focus should be on renewing training that prioritizes principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Centre the Voices of Equity-Denied Sport Stakeholders

Our study's focus on amplifying the voices of equity-denied sport stakeholders aligns with the growing body of literature on Safe Sport research, which highlights the importance of centring marginalized perspectives to drive meaningful change (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Joseph et al., 2021; Mountjoy et al., 2022). This entails actively seeking and collaborating with equity-denied groups throughout the research process, governance structures, policy design, and educational initiatives to ensure their viewpoints shape the advancement of such initiatives when

applied to Safe Sport. These collaborative efforts are crucial in the context of safeguarding, as the active involvement of equity-denied sport stakeholders can better ensure that they become beneficiaries of safeguarding (Hartill & Lang, 2015). While many sport organizations claim to include equity-denied voices in Safe Sport discussions and development efforts, mere inclusion is insufficient. True centring of equity-denied voices requires a transformative approach that begins with individual, organizational, and collective reflection on the origins and perpetuation of inequities. To address the importance of empowering equity-denied stakeholders' voices in sport, the following actions are recommended.

- o Implement an EDI panel/committee or EDI representatives, which includes elected members (athletes, coaches, administrators) who will serve as the leadership group to advocate on behalf of all equity-denied participants regarding Safe Sport issues, such as policies, educational programmes, and complaint processes.

- o Actively engage in collaborative discussion with equity-denied stakeholders when developing safe sport initiatives (e.g., focus groups, town halls, etc.). For example, feedback from equity-denied stakeholders should be used to inform content for education or policy expectations.

- o Conduct annual audits with a specific focus on exploring the current culture of sport organizations as it pertains to equity, diversity, and inclusion and the perspectives of equity-denied sport stakeholders.

Increase Knowledge Mobilization and Dissemination

Although the increased public attention and scrutiny regarding Safe Sport issues has resulted in the proliferation of Safe Sport initiatives, knowledge translation remains an area of concern (Lang & Hartill, 2015, Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2022). The following actions are

recommended to mobilize and disseminate knowledge to those in the field who may benefit from its use, and thus enact change and cultivate Safe Sport.

- o Increase access for all sport stakeholders to relevant Safe Sport-related forums (e.g., Sport Canada Research Initiative Conference, Sport Leadership Conference, webinars)

- o Conduct annual town-halls with researchers, experts, and sport stakeholders to collaboratively discuss concerns regarding EDI in the sport domain.

- o Develop an open access repository of Safe Sport resources. Abuse-free sport provides access to Safe Sport-related resources (education, reporting mechanism, etc.), however abuse-free sport is mostly targeted towards national sport participants, and thus a repository that is more readily accessible to sport stakeholders at all levels would be beneficial.

Conclusion

Despite the emergence of Safe Sport initiatives in Canada, there is a visible gap in the inclusion of equity-denied sport stakeholders' perspectives in the development and implementation of these safeguards. Consequently, these stakeholders remain vulnerable to experiencing various types of maltreatment (Gurgis et al., 2022b; Joseph et al., 2021). A more inclusive approach to Safe Sport is needed if we are to truly advance Safe Sport for all. The findings of this project provide critical insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by equity-denied sport stakeholders in experiencing Safe Sport. Through a mixed-methods approach, numerous barriers (e.g., cultural insensitivity, patriarchal structures, and fragmented approaches to Safe Sport) as well as facilitators which offer promising avenues for progress (e.g., improving representation, community engagement, mandatory training, and centring equity-denied voices in decision-making processes) were identified by the equity-denied stakeholders. Building on these

findings, our recommendations advocate for a multi-pronged approach, characterized by the reconceptualization of Safe Sport as Safeguarding Sport, implementing comprehensive EDI policies, prioritizing EDI in leadership, enhancing education, and improving knowledge dissemination efforts. By addressing these barriers and leveraging facilitators, we can work towards creating a sport environment that is truly safe, inclusive, and equitable for all participants, regardless of identity or background. Collectively, this project accentuates the importance of ongoing research, collaboration, and advocacy in advancing Safe Sport and promoting social justice in sport for equity-denied sport stakeholders.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Background
1. So, you're involved in the sport of _____, how did you become involved in this sport?
2. Reflecting on your current role in sport, what aspects do you find most enjoyable? Conversely, are there any aspects of your current role that you find less satisfying?

Safe Sport:
As discussed, the focus of this project is understanding the barriers and facilitators to experiencing safe sport. Before delving into those details, I want to begin by exploring your understanding of safe sport.
1. When you think of the term Safe Sport, what does this mean to you and what does it look like in terms of your experience in sport (e.g., physical safety, inclusivity, anti-oppression, etc.)?
    a. Does Safe Sport encompass EDI?
2. In your opinion, is equity/diversity/inclusion a priority in the sport environment? Please explain.
    a. (Examples) Consider hiring practices, diversity and inclusion in positions of leadership, etc.).
3. In your opinion, is the sport environment safe for participants of all identities (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQI+ athletes)? Please explain.

Experiences of Safe Sport:
For the following questions, I am interested in hearing about your perspectives on situations you have experienced or witnessed as an equity-denied (marginalized) individual regarding times you felt/did not feel sport was safe, inclusive, and welcoming.
4. Describe situations in sport you have experienced or witnessed where you felt sport was a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all.
5. Describe situations in sport you have experienced or witnessed where you felt sport was not a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all.
    a. Consider interactions between sport participants, times when your opinions/voices were/were not considered, etc.
6. In your opinion, how might your experiences of safe sport differ from individuals with privileged intersecting identities (e.g., white, heterosexual, able bodied, males)?
7. Are you aware of the Safe Sport efforts in Canada? If so, do you believe that Safe Sport efforts in Canada have sufficiently protected marginalized participants from harm. Please explain.
    a. Consider Safe Sport Training/other education, UCCMS, OSIC, advocacy initiatives.

Barriers/Facilitators to Safe Sport:
8. In your view, what are some of the main barriers that prevent equity-denied sport participants from fully experiencing Safe Sport environments? Feel free to draw from your observations or personal encounters with these barriers.

      a.   What are the consequences of these barriers for achieving Safe Sport for equity-denied sport participants?

9. In your opinion, what are the facilitators that help promote Safe Sport experiences for equity-denied sport participants? Please explain.

      a.   Why are these facilitators important for achieving Safe Sport for equity-denied sport participants?

10. What recommendations or suggestions do you have for advancing Safe Sport for equity-denied sport participants? This can encompass the roles of administrators, coaches, athletes, or any other relevant parties in improving Safe Sport practices.

      a.   In your opinion, what measures should be taken to ensure that Safe Sport practices are inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of participants?

Concluding Remarks:

11. In your opinion why has it been so challenging to advance Safe Sport, especially for equity-denied sport participants?

12. Do you think it's possible for equity-denied sport participants to truly experience Safe Sport? Please explain why or why not?

13. Do you have any questions or comments for me?

Appendix B: Online Survey

Barriers and Facilitators to Safe Sport

Dear Participant,

Background
In response to growing public awareness and prevalence studies of maltreatment in sport, there has been an emergence of legislative and organizational initiatives aimed at advancing Safe Sport. Despite these efforts, however, there is growing apprehension that such initiatives do not extend to, or consider, the unique safety needs of athletes, coaches, and sport administrators from equity-denied groups, including women, persons with disabilities, and individuals within the 2SLGBTQI+ and BIPOC communities. The exclusion of equity-denied participants' voices in the development and advancement of Safe Sport initiatives challenges the ability to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive experiences for all and is deeply concerning when considering these individuals are at increased risk of experiencing various types of harm, including maltreatment and discrimination in sport.

Participant Criteria
To participate in this study, you must be:
1. A current high-performance (e.g., post-secondary, provincial, national, and/or professional) Canadian athlete or coach
2. A current Canadian sport administrator with experience within the high-performance sport context
3. 18 years of age or older
4. Identify as an individual from an equity-denied group (e.g., woman, person with a disability, 2SLGBTQI+, BIPOC)

Survey Participation
If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a 20-minute anonymous online survey examining the barriers and facilitators to experiencing Safe Sport for equity-denied stakeholders. The survey is administered through Google Forms, which is a secure server. Consent to participate in the study will be assumed if you complete the survey. When you submit your survey responses you will also be given the opportunity to voluntarily decide if you want to participate in Phase 2 of the study, which involves participating in a focus group session. After submission of the survey the closing page will provide a link that when clicked, will direct you out of the survey to a separate form where you may voluntarily provide your name and email. Please note that your contact information will **NOT** be linked to your survey responses.

Participant Rights
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice by closing your browser prior to submitting your final responses. Given the anonymous nature of the study, data cannot be withdraw following the submission of the final

responses. If you choose to participate, your identity will remain completely anonymous (i.e., no personally identifying information, such as name, email address, phone number, or institution, will be collected or disclosed). All data will be stored using a certified-secure online provider, which will be accessible only to the research team. Any downloaded original data will be stored on a password protected computer in the research team's offices for up to two years and then deleted. By consenting to participation, you are not waiving your right to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this study is essential to foster safe and inclusive spaces for sport stakeholders across Canada. There are no real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest associated with participation. There are no major risks associated with participating in this study; however, it is possible that you may become emotionally distressed or anxious reading through and/or responding to various survey questions. Further, participants who have been victimized may be reminded of their negative experiences, consequently eliciting feelings of sadness, fear, or worry. You may discontinue your involvement in the survey at any time by closing your browser. Your survey will be flagged as incomplete, and your responses will be eliminated from the analysis. For participants who experience emotional distress or discomfort while participating in this survey, a comprehensive list of mental health support services has been compiled and can be accessed here: Support Services. This list contains free sport-specific, provincial/territorial support services. Participants may also contact the Principal Investigator by email to inquire about additional supports.

Compensation

If you agree to participate and submit your survey responses, you will be given the option of providing your name and email information which will be entered into a random draw to win one of twenty $30 Visa cards. It is estimated that roughly 450 athletes, coaches, and sport administrators may participate in the study, and therefore the estimated probability of winning a draw prize is 4.44%. To maintain anonymity, the closing page will provide a link, that when clicked will direct you out of the survey to a separate form where you may provide your name and email information (i.e., your contact information will not be linked to your survey responses).

Funding

This study is funded by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada. For more information, please refer to "abuse-free sport" at https://abuse-free-sport.ca/.

Dissemination

The findings of the study will be disseminated via publication and across various scholarly and applied conferences. Further, an executive summary will be shared with the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, who will make the findings of this study public.

This study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of Ontario Tech University (File No. 17469). If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Joseph Gurgis (joseph.gurgis@ontariotechu.ca). For concerns regarding your

rights as a research participant, please contact Ontario Tech University's Research Ethics Office at researchethics@ontariotechu.ca.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Gurgis | joseph.gurgis@ontariotechu.ca | Ontario Tech University

Consent

To support our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and healthy sport environment, we are interested in learning more about your experiences in sport. Below are a series of questions regarding your experiences as an athlete, coach, or sport administrator. We are interested in your opinions, experiences and comments and thus, there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will remain anonymous as your completed survey will only be accessed by the Principal Investigator.

I acknowledge and comprehend that my involvement in this study is completely voluntary and that I have the option to either decline participation or discontinue at any point prior to submitting the online survey without any adverse consequences. Taking into consideration the anonymous design of the study, I recognize that I cannot retract my data once I have submitted my final responses. Additionally, I am aware that granting my consent to participate does not nullify my entitlement to take legal action in case of harm resulting from the research. I have read this consent form and know who to contact if I have any further questions.

By continuing this survey, I acknowledge that I am consenting to participate in this study.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Which stakeholder group do you primarily represent?
   - Athlete
   - Coach
   - Sport Administrator

2. What age range do you fall within?

   - 18-29 years
   - 30-39 years
   - 40-49 years
   - 50-59 years
   - 60+ years

3. How do you describe your gender? Select all that apply.
   - Cisgender

- Gender non-conforming
- Intersex
- Man
- Non-binary
- Trans
- Two-spirit
- Woman
- I choose not to answer this question.
- Other:

4. Please indicate your self-identified sexual orientation. Select all that apply.
    - Lesbian
    - Gay
    - Bisexual
    - Queer
    - Two-spirit
    - Asexual
    - Heterosexual
    - I choose not to answer this question.
    - Other:

5. Please indicate which group(s) from the Canadian census list below best represents you. Select all that apply.
    - Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)
    - Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan)
    - Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali)
    - Chinese
    - Filipino
    - Japanese
    - Korean
    - Latin American
    - South American
    - Southeast Asian
    - White (Caucasian)
    - Other:

6. Please indicate if you have a disability. Select all that apply.
    - I have an invisible disability
    - I have a mental health disability
    - I have a visible disability

- I do not have a disability
- I don't know
- I choose not to answer this question.
- Other:

7. Do you self-identify as racialised?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I choose not to answer this question.

8. Do you self-identify as Indigenous?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I choose not to answer this question.

9. In your current role, which sport(s) are you most involved with?
   Select all that apply.
    - Alpine Skiing
    - Archery
    - Artistic Swimming
    - Athletics
    - Badminton
    - Baseball
    - Basketball
    - Biathlon
    - Blind Bowling
    - Bobsleigh
    - Boccia
    - Boxing
    - Canoe
    - Climbing
    - Cricket
    - Cross-Country
    - Cross-Country Skiing
    - Curling
    - Cycling
    - Diving
    - Equestrian
    - Fencing
    - Field Hockey
    - Figure Skating
    - Freestyle Skiing

- Goalball
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Handball
- Hockey
- Judo
- Karate
- Kayak
- Lacrosse
- Lawn Bowling
- Luge
- Modern Pentathlon
- Multisport
- Orienteering
- Racquetball
- Ringette
- Rowing
- Rugby
- Sailing
- Shooting
- Skeleton
- Ski Jumping
- Snowboarding
- Soccer
- Softball
- Speed Skating
- Squash
- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Taekwondo
- Ten Pin Bowling
- Tennis
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Water Polo
- Water Skiing
- Wake Boarding
- Weightlifting
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Wheelchair Rugby

- Wrestling
- Other:

10. Considering your current role, how long have you been involved in your primary sport(s)?
    - Less than 5 years
    - 5-10 years
    - 11-15 years
    - 16+ years

11. What level(s) of sport are you currently affiliated with? Select all that apply.
    - Post-secondary (i.e., University or college)
    - Provincial
    - National
    - Professional
    - Other:

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORT

The Government of Canada's (2023) *Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology* presents the following definitions:

Equity: The principle of considering people's unique experiences and differing situations, and ensuring they have access to the resources and opportunities that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

Diversity: The variety of identities found within an organization, group or society.

Inclusion: The practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected and valued, and to foster a sense of belonging and engagement.

12. I feel equity is **valued** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neither Agree nor Disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

13. I feel diversity is **valued** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).

14. I feel inclusion is **valued** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).

15. I feel equity is **demonstrated** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).

16. I feel diversity is **demonstrated** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).

17. I feel inclusion is **demonstrated** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment (e.g., team or place of work).

18. I feel persons from all backgrounds and with a range of identities **DO** have equitable opportunities to enter sport.

SAFETY IN SPORT

The Government of Canada's (2023) *Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology* presents the following definition:

Safe Space: A physical or virtual space or environment where people can express themselves and share experiences without fear of discrimination, judgment, conflict, criticism, harassment or repercussions. A safe space can be created for a particular purpose and is meant to be rooted in empathy and support. A safe space can have as few as two people or can include all the members of a team, network, department or organization.

19. I feel my immediate sport and/or professional environment is a **safe space** for persons with disabilities.

20. I feel my immediate sport and/or professional environment is a **safe space** for persons associated with the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

21. I feel my immediate sport and/or professional environment is a **safe space** for persons of all genders.

22. I feel my immediate sport and/or professional environment is a **safe space** for persons who identify as racialised, Indigenous, or a person of colour.

23. I feel **safe** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

PERSONAL FEELINGS OF BELONGINGNESS AND INCLUSION

24. I feel my identity is **accepted** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

25. I feel my identity is **valued** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

26. I feel my identity is **respected** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

27. I feel my identity is **welcomed** in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

28. I feel comfortable talking about my identity within my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

29. I feel comfortable raising issues of discrimination within my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

30. I feel comfortable raising issues of maltreatment (e.g., abuse, neglect, harassment, hazing, assault) within my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

31. I feel comfortable asking for additional supports or resources if I need them (e.g., funding, practice space, extra coaching, mental health care).

32. I feel opportunities for development are shared equitably among participants in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

33. I feel guidance and feedback to improve performance and achieve goals is provided equitably amongst all participants in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

34. I feel achievements are celebrated equitably and amongst individuals of all backgrounds and identities in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

EXPERIENCES IN THE SPORT ENVIRONMENT

35. Have you experienced name calling, insults, or discriminatory jokes related to your identity?
36. Have you experienced criticism related to your identity?

37. Have you experienced a lack of opportunities for personal, professional or athletic development due to your identity?

38. Have you been intentionally ignored due to your identity?

39. Have you been forced to engage in degrading/humiliating activities as a result of your identity (e.g., hazing)?

40. Have you felt unable to bring your whole or true self to the sport environment (e.g., felt pressure to present oneself as more masculine or feminine than one is naturally, felt pressure to hide spiritual beliefs, etc.)?

41. Have you experienced physical aggression or physical threats due to your identity?

42. Have you experienced microaggressions related to your identity (e.g., covert, subtle, or brief interactions that communicate hostile, stigmatized or negative attitudes)?

43. Have you experienced support or received resources related to your identity?

44. Have you experienced opportunities for personal, professional, or athletic development due to your identity (e.g., networking, opportunities to share personal experiences in sport, participation in committees)?

45. Have you received accommodation(s) for personal needs when requested (e.g., attire, facilities, equipment, time for spiritual/religious practice)?

SAFE SPORT EXPERIENCES AND AWARENESS

46. I am familiar with the term Safe Sport.

47. In your opinion, what is the purpose of Safe Sport?

48. I feel persons with disabilities **CAN** experience Safe Sport.

49. In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons with disabilities **DO** experience Safe Sport.

50. I feel persons associated with the 2SLGBTQI+ community **CAN** experience Safe Sport.

51. In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons associated with the 2SLGBTQI+ community **DO** experience Safe Sport.

52. I feel persons of all genders **CAN** experience Safe Sport.

53. In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons of all genders **DO** experience Safe Sport.

54. I feel persons who identify as racialised, Indigenous, or a person of colour **CAN** experience Safe Sport.

55. In my immediate sport and/or professional environment, persons who identify as racialised, Indigenous, or a person of colour **DO** experience Safe Sport.

56. I feel I am able to experience Safe Sport in my immediate sport and/or professional environment.

57. When there are major decisions made about Safe Sport initiatives, all participants are involved in or consulted regarding the decisions in an equitable and inclusive way.

58. Please outline any relevant barriers you perceive may prevent equity-denied sport stakeholders from experiencing Safe Sport.

59. Please indicate from the list the relevant facilitators you perceive as necessary for promoting Safe Sport among equity-denied sport stakeholders.

- Policy development and implementation (e.g., overarching organizational policies, technical rules, flexible dress codes, facility policies)
- Education (e.g., formal education or trainings, optional learning opportunities, familiarizing teams with diversity, equity, and inclusion policies
- Advocacy (e.g., participation in equity-focused events, public statements, team discussions, voicing support for equity, diversity, and inclusion in NSO environment)
- Established accessible, independent and transparent procedures to manage maltreatment and discrimination
- Increasing equitable representation on Boards, staff, committees, teams
- Hiring a staff-person/creating a portfolio to oversee equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives
- Building advisory committees to direct equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives
- Devoting funding to developing new programs (e.g., para-sports)
- Including equity-denied stakeholders' voices (e.g., athletes) in decision-making (e.g., athlete advisory committee, athlete representation on committees/boards)
- None of the above
- Other:

60. Please outline any other recommendations for advancing Safe Sport initiatives for equity-denied sport stakeholders.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. To enter a random draw to win one of twenty $30.00 Visa gift cards and/or express your interest in participating in a follow-up focus group interview, please click here:

SURVEY DRAW & FOCUS GROUP REGISTRATION

Please be aware that your contact details will not be associated with your survey responses. All survey data will be kept confidential and anonymous.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your email address?
3. Are you interested in being contacted to participate in a follow-up focus group interview?
   a. Yes
   b. No