

Bullying Information Sheet

Bullying Behaviors are repeated or severe aggressive behaviors directed at someone under age 18. The behaviors are intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish that person emotionally, physically, or sexually.

Bullying involves repeated or severe behaviors such as:

- **Physical:** hitting, beating up, spitting at, or throwing objects at someone
- **Verbal:** ridiculing, name-calling, taunting, or threatening to harm someone
- **Social** (including cyberbullying): spreading rumors or lies to harm someone's reputation, socially excluding them and asking others to do the same, or using technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate them
- **Sexual:** ridiculing or taunting someone about their gender identity, gender expression, looks, or sexual orientation or behavior
- **Criminal conduct:** any conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

When done to adults, these behaviors could qualify as other violations of the SafeSport Code, such as Hazing or Harassment.

Bullying does not include:

- Rude or mean behaviors that may be hurtful (by accident or on purpose) but are not part of an ongoing pattern
- A conflict in which people disagree
- Techniques and behaviors that are professionally accepted

Tennis providers who observe rude, mean, or conflict-based behaviors should monitor them to see if they are dealt with in a healthy manner, and not reflective of a deeper pattern of Bullying and exclusion. By holding individuals accountable for any harm they may cause, tennis providers can foster positive sport environments and prevent behaviors from escalating into Bullying.

What are examples of Bullying?

- A competitor posts hurtful and inaccurate rumors about a 14-year-old athlete on multiple social media platforms.
- Athletes aggressively ridicule a heavy 12-year-old teammate before and after most JTT team practices

Inclusion: A healthier way to respond

- When someone engages in Bullying Behaviors, they often use physical or social power to exclude and make someone feel less than others. This also makes it harder for targets to stop the behavior
- When someone exhibits inclusive behaviors, they use social power to include and build up others, bringing them into a group and making them feel welcome
- Bullying and inclusion are behaviors based on a specific context: someone can engage in Bullying in one context yet be a target of Bullying in another

Scenarios

Devon is new to his JTT team and is paired up with the top player on the team for doubles matches.

- **Bullying:** Some of Devon's teammates call him a freak and shove him around the locker room after most practices, threatening to make his life miserable if he doesn't quit the team
- **Inclusion:** Team captains make sure Devon is included in all team activities and help him get to know his new teammates

Carly and Keira, opponents at a tournament, are fighting after their match.

- **Bullying:** Keira encourages other players to gang up on Carly. They text Carly over 50 times that night, telling her that everyone hates her and that she doesn't belong on the court.
- **Inclusion:** Instead of taking sides, other players help them work out their disagreements.