

Psychological violence in a sports environment. What are we talking about?



Psychological violence

When a person is subject to serious and continuous behaviours that result in harm to the person by a parent or another person involved in sports.

These behaviours lead to indifference, denigration, emotional rejection, excessive control, isolation, threats, exploitation, particularly if the child is forced to do a job or an activity disproportionate to their capacity.

Examples of psychological violence in a sports or leisure-related environment:

- Shouting insults (e.g., swearing), saying mean things or making humiliating comments to the athlete.
- Striking or throwing objects out of anger and frustration (throwing a hockey stick, kicking a garbage can, etc.).
- Saying mean things or making humiliating comments to the participant.
- Threatening the participant with physical injury or pretending to throw something at them.
- Systematically ejecting or excluding the participant from a training session, rejecting or voluntarily ignoring the participant (e.g., systematically pretending the person is not present).
- Forcing the participant to train in spite of an injury known to the coaching team.
- Inflicting extra training sessions which lead to exhaustion or which make the participant sick.
- Asking the participant to perform moves or technical skills too difficult for their capacity.
- All other requests which could have negative impacts on a participant's health (e.g., using dangerous weight techniques, doping products, etc.).

Psychological harassment

Any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects a person's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful environment for the person. A single behaviour can also constitute harassment if it affects the person and produces a continuous harmful effect.

Examples of behaviours that could be linked to psychological harassment:

- Bullying
- Isolation
- Cyberbullying
- Verbal violence
- Threats
- Denigration
- Offensive or defamatory statements about a person or their work

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is assimilated with *psychological violence*. It is probably the most frequent form of violence in sport, but the least visible as well. Often, nobody in the victim's entourage even realizes the abuse is taking place.

Psychological abuse occurs when a person who takes care of another person (e.g., coach, therapist, volunteer, etc.) regularly ridicules, belittles them in front of others, intentionally excludes them or adopts other behaviours that shake the person's confidence and self-esteem.



59 to 62%

of athletes report having experienced psychological violence*

Don't take any situation lightly or brush it off
Need help? 1-833-245-HELP (4357)

