

Level 1 Training

General Orientation
Concussion Education
Protective Behaviors

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Thank You!



Thank you for being part of the Special Olympics family. It is through the caring, concern and talents of all our athletes, families and volunteers that Special Olympics has become one of the most respected sports programs in the world. Your participation in this training is just one more way that you demonstrate your dedication.

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Part 1:

General Orientation Training

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Mission

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics' athlete, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world.

Components

- Year-round
- Sports training and competition
- Olympic-type sports
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities

Outcomes

- Physical fitness
- Courage and joy
- Sharing of gifts and skills
- Friendship with family, athletes and community



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Vision

Special Olympics Minnesota will be recognized as the premier organization providing essential life skills opportunities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Our athletes will derive the full benefit of our mission through multi-level, year round sports opportunities and related health and leadership programs.



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Structure

- Special Olympics Minnesota accredited Special Olympics program in 1973
- Minnesota serves more than 8,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities
- Year-round sports training and competition opportunities.
- The state is divided into 13 program areas to better serve our athletes.
- State, regional and yearly area competitions
- Local teams competing in different Olympic-type sports
- Volunteer training through our approved Coaches Education Program, which provides sports specific training to more than 500 coaches each year.
- Worldwide more than 4.1 million athletes from more than 175 countries



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Current Sports Offered

Winter Games

- Alpine Skiing
- Snowboarding
- Poly Hockey
- Powerlifting

January- March Season

Summer Games

- Swimming
- Basketball
- Track & Field
- Gymnastics

April- June Season

Fall Games

- Bocce
- Softball

July- September Season

Summer Sport Classic

- Equestrian
- Golf
- Tennis

July- early August

Standalone State Competitions

- Volleyball- Area only competition
- Unified State Flag Football- October
- State Bowling- November



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Competition Opportunities

- Scrimmages
- Area Competitions (+90 annually)
- Regional Competitions (3 annually)
- State Competitions (5 annually)
- National Games (every 4 years)
- World Games (every 2 years)



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Statement of Eligibility

Special Olympics training and competition is provided for:

- Persons with an intellectual or developmental disability as identified by an agency or a professional
- Ages 8 years or older
- Person registered with Special Olympics to participate
- Children ages 2-7 can participate in Young Athletes

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

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Statement of Eligibility

Developmental disability is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disabilities but also includes physical disabilities. Some developmental disabilities can be strictly physical, such as blindness from birth. Some developmental disabilities – such as autism or cerebral palsy – might include intellectual disabilities. Other developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome and fragile X syndrome, could also include intellectual disabilities. Intellectual disabilities can also be caused by social factors.

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Statement of Eligibility

Down Syndrome

Approximately 10 percent of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine. These athletes are prohibited from the following activities, unless examined by a physician: butterfly stroke and diving starts in swimming, diving, pentathlon, high jumps, squat lifts, equestrian sports, artistic gymnastics, soccer, alpine skiing and any warm up exercise placing undue stress on the head and neck.

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Statement of Eligibility

Blood-Borne Contagious Infection Carriers

No Accredited Program or Games Organizing Committee may exclude, isolate, or discriminate from participation in any Special Olympics training or competition any athletes who is known to be a carrier of a blood-borne contagious infection or virus.

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Background Check Information

Coaches

Area Level:

Coaches who have not initiated the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

Coaches who have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline can attend area competitions but cannot be used to fulfill coach ratios.

State Level:

Coaches who do not pass a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

Unified Partners

Unified Partners who have not passed a background check prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.

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Background Check Information

Athletes

Area Level:

Athletes who have not initiated the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.

Athletes who have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline cannot attend Area competitions but may be eligible to advance to a higher level of competition if results are returned prior to state Errors & Exceptions deadline.

State Level:

Athletes who have not passed a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

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Unique from Other Sports Organizations

- Sports opportunities for all ability levels
- Divisioning for equitable competition
- Awards for all participants
- Eligible for advancement to higher levels of competition

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Divisioning

Combining athletes or teams with similar skill levels in to matches, games, etc using the following criteria:

Gender

Age

Ability

**Ages and gender may be combined if this achieves a closer matching of ability*



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Advancement to Higher Level Competition

National and World Games Only

- Minimum training requirement (10 hours within eight weeks prior to a culminating competition) with a certified Special Olympics coach
- Training and competition must be in the same sport in which the athlete will compete
- If quotas are limited, priority is given to first-place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event based on eligibility requirements. If the number of first-place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes are selected by random draw



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Additional Opportunities for Athletes

[Unified Sports](#)

[Athlete Leadership Program \(ALPs\)](#)

[Summer Sports Camp](#)

[Wilderness Inquiry Trips](#)

[Healthy Athletes](#)

[Young Athletes](#)

[Unified Schools](#)



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Unified Sports

Inclusive based sports combining individuals with and without an intellectual disability on the same sports team. Special Olympics Minnesota offers Unified Sports in basketball, bowling, bocce, tennis, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, swimming, track & field, volleyball, softball and flag football.

Unified Sports enables athletes and unified partners to:

- Experience meaningful inclusion
- Build an inclusive environment in their school, community and team
- Socialize with peers and develop new friendships
- Participate in their communities and have choices outside of Special Olympics

Click [here](#) to see the video featuring Unified Sports at Orono High School



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Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs)

The [Mission of Athlete Leadership Programs \(ALPs\)](#) To empower athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices to assume meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement, and educate communities around the world that results in positive life changes.



Training classes include Athletes as Coaches, Beginning Global Messenger, Graduate Global Messenger, Athletes as Volunteers, Governance and Leadership 101, Challenges Through Choice, Health & Wellness Ambassador, DIFFERbilities in Youth Leadership, & Athletes as Ambassadors.

Click [here](#) for more information on ALPs!

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Healthy Athletes

Healthy Athletes mission is to improve athletes' ability to train and compete in Special Olympics. The program is designed to improve athletes health and fitness, leading to enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Healthy Athletes has seven disciplines:

Special Smiles (dental screening)

Healthy Hearing (hearing screening)

MedFest (sports physical exam)

Fit Feet (podiatry screening)

FUNfitness (physical therapy/education)

Opening Eyes (eye exam)

Health Promotion (health information and seminars)

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SoFit

Special Olympics Minnesota's SOfit health promotion program is a Unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. SOfit offers participants a comprehensive, 360-degree look at wellness and the human spirit. Together, athletes and Unified partners are empowered to challenge and change the way they look at diet, daily exercise and lifestyle choices.

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Young Athletes

Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age eight.

Our Goals

- Engage children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive and social development.
- Welcome family members of children with and without intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support.
- Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events.
- Developing skills for success as a future Special Olympics athlete:
 - Foundational skills
 - Balancing & jumping
 - Trapping & catching
 - Kicking
 - Walking & running
 - Throwing
 - Striking
 - Advanced skills

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Unified Schools

Special Olympics [Unified Schools](#) is an education and sports based strategy powered by an engaged youth community. The program aims to increase athletic and leadership opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities, while creating inclusive school communities.

The three pillars of the program include Inclusive Youth Leadership, Unified Sports and Whole School Engagement

Unified Champion School

Youth Leadership & Advocacy

Unified Sports

Whole School Engagement

Click [here](#) for more information on Unified Schools!



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Proven Benefits of Special Olympics Participation

- Improved strength, stamina and motor skills
- Improved self-esteem and self confidence
- Healthy, skill-dependable employees
- Greater independent participation in the community
- Increase social skills through teamwork, interaction with peers and people without intellectual disabilities

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Many ways to get involved

Each program or event is run by volunteers like you! If you have an interest in getting involved in another way please email volunteers@somn.org.

Healthy Athletes clinicians

Coaches

ALPs mentors

Day of Event volunteers

Financial Support/Fundraisers

Unified Partner

Local Sports Management

Area Sports Management

Young Athletes instructor

Summer Camp counselor

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Putting it All Together

- TRAINING is the key
- COMPETITION is the means
- Skill, confidence, courage and joy are the OUTCOMES
- Better preparation for life is the GOAL
- Lifelong skills and increased independence are the RESULTS

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Common Myths

- It's just for kids
- Just once per year
- Offers just a few sports
- Only for people with disabilities
- Not inclusive
- Too expensive
- Funded by the United Way

As you now have learned, these are just myths. Special Olympics is available to anyone, no matter their abilities or interest level, and we thank you for your support in this mission!

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Special Olympics Athlete Oath



“Let me win,
But if I cannot win,
Let me be brave in the attempt.”

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Part 2: Concussion Education

What you need to know as a Special Olympics
Minnesota coach and Unified Partner to keep
our athletes safe

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Coach Concussion Training

Concussions can result in long-term physical, mental, and emotional problems

You can't always prevent a head injury in sports, but there are things you can do, as a coach, to give your athletes the best chance of recovery if a concussion happens

After this training, you'll know:

How to recognize a concussion

How to respond to a concussion

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What is a Concussion?

Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes a person's head to move rapidly back and forth

Concussions include "bell ringers" and "dings"

All concussions are potentially serious

Concussions can cause short-term and long-term problems

After a concussion, you may see physical, emotional and cognitive changes

No sport is immune to the possibility of concussions

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How Does a Concussion Occur?

A bump, blow or jolt to the head can cause a concussion

An athlete doesn't have to be hit in the head to have a concussion

A forceful collision with another player or the ground can cause a concussion

An athlete doesn't have to be knocked unconscious to have a concussion

9 out of 10 concussions do not include a loss of consciousness

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Observing your Players

Concussions can happen any time in any sport

Concussions have many different symptoms

Some symptoms aren't very obvious

It's important to observe your athletes and to know what to watch for

Be sure to have equipment that properly fits your players and is appropriate for the sport

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Concussion Symptoms

Headache

Neck pain

Pressure sensation

Double or fuzzy vision

Balance problems

Dizziness

Memory problems

Sluggishness

Feeling foggy

Sensitivity to light and/or noise

Nausea

Sleep problems

Difficulty concentrating

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Things to Watch for if you Think an Athlete has a Concussion

Appears dazed or stunned

Seems confused

Forgets plays or instructions

Is unsure about game, score or
opponent

Moves clumsily (altered coordination)

Exhibits balance problems

Shows changes in mood, behavior or
personality

Responds slowly to questions

Forgets events before or after the
hit/fall/injury

Loses consciousness

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When does a Concussion Require Emergency Medical Attention?

If a concussion is serious enough, an athlete may require immediate medical attention

Rush an athlete to an emergency department immediately if an athlete:

- loses consciousness
- is persistently vomiting
- is increasingly more confused or restless

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Three Phrases to Remember

Remember the three simple phrases to know what to do if you suspect a concussion

When in doubt, keep 'em out.

If you suspect a concussion, keep them out until you have received clearance from the athlete's healthcare provider

Stand tall. Make the call.

A good coach errs on the side of caution

No play without okay.

Don't let any concussed athlete return to play without medical clearance

Don't let them play, even with medical clearance, if you are still noticing signs and symptoms

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Reporting a Concussion

If you suspect that an athlete has suffered a concussion:

Provide a letter to the athlete's parent, guardian or care provider

This letter instructs the athlete that they must see a healthcare provider and receive medical clearance before returning to play.

Complete a Special Olympics Accident Report form

Send to your local Sports Program Manager within 72 hours of the incident. The form is available [here](#).

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Returning an Athlete to Play

Return to play is a medical decision

Either of the following must occur if a concussion is suspected:

- The athlete must sit out for a minimum of 7 consecutive days AND a healthcare provider must provide written clearance for the athlete to return to play
- Or, a healthcare provider must determine that the athlete did not suffer a concussion and provide written clearance for the athlete to return to play immediately (no 7 day wait is necessary)

The athlete **MUST HAVE** a note from a healthcare provider before he/she can play again. This note must be sent to your local Sports Program Manager for inclusion in the athlete's file

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Return to Play Progression

An athlete must be free of all symptoms **AND** be cleared by a healthcare provider.

If an athlete is cleared by a healthcare provider, but you still notice that he/she is exhibiting symptoms, pull him/her from play and repeat the reporting process

Cognitive and physical rest are both needed to heal from a concussion.

Every concussion is different and a healthcare provider will provide specific instructions to return the athlete to play.

Coaches must follow the instructions of the healthcare provider to ensure the athlete doesn't experience a second injury. This may include gradually increasing the athlete's intensity upon return to the sport.

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Concussion Education Review

Follow the game plan

- If you suspect an athlete has a concussion, keep them out of the game
- Complete the correct paperwork and inform the athlete's parent, guardian or care provider
- Do not let the athlete play again until he/she has been cleared by a healthcare provider and you have a note stating that the athlete can return to play

Remember the three phrases!

When in doubt, keep 'em out.

Stand tall. Make the call.

No play without okay.

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Concussion Policy Forms

For more information on the Concussion Policy and forms please visit

<http://specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/coach-resources/>

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Part 3:

Protective Behaviors Training

CONTENT ALERT: This training contains mature content. If you are a minor, we recommend that you take this training with a parent or guardian.

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Welcome to the Protective Behaviors Training

The main objective of this training is the prevention of sexual abuse of Special Olympics athletes and youth participants. It will also briefly address physical and emotional abuse.

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Actions Special Olympics has taken to protect Athletes:

- Protective Behavior Training
- Volunteer screening requirements
- Code of conduct for athletes, coaches and parents/spectators
- Policy prohibiting volunteers or staff in authority positions from dating athletes

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Special Olympics Screening Policy

The foremost goal of the volunteer screening policy is to protect the safety and well-being of athletes

Special Olympics screens prospective Class A volunteers and rescreens every three years. If screening reveals criminal history involving certain offense, the volunteer is prohibited or restricted from participation.

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Who is a Class A Volunteer?

- Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes.
- Volunteers in a position of authority or supervision with athletes.
- Volunteers in a position of trust of athletes
- Volunteers who handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets of the program.

Examples:

- Coaches, Unified Partners, chaperones, overnight hosts, ALPs mentors, drivers of athletes
- May also include Fundraising Event Committee members, board members and Games Management team members

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Volunteer Screening Policy

Benefits and Limitations

- Volunteer screening is a tool Special Olympics uses to help protect athletes, but it is not fool-proof
- Many predators do not have criminal records
- Your job as a volunteer is to be vigilant and report any behavior or activity that does not appear appropriate based on your personal experience or warning signs identified in this presentation

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Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are in affect and enforced for athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents/spectators. All Special Olympics Programs are required to have a code of conduct for athletes and coaches. The codes list the minimum standards set by Special Olympics. Please check with your local Special Olympics Program to see if there is a more restrictive code for that program.

Each program is responsible for establishing guidelines for sanctions related to breach of these codes of conduct. Included in the codes of conduct are references to the prohibition of volunteers or staff in authority positions dating athletes.

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Special Olympics Minnesota Codes of Conduct

Athlete Code of Conduct

Coaches Code of Conduct

Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Code of Conducts found here

<http://specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/>

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Prevention

Recognizing Sexual Predators

A sexual predator could be anyone. There is no “look” or behavior pattern that sets them apart.

Sexual Predators

- Target vulnerable populations (such as children and individuals with an intellectual disability)
- Come from all backgrounds
- Can be male or female
- Are generally very likeable and have warm personalities
- May have limited relationships with other adults

Remind athletes and families that not everyone who comes to a Special Olympics event is a volunteer who has been screened and is assumed to be “safe”.

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Prevention: Sexual Abuse

- For athletes requiring assistance with changing, toileting or showering, it is a best practice if two volunteers are present.
- Private conversations with athletes should be within sight of others who are aware of the conversation.
- Hugs should respect both athlete and volunteer limits and never be secretive.
- Touching should avoid areas a traditional swimsuit would cover
- Be aware of unusual or inappropriate gifts, trips, affection or attention from a volunteer.
- Be aware of relationships between volunteers and athletes that become private or secretive.
- Be clear and direct about pointing out inappropriate behavior

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Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate gifts, trips, outings or other gestures of affection from a volunteer include:

- Invitations for sleep overs at a volunteer's house
- Invitations to parties at a volunteer's house where parents or care providers are not included
- Excessive displays of interest in a particular athlete or group of athletes (such as all male athletes or only athletes under the age of 13)

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Tips for Travel

- Be sure to separate sleeping rooms by gender.
- Try to assign roommates based on similar age, maturity and size.
- Establish a plan for checking on each room/athlete.
- Clearly explain rules and behavior expectations of both chaperones and athletes before each trip.

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Emotional And Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse

- Corporal punishment is never allowed no matter who says it is OK.
- Withholding food or water is maltreatment and strictly prohibited.
- Only give prescribed medications in accordance with state regulations (consult your Special Olympics Program office for those regulations)
- Be aware of athlete sensitivity to temperature, sound and touch

Emotional Abuse

- Profanity is never allowed.
- Treat athletes with respect and provide encouragement.
- Don't allow demeaning nicknames even among teammates.
- Discipline should be part of a meaningful behavior modification strategy and never acted on in anger.

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How to Recognize Abuse

- Changes in behavior may offer the only visible clue that an athlete is the victim of abuse. Abuse causes stress and victims often exhibit stress related behavior.
- Depression
- Withdrawal (including loss of interest in participation in Special Olympics)
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.
- Aggression
- Immature acts
- Sleep disturbances
- Uncharacteristic changes in behavior that last more than a few days indicate a possible need for interventions, but are not a certain indicator of abuse as there are other causes of stress. The absence of behavioral indicators does not indicate a lack of abuse.

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How to Recognize Abuse

- Injuries to genital areas may indicate sexual abuse; for example, cigarette burns on the inside of the upper leg or on the buttocks.
- Tether marks or rope burns and abrasions caused by tying wrists, ankles, or the neck are also indicators of probable abuse.
- Some athletes are prone to injuries as a consequence of athletic competition

The location of the injury may indicate whether the injury was due to abuse or competition. Injuries that happened due to athletic competition are most likely to be on the shins, knees, elbows, etc. They are less likely to be on the abdomen, across the back, on the back of the legs, or on the facial cheeks.

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Possible signs of neglect

- Unattended medical needs
- Inappropriate clothing for the climate and weather conditions
- Chronic hunger and poor personal hygiene

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Reporting Suspicious Activity

- Suspicious activity should be reported to Special Olympics staff.
- Reports will be reviewed and reported as appropriate.
- Suspensions may be utilized during investigations.
- Special Olympics reserves the right to expel athletes or volunteers as a result of suspected or confirmed physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a Special Olympics athlete.

Be ready to say...

- What makes you think this activity is suspicious.
- When you witnessed the activity – or first suspected it.

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Reporting Suspicious Activity

Who to tell...

- If the activity is during Special Olympics functions, tell local Special Olympics leadership (preferably staff)
- If you suspect that an athlete is in immediate danger, notify the police, and then Special Olympics staff.
- If you are a mandatory reporter under your state's laws, report as required by statute in addition to the report you file with Special Olympics
- Reporting is NOT the same as accusing. It just alerts professionals to investigate

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Mandatory Reporter

- Nearly all states have laws that require some individuals to report suspected abuse (such as teachers, health care providers, etc).
- In some states, everyone is a mandatory reporter

Click on the website below to familiarize yourself with your state's reporting requirements:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

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To complete the quiz and receive credit
for completing the Level 1 Training
course, click the link below:

[Level 1 Quiz](#)

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