

Staff Screening Guidelines and Interview Questions



It is essential that hiring processes be designed to detect and reject coaches and staff with a high potential for abusing athletes. Below are recommended guidelines and interview questions to screen potential hires.

Screening Guidelines

When you use the interview questions below, it is essential that you:

- Recognize that coaches who were abused as children are more likely to be abusive.
- Recognize that people who have participated in therapy can heal from abuse.
- Listen for worries about “false allegations.”
- Listen for overly authoritarian coaches who are unwilling to be questioned.
- Listen for a view that athletes should be obedient and compliant.
- Listen for a lack of boundaries between coach/ athlete.

Interview Questions

- Please describe your coaching philosophy.
- Please describe how you were parented and coached.
- Tell us about your best coach and your worst coach.
- What are your coaching credentials and licensure?
- Are you SafeSport trained?
- How do you build trust and community? (Note to Hiring Committee: listen for candidates to focus on building a healthy team culture; beware of candidates who describe grooming behavior)
- How do you communicate with athletes during training and competition?
- How do you communicate with your athletes (and parents) outside the training environment?
- How do you respond when an athlete feels nervous or says “no”?
- How do you handle athlete/ parent concerns?
- How do you discuss your concerns with an athlete?
- How do you support injured athletes?
- When is it ok to touch an athlete?
- When is it ok for a coach to be alone with an athlete?
- When is it ok for a coach to have a relationship with an athlete?
- Please describe the difference between passionate intensity and abuse.