

WORKSTREAM 3 - Advice, support and information

Action 1: provide information and support after an incident or complaint

Aftercare for incidents and complaints

In the aftermath of an incident, there is often too little attention paid to the experience of and its impact on those involved. Feelings of insecurity or injustice can persist for a long time and individuals may face lasting consequences. Usually, those affected need more and better aftercare.

The responsibility for providing support lies primarily with the club, while the sports federation can play an advisory role. Well-organised aftercare helps to prevent repetition of similar types of incidents. Transparency about how an incident was followed up fosters a sense of safety and trust within the organisation.

Aftercare for those directly involved

Organise aftercare meetings with those directly affected. Shortly after an incident, it's important to provide space for individuals to share their experiences and reflections. These aftercare conversations should be repeated within a short timeframe to offer ongoing support. Victim support services, such as [\[insert name of organisations in your country\]](#), can assist in this process.

Close the incident in consultation with all directly involved parties. Share information about the steps that have been taken and outline any actions that are still planned. Ask how they experienced the handling and follow-up of the case and invite suggestions for improvement.

If you observe additional needs, such as psychological support, legal assistance or other specialized help, ensure that the club and the SO review possible external professionals or organisations for referrals. Try to minimize the burden on those affected by proactively initiating contact or gathering and sharing practical details (e.g. contact info, cost, reimbursement options).

Points to consider for aftercare conversations & referral

- **Prepare in advance:** Before the meeting, research into which organisations may be relevant. Write down their contact details along with a short explanation of their services. If a person indicates they do not want additional help at the moment, simply note this respectfully.
- **Ensure a safe and private environment:** Hold the conversation in a quiet, private room where you won't be disturbed. Let the person know you're there to listen and support, but that you are not a professional counselor. Clarify that you can help think through possible resources.

- **Clarify counselling options:** Not everyone is familiar with what counselling involves. Offer a brief overview, such as one-on-one sessions with a psychologist or psychotherapist, group therapy or peer support, contact with helplines or specialized services.
- **Explore their needs:** Ask what they need, while making it clear that you're not there to push them into anything. Emphasise that it's entirely their choice if and where to seek help.
- **Offer practical support for referrals:** If they would like a referral, share the relevant contact details clearly. A first step can feel daunting for those involved, offering to make the initial call together or help scheduling their first appointment.
- **Respect individual needs and timing:** Not everyone needs or is ready for professional support right away. Sometimes simply identifying someone they trust in their personal circle can be enough. Reassure them that they're always welcome to come back to you if they change their mind later.

Aftercare for club employees/volunteers

Give the club team (administrators, coaches, volunteers) the opportunity to reflect on the process that was followed. Create space for questions, concerns or feelings of frustration and powerlessness that may have arisen as a result of an incident.

Through dialogue, explore how they experienced the handling and follow-up of the incident. Ask whether they have suggestions for improvement and whether they feel the situation was adequately addressed and resolved.

Staff members who were closely involved may also require extra support. As a club, you can respond with care by providing information about professionals and support organisations they can turn to for guidance and help.

Aftercare for parents and club members

In cases that have caused significant commotion or concern, it can be useful to organise a meeting for parents or members to explain the club's approach and response strategy. These gatherings provide transparency, build trust, and create space for questions. It can be useful to invite experts who can explain a certain perspective and answer questions.

Self-care

If you are responsible for handling incidents within the club, such as SO, club director or team coordinator, it is essential to look after your own wellbeing as well. Managing safeguarding cases, especially serious ones, can have a significant impact.

Be mindful of the risk of secondary trauma and don't hesitate to seek support when needed. Taking care of yourself is not a luxury, but a necessary part of doing this work sustainably and responsibly. Talk to trusted colleagues, consider professional supervision or reach out to support services to safeguard your own resilience.