

# CREATING A HEALTHY ATHLETE ENVIRONMENT

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#MENTALLYFIT



# CONFLICT OF INTEREST



International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sports



Association of Summer Olympic Federations



INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



World Health Organization



INTERNATIONAL GOLF FEDERATION



FINA  
WATER IS OUR WORLD



WORLD RUGBY



“I don’t think anybody really cared to help us. I don’t think anybody really jumped in to ask us if we were ok. As long as we were performing, I don’t think anything else really mattered.”

Michael Phelps

AN HBO SPORTS DOCUMENTARY

FEATURING

MICHAEL PHELPS

APOLO OHNO

SHAUN WHITE

LOLO JONES

GRACIE GOLD

KATIE UHLAENDER

BODE MILLER

DAVID BOUDIA

JEREMY BLOOM

SASHA COHEN

AND MORE

# THE WEIGHT OF GOLD

CELEBRATED IN THE SPOTLIGHT  
LEFT IN THE DARK

JULY 29  
AT 9PM **HBO**  
STREAM IT ON **HBOMAX**

“I don’t think they are maliciously ignoring our well-being. I just don’t know that they realize it’s, like a full crisis yet. How many more dead Olympians do they need before they realize that there might be an epidemic here?”

Lolo Jones

# IMPORTANCE OF SPORT CULTURE

“optimise environments in  
which all elite athletes train and  
compete”

“create an environment that  
supports mental wellness and  
mental health help seeking”

Reardon *Br J Sports Med* 2019

## Consensus statement

### Mental health in elite athletes: International Olympic Committee consensus statement (2019)

Claudia L Reardon,<sup>1</sup> Brian Hainline,<sup>2</sup> Cindy Miller Aron,<sup>3</sup> David Baron,<sup>4</sup>  
Antonia L Baum,<sup>5</sup> Abhinav Bindra,<sup>6</sup> Richard Budgett,<sup>7</sup> Niccolo Campriani,<sup>8</sup>  
João Mauricio Castaldelli-Maia,<sup>9,10</sup> Alan Currie,<sup>11,12</sup> Jeffrey Lee Derevensky,<sup>13</sup>  
Ira D Glick,<sup>14</sup> Paul Gorcynski,<sup>15</sup> Vincent Goutteborge,<sup>16,17</sup> Michael A Grandner,<sup>18</sup>  
Doug Hyun Han,<sup>19</sup> David McDuff,<sup>20</sup> Margo Mountjoy,<sup>21,22</sup> Aslihan Polat,<sup>23,24</sup>  
Rosemary Purcell,<sup>25,26</sup> Margot Putukian,<sup>27,28</sup> Simon Rice,<sup>29,30</sup> Allen Sills,<sup>31,32</sup>  
Todd Stull,<sup>33</sup> Leslie Swartz,<sup>34</sup> Li Jing Zhu,<sup>35,36</sup> Lars Engebretsen<sup>37,38</sup>

# RISK FACTOR FOR DEPRESSION

Environmental factors:

poor quality relationships  
lack of social support

Reardon *Sports Med* 2010

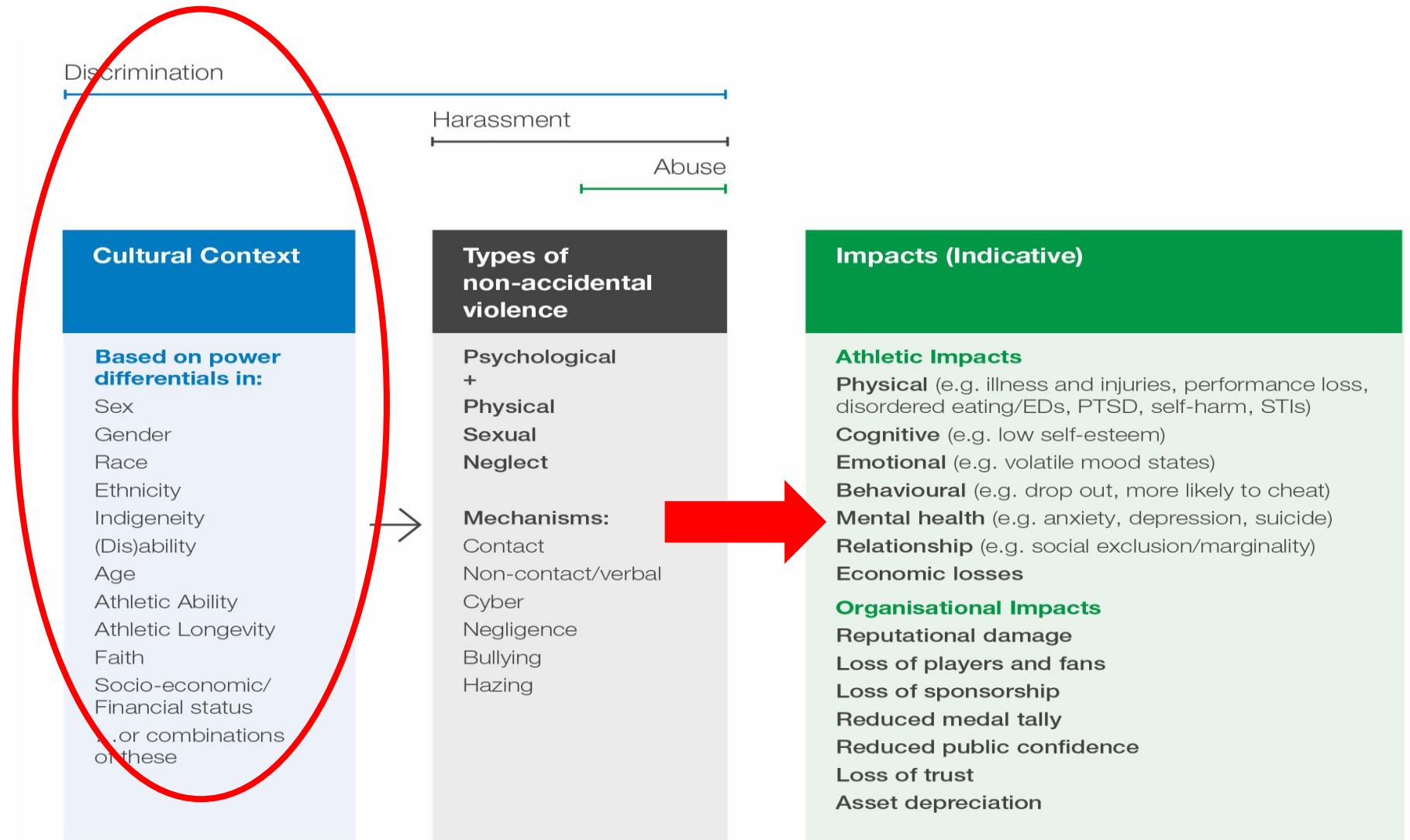
Lancaster *Clin Neuropsychol* 2016



# ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON MENTAL HEALTH

## Harassment and abuse

Mountjoy *Br J Sports Med* 2016





# TOXIC CULTURES

What are some toxic cultures in sport?



# TOXIC CULTURES

1,001 current and former Canadian national team athletes  
60 sports

60% psychologically harmful behavior  
20% sexually harmful behavior  
14% physically harmful behavior

Kerr 2019





# TOXIC CULTURES

Win at all costs



Mary Cain 2019



## [Alberto Salazar suspended by SafeSport](#)

Track coach Alberto Salazar is temporarily suspended by the U.S. Center for SafeSport for unspecified allegations of misconduct. SafeSport is tasked with investigating abuse claims in Olympic sports. Salazar was previously banned...

**01/31/20 - NBC Sports**



# TOXIC CULTURES

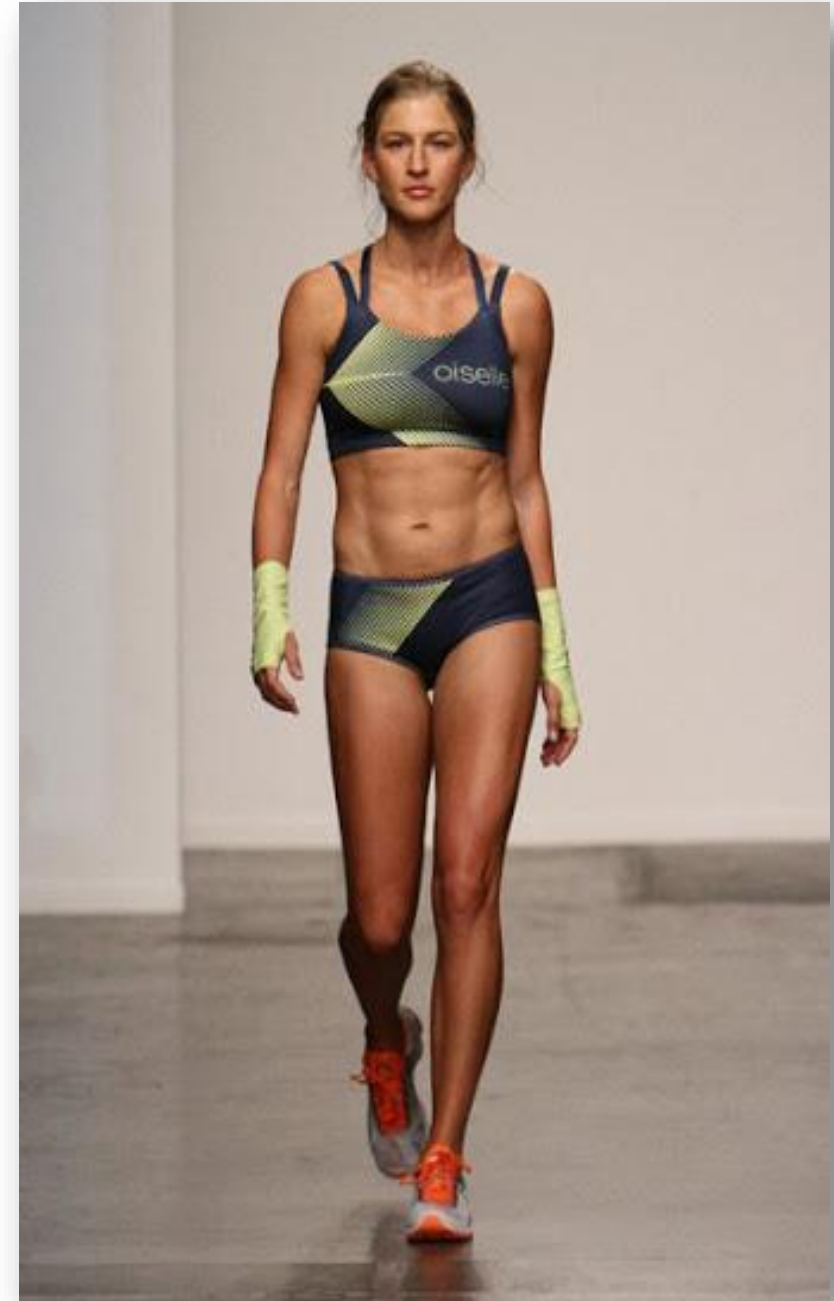
## Exploitation: Media + Business

*“America loves a good child prodigy story, and business is ready and waiting to exploit that story, especially when it comes to girls. When you have these kinds of good girls, girls who are good at following directions to the point of excelling, you’ll find a system that’s happy to take them.*

*And it’s rife with abuse.”*

Lauren Fleshman 2019

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Athlete  
365

# TOXIC CULTURES

## Coaching Styles

Mike Babcock:	Toronto Maple Leafs
Marc Crawford:	Chicago Blackhawks
Darryl Sutter:	LA Kings (Dan Carcillo)

<https://www.si.com/nhl/2019/12/11/hockey-reckoning-coaches-abuse-revelations>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/hockey/article-nhl-scandals-prompt-reflection-on-coaching-culture-and-the-line/>







Athlete  
365

# TOXIC CULTURES

## Abuse of Power

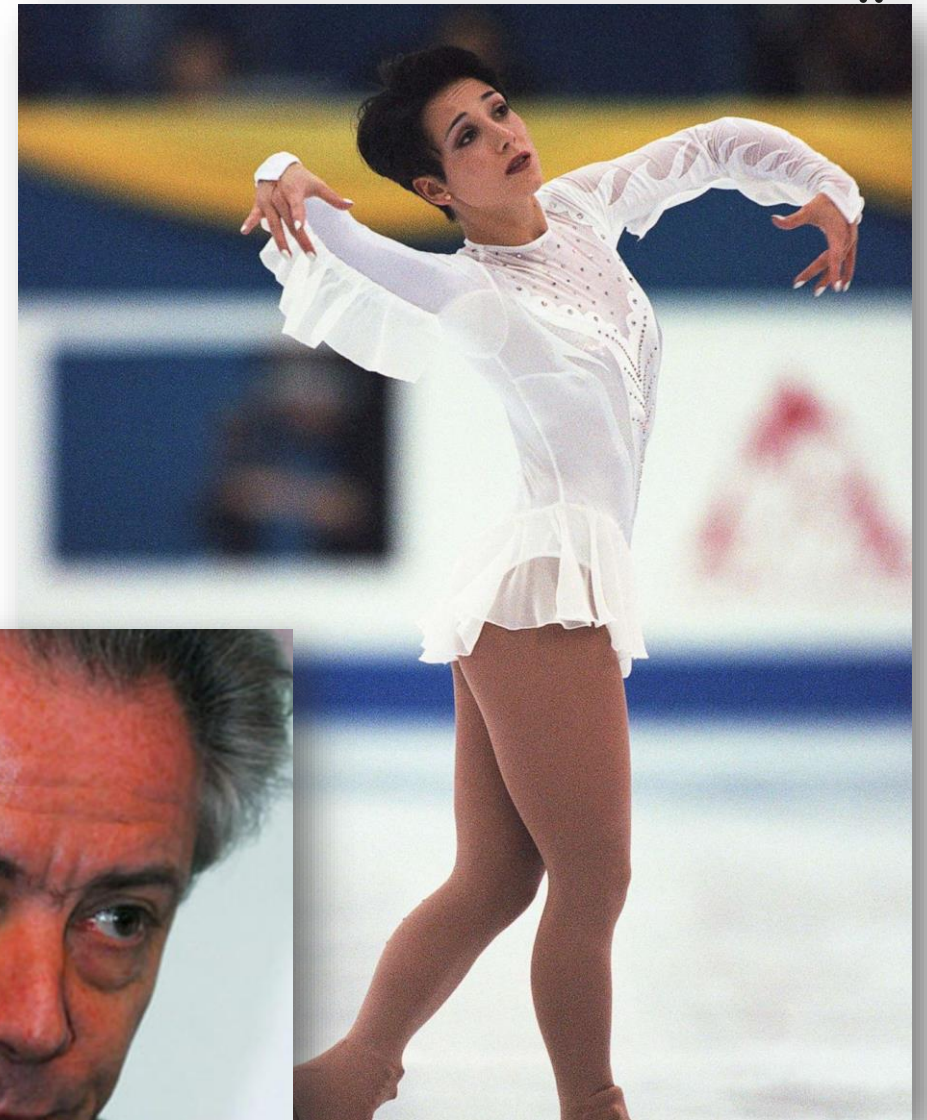
### [Ice Skating: French coaches face rape claims](#)

PARIS: Former world bronze medal winning skater Sarah Abitbol was at the forefront on Wednesday (Jan 29) of new revelations about sexual abuse in French sport. In a new book published on Wednesday and in an interview with the newspaper...

**01/30/20 - Channel News Asia**

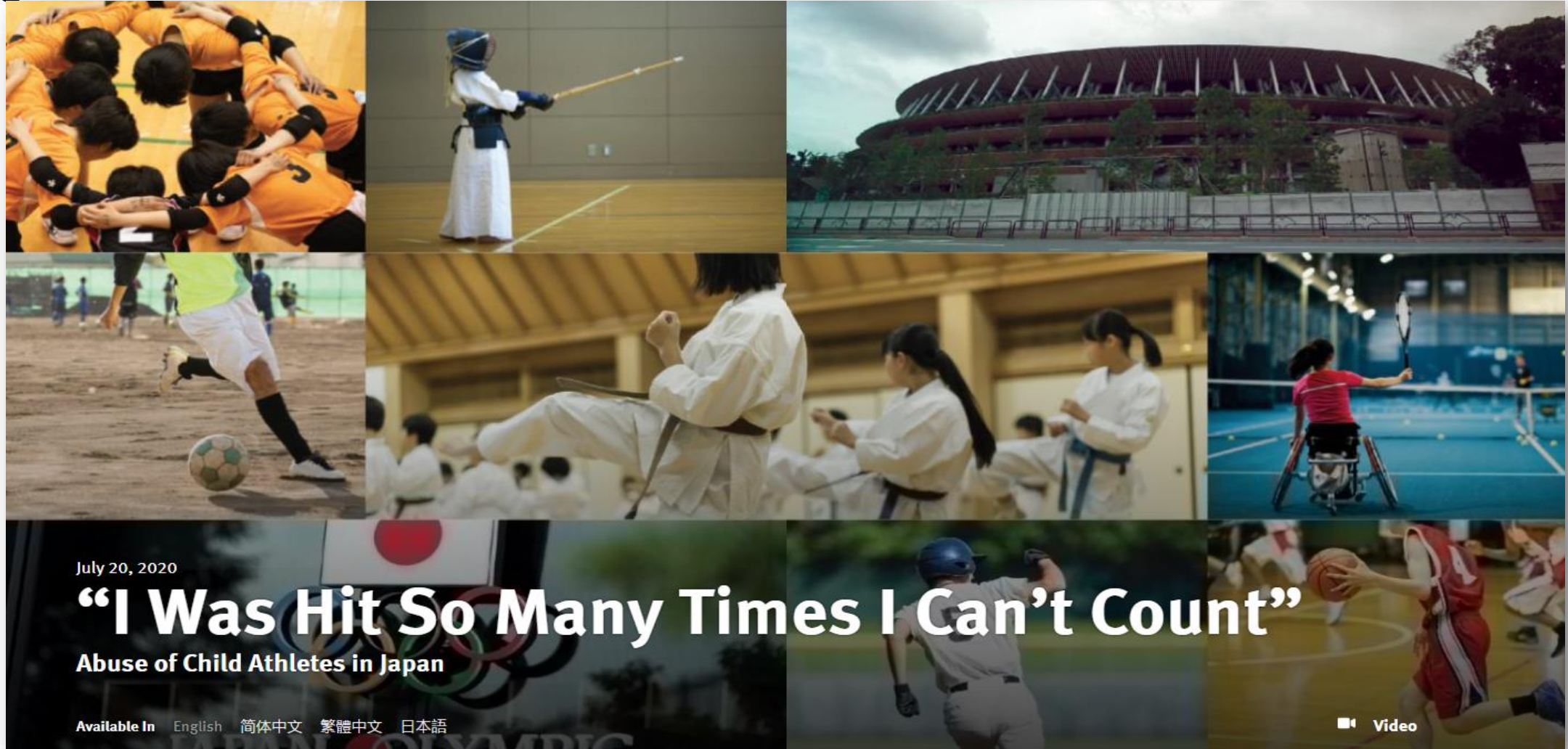


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# TOXIC CULTURES

“cultural tradition”: country - Taibatsu







## The man who blew own corruption



Tamás Aján resigned in March following Secretary General and 20 years as Pres leadership," says report. Photo: Grit Ha

09.06.2020

By Jens Sejer Andersen - International di

A new report documents a "tyra corruption in international weigl investigations published over th the first to reveal the corruption was the sport's president and perpetrator himself.



McLAREN  
GLOBAL SPORT SOLUTIONS

McLaren Independent  
Weightlifting Investigation

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR REPORT TO  
THE OVERSIGHT AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION  
OF  
INTERNATIONAL WEIGHTLIFTING FEDERATION

Any conduct at the highest levels of a federation that permits the rule by fear, deception and corruption to satisfy personal desires, acts to the detriment of the sport's key stakeholders: the athletes.

4 JUNE 2020



## 'serious' doping ing

ed to take drugs  
s against IWF





# TOXIC CULTURES

## Failed Leadership

USA Gymnastics

[Settlement offer from USA Gymnastics criticised by Nassar victims and lawyers](#)

Victims of sexual abuse from Larry Nassar have been offered a settlement of \$215 million (£165 million/€194 million) by USA Gymnastics

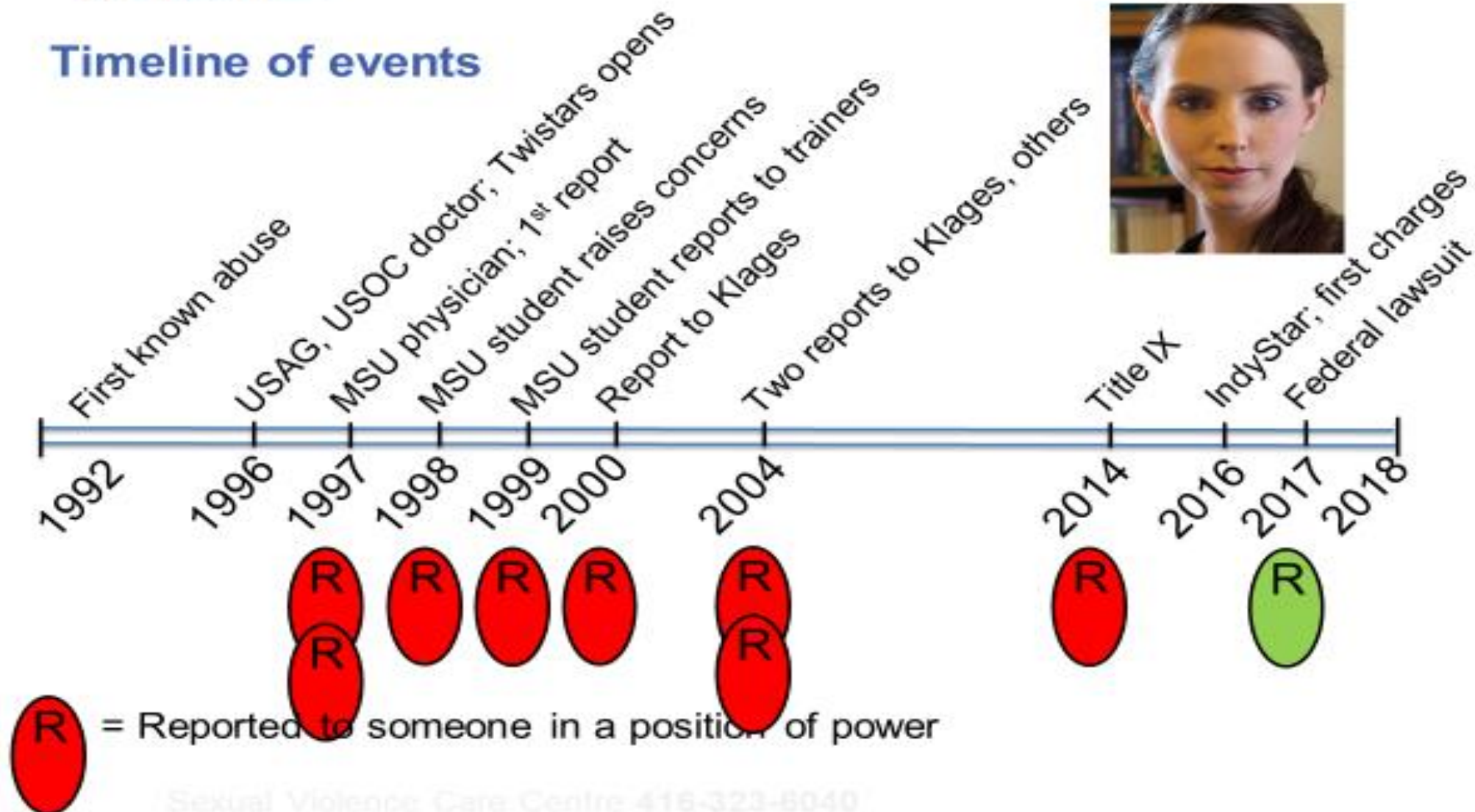


USA GYMNASTICS®



## 1. WHAT HAPPENED?

### Timeline of events



Sexual Violence Care Centre 416-323-6040

Good 2 Talk Student Helpline 1-866-925-5454



## 168 Victim Impact Statements



Kyle Stephens.  
Jessica Thomashow.  
Victim D.  
Chelsey Markham.  
Jade Capua.  
Alexis Moore.  
Olivia Cowan.  
Rebecca Mark.  
Bethany Bauman.  
Kate Mahon.  
Danielle Moore.  
Marion Siebert.  
Annette Hill.  
Taylor Stevens.  
Victim 55.  
Amanda Cormier.  
Jennifer Rood Bedford.  
Nicole Soos.  
Ashley Erickson.  
Melissa Imrie.  
Victim 125.  
Megan Halicek.  
Victim 48.  
Katelyn Skrabis.  
Brianne Randall.  
Victim 2.  
Anna Ludes.  
Lindsey Schuett.  
Maggie Nichols.  
Tiffany Thomas Lopez.  
Jeanette Antolin.  
Amanda Thomashow.  
Victim 105.  
Gwen Anderson.  
Amanda Barterian.  
Jaime Doski.  
Jenelle Moul.  
Madeleine Jones.  
Kayla Spicher.

Jennifer Hayes.  
Nicole Walker.  
Victim 75.  
Chelsea Williams.  
Stephanie Robinson.  
Carrie Hogan.  
Helena Weick.  
Victim 28.  
Victim 10.  
Taryn Look.  
Jamie Dantzscher.  
McKayla Maroney.  
Lindsey Lemke.  
Nicole Reeb.  
Lyndsy Gamet.  
Taylor Cole.  
Jessica Smith.  
Arianna Guerrero.  
Melody Posthuma Van der Veen.  
Christine Harrison.  
Victim 153.  
Victim 11.  
Victim 136.  
Kristen Thelen.  
Katie Rasmussen.  
Jessica Tarrant.  
Mary Fisher-Follmer.  
Jordyn Wieber.  
Chelsea Zerfas.  
Samantha Ursch.  
Kara Johnson.  
Maddie Johnson.  
Marie Anderson.  
Amy Labadie.  
Ashley Yost.  
Aly Raisman.  
Kassie Powell.  
Megan Ginter.  
Katherine Gordon.

Katelynne Hall.  
Anyia Gillengerten.  
Kaylee McDowell.  
Lindsay Woolever.  
Hannah Morrow.  
Bayle Pickel.  
Alexis Alvarado.  
Morgan McCaul.  
Treneza Gonzcar.  
Larissa Boyce.  
Bailey Lorencen.  
Valerie Webb.  
Whitney Mergens.  
Marta Stern.  
Clasina Syrov.  
Emma Ann Miller.  
Amanda Smith.  
Taylor Livingston.  
Victim 163.  
Victim 183.  
Presley Allison.  
Kamerin Moore.  
Krista Wakeman.  
Samantha Daniels.  
Victim 159.  
Alliree Gingerich.  
Megan Farnsworth.  
Kourtney Weidner.  
A.N.  
Charla Burill.  
Lauren Michalak.  
Vanasia Bradley.  
Breanne Rata.  
Erin McCann.  
Catherine Hannum.  
Victim 170.  
Jessica Chedler Rodriguez.  
Victim 138.  
Morgan Margraves.

Victim 127.  
Victim 142.  
Victim 162.  
Victim 186.  
Victim 185.  
Victim 73.  
Victim 165.  
Whitney Burns.  
Isabell Hutchins.  
Meaghan Ashcraft.  
Natalie Woodland.  
Jillian Swinehart.  
Alison Chauvette.  
Anna Dayton.  
Olivia Venuto.  
Victim 126.  
Mattie Larson.  
Jessica Howard.  
Alexandra Romano.  
Arianna Castillo.  
Selena Brennan.  
Victim 190.  
Makayla Thrush.  
Emily Morales.  
Abigail Mealy.  
Ashley Bremer.  
Victim 195.  
Brooke Hylek.  
Abigayle Bergeron.  
Emily Meinke.  
Morgan Valley.  
Christina Barba.  
Amanda McGeachie.  
Victim 177.  
Victim 178.  
Sterling Riethman.  
Kaylee Lorincz.  
Rachael Denhollander.

# THANK YOU.

Detroit Free Press

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# ANALYSIS OF VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS



## Theme: Psychiatric problems

*"Self care is hard to manage when your soul has been scarred."*

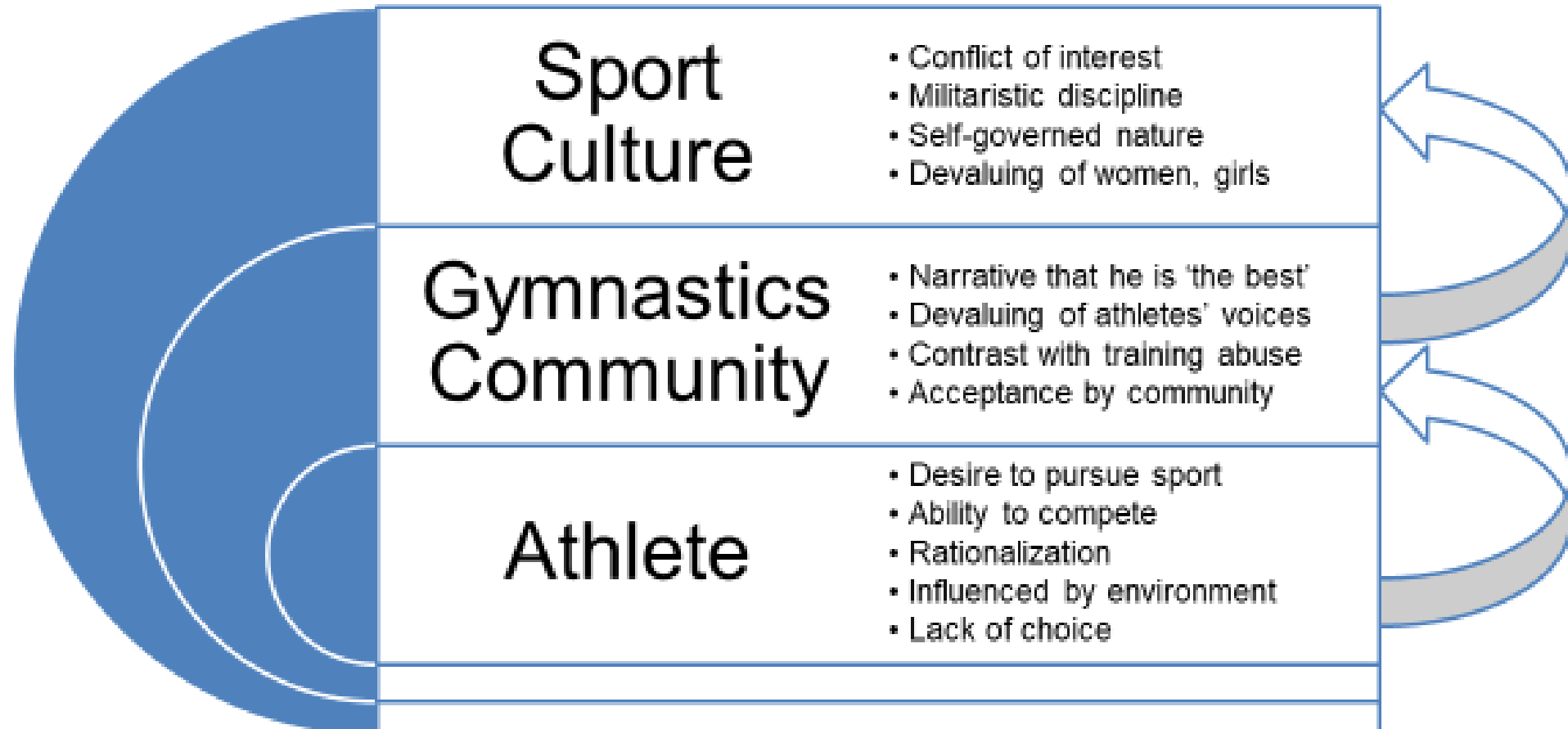
- Extreme fear of men and medical practitioners
  - Anxiety, panic attacks
  - Depression
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder
  - Suicide
  - Self-harm
  - Eating disorders
  - Substance abuse
- 
- **Nearly 2/3 describe significant psychiatric symptoms following the abuse and persisting throughout adolescence**



# TOXIC CULTURES

## Putting it all together: The myth of Larry Nassar

*"My misplaced trust in my physician and my misplaced trust in the adults around me were wielded like a weapon, and it cost me dearly."*



# TOXIC CULTURES

## Failed leadership

lack of policies and procedures

lack of independent reporting mechanism

lack of safeguarding officer

Mountjoy *Br J Sports Med* 2016





# TOXIC CULTURES

*“Abuse is nurtured in a sport culture where athletes are commodified in an environment that pursues ‘winning at all costs’; one in which athletes have no power, and where abuse is either accepted as being normal, or is ignored.”*

Mountjoy *Br Med J* 2018





# ADDRESSING TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS

## Sport Leadership

codes of conduct

top-down approach: leadership

educate sport governing body + entourage

policies and procedures

Reardon *Br J Sports Med* 2019



# ADDRESSING TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS

## Athletes

athlete voice: valued not commodified

improve social networks

athletic and personal life balance

team cohesion

coach and team expectations



Reardon *Br J Sports Med* 2019

# ADDRESSING TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS

## Systems

international sport safeguarding agency

international offender database

research gap

cultural shift



## Political prioritization

statement prioritizing mental health in foundational guiding documents

## Mental health action plan

to include a social media campaign to decrease stigma

## Mental Health Emergency Action + Management Plan

pre-defined steps for management of a mental health emergency during an event

## Team physician education

educational initiatives to improve team physician competency in mental health

# PREVENTING TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS





# PREVENTING TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS

## Coaching education

coach development on prevention + detection

## Inclusion of mental health support on Host Organizing Committees

to support mental health presentations during events

## Inclusion of a mental health professional on Medical Committees

to provide mental health expertise

## Implementation of policies to prevent harassment + abuse in sport

to prevent mental health outcomes from harassment + abuse

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# TOXIC CULTURES

Hazardous to athlete mental health



# HEALTHY SPORT CULTURE

is achievable....



# PREVENTION: CREATING A HEALTHY ATHLETE ENVIRONMENT

Dr Margo Mountjoy MD, PhD  
McMaster University  
FIFA Science | International Golf Federation  
IOC Mental Health Working Group  
ASOIF Medical + Scientific Working Group



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