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Q: What are good resources to use to educate athletes and parents about the grooming behaviors of pedophiles?

A: Competent sport organization administrators understand that the most common type of pedophile encountered in youth sport programs is the “acquaintance pedophile.” Generally, there are three types of pedophiles: “stranger”, “family” and “acquaintance” pedophiles. Stranger pedophiles typically abduct and harm their victims, often fatally. Family pedophiles involve child abuse by a parent or family member. Acquaintance pedophiles are the most difficult to detect because they often occupy positions of respect (i.e., teachers, coaches, priests, etc.) and artfully groom the child over an extended period of time, developing feelings of affection and solidifying their power and control in a manner that makes it difficult for athletes to reject or report inappropriate conduct. They are secretive in that they commonly engage the child for their “grooming” in purposely manufactured one-on-one situations. Thus, parents, participants, coaches and other staff members need to be educated to be aware of any coach spending time with individual participants such as picking up a single participant and transporting them to practice, games or other events, spending unusual one-on-one time with a child, giving a single child special treatment, gifts, or preferred messaging (personal text messages, etc.) and even spending too much time with parents, cultivating their favor and trust. Everyone participating in the program must be educated on how to recognize and report these behaviors common to acquaintance pedophiles. “Grooming” educational handouts should be distributed to parents and athletes respectively and discussed at meetings for that purpose.

Safe4Athletes.org contains two excellent education handouts that any club can use to education athletes and parents about the grooming behavior of pedophiles: ***If It Feels Wrong, It is Wrong…Parents Must Understand, Teach Their Children*** ***and Recognize the Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators*** and If It Feels Wrong, It is Wrong…Athletes: Be Aware and Recognize the Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

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