

An Invitation to Participate in a Research Study about Athletes' Experiences

We are writing to invite you to join a research study about Canadian athletes' experiences. If you are an athlete between 16 and 24 years of age, you can choose to participate in this study. We know that athletes often have close relationships with their coaches and that athletes sometimes turn to their coaches for advice and support when they have having difficulties in sport or in life. For coaches to be able to help athletes, they need to understand what life is like for athletes your age. One of the topics that coaches believe they need to know more about is dating relationships in athletes of your age. Coaches also want to know more about experiences of conflict and even violence in your relationships, and whether or not athletes would talk to their coaches about these experiences. To help us educate coaches, we need to first understand your experiences with dating and with dating conflict.

Participation in this study involves completing an anonymous online survey that will be distributed by the Coaching Association of Canada to athletes across Canada. Participation is completely voluntary which means you may choose to participate or not participate in this study and there will be no consequences for you of any kind should you decide not to participate.

To learn more about the quality of your sport experiences, the survey questions will ask about experiences you have had in dating relationships. Questions will be asked about dating relationships and any experiences of conflict or violence you may have experienced in these dating relationships. Questions will also be asked about the topics you would feel comfortable discussing with your coach(es). Again the purpose of asking these questions is to help educate coaches.

Who Can Participate in This Study?

Individuals who are currently participating in organized sport and are between the ages of 16 to 24 years may join this study.

What Does Your Participation in the Study Involve?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey which means you don't need to include your name. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes. The survey is administered through RedCap, which is a secure server provided by the University of Toronto. The Coaching Association of Canada has agreed to distribute the surveys through their existing database but all completed surveys will be sent directly to the research team at the University of Toronto. Neither the researchers, the Coaching Association of Canada, or your coaches will know who has and who has not responded to the survey. Consent to participate in the study will be assumed if you complete the survey. You may choose to not answer some of the questions if you like. If you start the survey and then decide to withdraw from the study, you may do so by not submitting the survey. Once the survey is submitted, your data cannot be removed because it is anonymous – we won't know which is your survey because your name will not be on the survey.

Will My Identity Remain Anonymous?

Yes, this survey is anonymous; you will not be asked for your name at any point in the study. No one will know of your identity and the final report of findings will include group results only (no individual results). Although we ask for some general demographic data, this information will not be enough to identify you.

No persons other than the research team will see the survey data, which will be securely stored for seven years at the University of Toronto. After this time, all information from the surveys will be securely destroyed.

At the end of the survey there is an option to provide an email address if you wish to participate in future studies of this nature. If you choose to provide your contact information, there is a link that will take you to a separate portal; this will ensure your contact information is in no way associated with the data you have provided in the survey.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the University of Toronto Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by the HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

What are the Possible Benefits and Risks to My Participation:

There are no immediate benefits related to participation in this study. However, the information we collect for this study will help inform educational modules to be developed for coaches' professional development.

There is a risk that you may experience discomfort or emotional distress when responding to some of the survey questions, particularly if you have experienced or know someone who has experienced dating conflict and violence. You can stop your involvement in this study at any time without penalty. You will also be provided with a list of supports you may access should you feel they would be helpful.

Will I Have Access to the Results?

A summary report of the group findings will be posted on the website of the Coaching Association of Canada which will be accessible to you at the end of the study.

In Summary:

- You can freely choose to participate in this study or not to participate.
- You can choose to stop participating in this study at any time without penalty.
- There are no known conflicts of interest on the part of the researchers.
- You will not be personally identified in the survey results or any final reports.

If you Have Questions About the Study: Please feel free to contact any members of the research team:

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Concerns about the Study or the Rights of Research Subjects

If you have any concerns about this study, your treatment, or rights as a research subject you may contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or +1 416-946-3273.

Consent:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time before sending the online survey. I have read this consent form and know who to contact if I have any further questions. By continuing, I agree to participate in this study.

Please print a copy of this consent form for your records.