

SAFE SPORT MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS



MYTH

Trainers can be banned based on false allegations made to the U.S. Center for SafeSport by one disgruntled client.

FACT

While false allegations are unlikely, they unfortunately do happen, and the U.S. Center for SafeSport has highly experienced investigators who are skilled and trained to recognize false claims. The accused will have an opportunity to be heard by the case investigator. This affords the accused with the opportunity to provide their story, learn what evidence the investigator has gathered, and provide their own evidence, including the identity of witnesses who may have relevant factual information. This process occurs before any disciplinary action is taken. Further, there are consequences for knowingly making a false report as it may violate state criminal law and civil defamation laws.

MYTH

Due to SafeSport, trainers cannot touch students at all, including demonstrating proper leg position or offering a supportive or celebratory hug.

FACT

Trainers can touch students in appropriate ways such as adjusting leg and hand position or posture and can hug students in celebration or support.

MYTH

Every person who is reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport is temporarily suspended until an investigation is conducted.

FACT

Temporary suspensions are very rare. The vast majority of reports – more than 99% – do not result in a temporary suspension. In fact, only 0.5% reports in our sport have resulted in an immediate, temporary suspension.

MYTH

Under the U.S. Center for SafeSport's process, you are guilty until proven innocent. This is unfair and does not provide the accused with due process.

FACT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport follows a thorough investigative process, led by trained investigators, to ensure the accuser and accused are fully heard. To protect both parties, the process is confidential and once a decision is issued by the Center, if desired, the accused has the opportunity to request a hearing before an independent arbitrator. The arbitrator's decision is final.

MYTH

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is on a witch hunt.

FACT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport was created to protect athletes from abuse. Its mandate from the United States Congress is to keep athletes safe and investigate reports of misconduct, and that is what it does.

MYTH

The lack of a statute of limitations on incidents of misconduct is unfair and goes against our country's justice system.

MYTH

SafeSport investigations are not done by trained experts.

MYTH

All reports received by the Center result in formal investigation and disciplinary measures.

MYTH

Accused individuals have no opportunity to have their voices heard.

MYTH

US Equestrian is solely administering Safe Sport as a matter of compliance.

MYTH

Strict sanctions, such as bans, require criminal convictions.

MYTH

Trainers are not bound by certain restrictions if they sign paperwork with parents.

FACT

Oftentimes, it can take years if not decades for survivors of abuse to come forward and share their story. There is no statute of limitations on the pain and suffering they have endured, and their abuser must be held accountable for their actions. State policymakers have come to understand how physical, emotional, and psychological effects of sexual abuse can influence how and when a survivor comes forward. Several states have abolished statutes of limitations for some sex crimes to allow a perpetrator to be prosecuted at any point.

FACT

All investigators working for the U.S. Center for SafeSport receive training developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on how to conduct forensic interviews as well as other investigatory training. Trainings are conducted annually to ensure investigators are well-equipped and resourced to conduct thorough investigations.

FACT

When a report is made, the Center conducts an initial review to determine whether it has jurisdiction over the matter. If the Center does have jurisdiction, it enters a fact-finding period which can lead to one of three actions: formal resolution (i.e. an investigation), informal resolution, or administrative closure when there is insufficient information to move forward. Even when the Center pursues an investigation, measures are determined by the facts of the case and can range from warnings to bans.

FACT

The investigatory process allows the accused the opportunity to defend themselves.

FACT

There is nothing more important to US Equestrian than protecting our riders, especially our young riders. We share this goal with our members, other National Governing Bodies, and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. US Equestrian has had a Safe Sport program since 2013.

FACT

Sanctions do not require criminal convictions and are dependent upon the facts of the case and whether a violation of the SafeSport Code has occurred.

FACT

Parents can give signed written consent for one-on-one training, but all trainers are bound by the MAAP policies as well as the SafeSport Code.