



Section A: Speaking Up vs. Staying Silent

Mini-lesson objectives

- Clarify when speaking up is important.
- Explore when silence is about privacy, and when it becomes harmful.

Key teaching points

- Speaking up is always appropriate when **safety, dignity, or basic fairness** are at risk (unsafe drills, boundary violations, discrimination, repeated humiliation).
 - Speaking up also matters for **practical needs**: unclear expectations, unfair lane or event assignments, pain or exhaustion that could lead to injury.
 - Silence can be a valid choice to protect privacy or to think things through, but it should **not** be used to hide ongoing harm or abuse.
 - If silence is driven mainly by **fear** (retaliation, shame, “making trouble”), that is a signal that support and possible action are needed.
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Section B: How to Speak Directly to Someone Who Causes Discomfort

Mini-lesson objectives

- Provide concrete language for low-level issues.
- Distinguish between safe direct communication and situations needing outside help.

Key teaching points

- Direct communication is often appropriate for **lower-level problems** (awkward jokes, minor boundary crossings) when there is no immediate safety risk.
- Clear, simple statements work best: focus on the **behavior and impact**, not attacking the person.
- If there is fear of retaliation, a pattern of being ignored, or **serious misconduct**, it is safer to go to a trusted adult or formal reporting channel instead of confronting someone alone.

Practice phrases

- “I feel uncomfortable when you make those comments; please stop.”
- “It is not okay to message me about that, especially late at night.”



- “I need you to ask before touching me to correct my stroke.”

Section C: Speaking Up About Powerful People

(Recruiting, College, Olympic Dreams)

Mini-lesson objectives

- Address fears about losing opportunities.
- Reframe where athletic worth and future potential come from.

Key teaching points

- Fear of losing recommendations, recruiting attention, or selection is a major reason athletes stay silent about harmful behavior.
 - Adults involved in college or high-performance pathways hold **power**, but they do not create an athlete’s talent; they influence opportunities, not inherent ability.
 - Protecting one person’s reputation or favor at the cost of **long-term safety and mental health** is too high a price.
 - “Letting go” can mean changing teams, seeking different mentors, or stepping away from one pathway while still honoring athletic identity.
 - A coach can open doors, but **does not make the athlete great**—skill, effort, and character belong to the athlete.
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Section D: Communication and Advocacy Skills

Mini-lesson objectives

- Build a simple advocacy framework.
- Practice both spoken and written “speak-up” messages.

Key teaching points

- Advocacy in sport means clearly expressing needs and boundaries and using **existing processes** (meetings, emails, reports) when needed.
- Effective advocacy usually includes:
 - Calm, specific description of the situation.
 - A clear **ask** or request.
 - Reference to team rules or values (safety, respect, fairness).
 - A focus on solutions and next steps, not revenge.



“Speak-Up Template”

- **Situation:** “During [practice/meet/travel], [briefly describe what happened].”
- **Impact:** “This made me feel / led to [effect on safety, performance, or wellbeing].”
- **Request:** “I am asking for [specific change, support, or next step].”
- **Safety/values:** “I want this handled in a way that keeps athletes safe and respects everyone involved.”

Speaking up is an act of self-respect and of care for the team’s culture. Silence can protect privacy, but it should never be used to protect harm; no dream, scholarship, or coach is more important than a swimmer’s safety and dignity.