



A. Why Swimming Needs Special Attention

- Competitive swimming has had high-profile abuse cases, including coaches who groomed and sexually abused young swimmers over many years, sometimes with other adults suspecting but not reporting.
- Investigations and lawsuits have shown that failures to act, silence from bystanders, and power imbalances between coaches and young athletes can allow abuse to continue in clubs and national-level programs.
- USA Swimming and the U.S. Center for SafeSport now require policies like MAAPP, background checks, and clear reporting channels, but awareness from swimmers and families is still essential.

Student discussion questions:

- What feels unique about swimming compared with other sports (e.g., minimal clothing, early-morning practices, travel, long-term coach relationships)?
- How could those features be both positive (team closeness, trust) and risky (easy for boundary-crossing to be hidden or normalized)?

B. Famous Asian Female Swimmers and Representation

- In many Asian and Asian-American families, modesty and respect for elders can make unquestioned physical contact from a coach (for example, hands-on stroke correction), crowded locker rooms, or comments on body shape feel typical, even when discomfort is present.
- In many U.S. swim programs, athletes are told to speak up and “own” their bodies, yet team culture can still reward obedience, silence, and “pushing through” discomfort for faster times.
- Torri Huske is a Chinese-American Olympic gold medalist who has talked about resilience after missing the podium in Tokyo by 0.01 seconds and then coming back to win multiple medals in Paris.



- She has spoken about being inspired by her Chinese mother and about the pressure and expectations she faced as a rising star, which can echo model-minority stereotypes placed on Asian-American athletes.
- Asian and Asian-American athletes often navigate cultural expectations of modesty, deference to authority, and “not causing trouble,” which can make it harder to question coaches or disclose harm.

Student prompts:

- How might being one of the few Asian or Asian-American swimmers on a team affect how comfortable someone feels speaking up?
- What messages do you think elite athletes like Torri Huske send about mental health, pressure, and asking for support, even when they look “successful” from the outside?

C. “Have You Ever Felt This?” Activity

Activity setup: Create a Video for Self-Assessment and Reflection

Reads or posts a list of common feelings and situations. Students can respond with:

- “Seen it,” “Felt it,” or “Not sure” (using sticky notes, anonymous forms, or quick polls).

Prompts:

- I felt uncomfortable about a coach or older swimmer’s comments on my body or swimsuit.
- I felt pressure to text or DM a coach late at night or to keep messages secret.
- I felt like I could not say “no” to extra one-on-one help, even if I did not want it.
- I felt nervous or unsafe in the locker room or shower areas.
- I felt left out, bullied, or targeted because of my race, gender, body, or religion.

“What could these feelings be telling you?”

- Some discomfort is normal in hard training (tired, sore, nervous before races), but feeling scared, cornered, sexualized, or repeatedly disrespected can signal boundary



violations or abuse.

- It is never “too small” to talk about: repeated “jokes,” isolation, or secret communication can be early warning signs that SafeSport calls grooming or misconduct.
- Students discuss which feelings are “OK and expected in sport” (e.g., performance nerves) vs. “Not OK” (e.g., fear of retaliation, sexually charged comments, pressure to keep secrets).

D. Existing Supports and Reporting Tools

1. MAAPP and SafeSport (sport-specific safety rules)

- MAAPP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies) sets rules for one-on-one interactions, electronic communication, travel, and locker rooms to reduce risk.
- SafeSport provides a centralized place to report abuse or misconduct in Olympic-sport systems, including swimming, and can take action even if something is not yet a crime.

2. Title IX (schools and colleges)

- Title IX requires schools to respond promptly and fairly when students report sexual harassment or sex-based discrimination, including in athletics.
- Students and parents can file a complaint with a Title IX coordinator and receive supportive measures (schedule changes, counseling referrals, no-contact directives).

3. RAINN and community hotlines

- RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline and has guides on reporting to police, including tech-enabled and online abuse.
- Youth can seek confidential support and learn options even if they are not ready to report formally.



E. Introducing Online Abuse in Swimming

- Swimmers now compete not only in the pool but also on social media, where performance videos and photos can attract both support and harassment.
- Athletes have reported cyberbullying, body-shaming, racist or sexist comments, and threats after races, which can seriously affect mental health and sport participation.
- Tech-enabled abuse can include doxxing, non-consensual sharing of images, coercive sexting, and ongoing harassment through anonymous accounts.

Student discussion:

- Where do swimming-related online interactions happen in your life (team chats, Instagram, TikTok, meet livestreams, fan comments)?
- What boundaries do you think are important between coaches and athletes online (DMs, friend requests, following, late-night messaging)?
- If you saw a teammate targeted online after a bad race, what concrete things could you do (check-in, screenshot, report to adults, platform reporting tools)?