



Recognizing Unsafe or “Too Comfortable” Behaviors

Mini-lesson objectives

- Help coaches and peers notice early warning signs.
- Distinguish normal closeness from risky, boundary-blurring behavior.

Red-flag behaviors to name explicitly

- Frequent one-on-one time with a specific swimmer that is not required by role (special rides, private meetings, secret talks).
- “Inside jokes,” pet names, or physical contact that excludes others or feels secretive.
- Regular comments on a swimmer’s body, appearance, romantic life, or home situation.
- Defensiveness when others ask questions (“You don’t understand our connection,” “Everyone is overreacting”).

“Too comfortable” patterns

- A coach or older peer becomes the main person a swimmer turns to for every problem, including topics far beyond sport.
- The swimmer seems afraid of upsetting one adult or of losing special attention.
- Others notice rules bending for one swimmer (extra alone time, different expectations, special treatment).

Activity – Red-Flag Sorting

Give mixed examples of behavior (healthy support vs. grooming-style attention). In groups, label each example:

- “Healthy closeness,”
- “Needs conversation/clarification,” or
- “Unsafe / report.”

Personal Information: Support vs. Prying

Mini-lesson objectives

- Clarify what level of personal information is appropriate.
- Encourage supportive curiosity without intrusion.



Guidelines for coaches

- **Appropriate:** general check-ins (“How is school going?”), listening when swimmers choose to share, offering resources, and referring to parents, counselors, or other appropriate adults.
- **Inappropriate:** probing for detailed information about home conflict, mental health, finances, or relationships—especially after a swimmer has declined or looks uncomfortable.
- Coaches should not become the main “therapist.” Their role is to validate feelings, stay within professional boundaries, and connect swimmers to proper support.

Guidelines for peers

- **Supportive:** “Do you want to talk?” and respecting “no,” offering presence without demanding details.
- **Prying:** pushing for secrets, demanding screenshots, insisting on knowing every detail “because we’re close.”

Simple questions for adults and peers

- “Is this information necessary to keep this swimmer safe right now?”
 - “Am I the right person to hold this, or should I help them connect with someone else?”
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Language in Texts, Meets, Practices, and Hangouts

Mini-lesson objectives

- Set standards for language across all team settings.
- Address jokes, flirting, and private communication.

Guidelines for digital and in-person language

- **Content stays sport-appropriate.** No sexual comments, romantic flirting, or body-focused teasing between adults and minors. Peers are coached to challenge or report this when they see it.
- **Tone stays respectful.** No insults, slurs, or “jokes” targeting race, gender, sexuality, body, or ability.
- **Timing and frequency are reasonable.** Adults avoid late-night, constant, or rapid-fire personal messaging with individual minors.
- **Transparency matters.** Group chats and communication channels are known to parents/clubs; no secret accounts or disappearing-message threads between coaches and minors.



Activity – Language Audit

Have swimmers and coaches review recent sample messages or invented scenarios. Ask:

- “Is this message okay as written?”
 - “What would make it safer or more respectful?”
 - “Should this be moved to a different channel (group chat, email, in-person)?”
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Respecting Boundaries: Coach vs. Friend

Mini-lesson objectives

- Clarify role boundaries for adults and older peers.
- Emphasize that warmth and care do not require being a “friend.”

Coach role

- Primary roles are **teacher, leader, and safety-holder**, not peer or romantic partner.
- Care is shown through fair treatment, clear expectations, safe training, and consistent follow-through.
- Emotional support focuses on listening, validating, and connecting swimmers to appropriate help, while keeping professional distance.

Peer role (captains, older swimmers, mentors)

- Can be friendly and supportive, but do **not** replace adults in handling disclosures of harm or abuse.
 - Encourage teammates to seek help from trusted adults when safety is involved.
 - Set a positive example in behavior, sportsmanship, and inclusion so newer swimmers understand team culture.
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Strong teams are built on trust, respect, and clear roles. Warmth and connection are essential, but boundaries protect everyone and make genuine support more effective—for both swimmers and the adults and peers who care about them.