



USAC DEI Committee Best Practices for Gender Inclusion

GENERAL RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

Transgender and non-binary athletes should have equal opportunity to participate in sport and to be able to strive for excellence. Below are suggestions for teams, coaches, member gyms, competition organizers, judges, and volunteers to assist in their interaction with transgender and non-binary climbers.

1. **Value** diversity, equity and inclusion
2. **Support** and demonstrate listening to athletes by taking with each individual about their expectations and needs as a climber.
3. **Educate** by taking responsibility for your own notions of gender roles and expectations. Do not make any assumptions as to the gender of an athlete.
4. **Create** safe spaces by including pronoun preferences on registration forms, scorecards, and name tags as well as referring to people by their preferred pronouns
5. **Include** transgender and non-binary athletes by providing access to locker rooms and bathrooms consistent with their gender identity and have gender-neutral bathroom options whenever possible
6. **Respect** the privacy of transgender and non-binary athletes. Discussion or disclosure of an individual's transgender status should be automatically considered confidential and should only take place after expressed permission is given by the individual or their parents
7. **Protect** by enforcing a zero-tolerance policy in instances of discrimination or bullying. Be prepared to address discriminatory behavior, based on any perceived or actual gender identity or gender expression of an athlete.
8. **Teach** how to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, harassment, and discrimination based on sex and gender identity.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR USAC STAFF EVENT ORGANIZERS

1. List of guidelines for choosing host sites to include consideration for other minority groups as well, for example, paraclimbers, BIPOC members, and the LGBTQ+ community.
2. Use hotels, restaurants, and suppliers that are LGBTQ and/or BIPOC owned.
3. Post inclusive signage that provides educational material, such as why tampons are placed in the men's bathroom and why we put pronouns on name tags.



RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Be aware that a climber's gender identity may not match their gender expression or their USAC gender category. To ensure that we are creating an inclusive and safe environment and to not put any undue stress or scrutiny on a trans or non-binary athlete, we recommend the following practices for event organizers:

1. Do not assume or ask a climber's gender. Instead, ask the climber's name and category to ensure they are in the correct place.
2. If using name tags for volunteers, include pronouns along with names
3. Include your pronouns in email communication about the competition
4. Include pronouns and preferred names on scorecards and/or climber name tags and use bibs that differentiate gender categories whenever possible. Differentiation can be made by indicating M or F with the applicable category or by bib color though it is not recommended to use blue and pink to differentiate male and female.
5. Include tampons and pads in male, female, and gender-neutral bathrooms and include educational material to explain why.
6. Ensure that the volunteer/judges' meeting prioritizes creating safe spaces for all athletes and reiterates recommended best practices
7. Include a statement about inclusion and best practices for volunteers in the sign up process and email communication to volunteers
8. Print and share best practice one pagers at competitions
9. Understand and challenge your own attitudes and beliefs around trans and non-binary athletes competing
10. Be prepared to talk with parents of athletes about transgender athlete participation in climbing in a way that respects and supports the inclusion of those athletes.
11. Take action if you are aware of discriminatory or harassing behavior based on the perceived or actual gender identity or expression of a athlete. If such behavior happens at a USAC event, document the event and notify USAC at _____.



RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Be aware that a climber's gender identity may not match their gender expression or their USAC gender category. To ensure that we are creating an inclusive environment that does not put any undue stress or scrutiny on a trans or non-binary athlete, we recommend the following practices for volunteers:

1. During USAC Sanctioned events, Introduce yourself with your name and pronouns to and respect the name and pronouns of those you meet. If someone corrects you on their pronouns, thank them - don't apologize.
2. During USAC Sanctioned events, do not assume or ask a climber's gender. Instead, ask the climber's name and category to ensure they are in the correct place.
3. Understand and challenge your own attitudes and beliefs around trans and non-binary athletes competing
4. During USAC Sanctioned events, all athletes should be provided access to locker rooms and bathrooms consistent with their gender identity; Male, Female, and Gender Neutral. Include tampons and pads in all male, female, and gender-neutral bathrooms.



ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR COACHES

We invite coaches to nurture a team climate in which all members feel valued, respected, and safe. Your role as a coach is critical in creating your team culture and athletes will look to you to provide strong leadership and model fair and respectful behavior. Here are some additional recommended practices for your leadership role:

1. Understand and challenge your own attitudes and beliefs around trans and non-binary athletes competing
2. Make your support for transgender and non-binary team members visible and intentional
3. If an athlete is changing their name and/or pronoun, ask them when they would like others to start using their new name and how they would like you to communicate this information to others
4. Create a culture of inclusion on your team by communicating about and educating your team about transgender and non-binary athlete inclusion, identity, and preferred terminology
5. Have athletes share their pronouns at the start of the season or when welcoming new athletes to the team
6. Be prepared to talk with parents of athletes about transgender athlete participation in climbing
7. Anticipate and address transgender athlete access issues proactively
8. Assign transgender and non-binary athletes to shared hotel rooms based on their gender identity, with a recognition that any athlete who needs extra privacy should be accommodated whenever possible
9. All team members should have a uniform that they feel comfortable in and does not conflict with their gender identity
10. Take action if you are aware of discriminatory or harassing behavior based on the perceived or actual gender identity or expression of a student-athlete. If such behavior happens at a USAC event, document the event and notify USAC at _____.

Please see the accompanying FAQ and links for more information and resources on working with transgender athletes.

UNIFORMS

To ensure that transgender and non-binary climbers are comfortable participating, all competition-related rules regarding clothing and uniforms must be flexible and gender-inclusive. Teams should not require female or male climbers to wear a specific type of uniform (t-shirt, tank top, spandex, shorts, etc) or gendered color.



Terminology

Assigned sex at birth: The classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person's reproductive system, hormones, chromosomes, and other physical characteristics.

Cisgender is an term used to describe people whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth

Gender or Gender identity: Each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their assigned sex at birth.

Assigned sex at birth and gender are different; gender is not inherently connected to one's physical anatomy

For most people, their sex and gender identity align. For some, it does not. A person may be born with physical characteristics and assigned male at birth but identify as a woman, or assigned female at birth but identify as a man. Other people may identify outside the categories of woman/man, or may see their gender identity as fluid and moving between different genders at different times in their life. "Gender queer" and "gender diverse" are increasingly common terms used to identify this fluidity.

Gender binary: A social system whereby people are thought to have either one of two genders: man or woman. These genders are expected to correspond to birth sex: male or female. In the gender binary system, there is no room for interpretation, for living between genders or for crossing the binary. The gender binary system is rigid and restrictive for many people who feel that their natal sex (sex they were labelled with at birth) does not match up with their gender or that their gender is fluid and not fixed.

Gender expression: How a person publicly presents or expresses their gender. This can include behavior and outward appearance such as dress, hair, makeup, body language, and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways people express their gender. Others perceive a person's gender through these attributes. All people, regardless of their gender identity, have a gender expression and they may express it in any number of ways.

For trans people, their chosen name, preferred pronoun and apparel are common ways they express their gender. People who are trans may also take medically supportive steps to align their body with their gender identity.

Gender norms: The gender binary system influences what many people consider "normal" or acceptable behaviors, dress, appearances and roles for women and men.

Gender non-conforming or genderqueer: Individuals who do not follow gender stereotypes based on the sex they were assigned at birth. They may identify and express themselves as



“feminine men” or “masculine women” or as androgynous, outside of the categories “boy/man” and “girl/woman.” People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans.

Non-binary: Those who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary categories of male or female. Not all non-binary people identify as transgender.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments, such as hormone therapy and a range of surgical procedures, to align their bodies with their internally felt gender identity. There is no single or universal experience of what it means to be trans.

Transgender boys or men: Those who were assigned female at birth whose gender identity is male

Transgender girls or women: Those who were assigned male at birth whose gender identity is female

Transitioning: Refers to a host of activities that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity. This may include changes to their name, sex designation, dress, the use of specific pronouns and possibly medically supportive treatments, such as hormone therapy, sex-reassignment surgery or other procedures. It is important to recognize that the transition to living in a way that is consistent with one’s gender identity can look different for each person. For many, the transition process involves some combination of social transition, hormonal transition and/or surgical transition, but for others it may not

Transphobia: The aversion to, fear or hatred, or intolerance of trans people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment and violence toward trans people.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Doesn't allowing transgender women to compete take away from opportunities of real women?

It's important to understand that *trans women are women*. The decision to transition from one gender to the other is a deeply significant and difficult choice and reflects a woman's innermost concept of being female.

2. What about transgender men? Can they compete?

Yes, trans men and boys can compete in the men's category. Some trans boys or men may want to continue to compete in the female category. Their doing so depends on whether they qualify based on USAC's Transgender Athlete Participation Policy.

3. Won't transgender women have an unfair advantage over non-transgender women?

It is important to place this fear in context. Transgender girls who medically transition at an early age do not go through a male puberty, and therefore their participation in athletics as girls does not raise the same potential equity concerns that arise when transgender women transition after puberty.

For transgender women who transition after puberty, the IOC has stated that no athlete should be precluded from competing on the ground of an unverified, alleged, or perceived unfair competitive advantage and that athletes should not be presumed to have an unfair or disproportionate competitive advantage. Just as non-transgender women and men do, transgender women display a great deal of variation in physical attributes.

4. Do I need a separate locker room or restroom for trans athletes?

No. Trans athletes should be permitted to use the restroom or locker room that matches their gender identity. We recommend that gyms offer transgender athletes who want additional privacy in a restroom or locker room to have an alternative option - this may be gender-neutral portapotties and competitions. It is important to note that transgender and non-binary athletes may not identify with either male or female, so a gym can let an athlete use a single-user restroom or add curtains or stalls in locker rooms to give everyone more privacy.

Note: Should a cisgender person remain uncomfortable about sharing toilets and facilities with a trans person, it is the cisgender person who can seek out alternate arrangements and not the trans person. All too often, accommodation is at the expense of the trans person when the reverse is required if trans discrimination is to be avoided.

5. Should I let other parents, teammates or judges know that an athlete is transgender or non-binary in order to avoid uncomfortable situations for the athlete?



Do not without permission from the athlete and the athlete's parent(s). Athletes have a right to privacy about their personal information and this information must not be shared without their permission and from the parent(s). Discuss any situations with the athlete's parent(s) and ask for their guidance on how to handle specific situations for their child. Permission from the athlete and the athlete's parent(s) to disclose this information should include guidance on whom you may disclose the information to and how the information will be shared.

6. What do I do if I mistakenly use the wrong name or pronoun?

Using the wrong name and pronouns is hurtful. If you do use the wrong name or pronouns, quickly correct yourself. Afterward, consider approaching the person privately to let them know that you want to be respectful and would like their direction on how to go about correcting or apologizing in the moment. Also ask how you can support them if and when you witness other people making mistakes. Here is an example of something you could say: "I realize I made a mistake with your name/pronoun. I want to be respectful and supportive, so what is the best way for me to do that? Would you like me to apologize in the moment, or correct myself without drawing attention to the mistake? Would you like me to deal with other people who might make the same mistake? If so, would you like me to address the issue at the moment or pull the person aside and give them a reminder?"

Additional Reading and Resources

Transgender Athletes - Toolkits and Resources

- [Transgender Inclusion in Sport - General Resource](#)
- [Gender Diverse Youth Sport Inclusivity Toolkit](#)
- [Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student Athletes](#)
- [Guidelines for Creating Policies for Transgender Children in Recreational Sports](#)
- [Talking About Suicide](#)
- [Care of the Transgender Athlete](#)
- [The World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care](#)
- [USADA TUE Information](#)
- [USADA TUE Application](#)
- [Q&A on Transgender Athletes and USADA](#)
- [WADA Transgender and Gender Diverse Athletes and Anti-Doping](#)
- [WADA International Standards](#)
- [WADA TUE Physician Guidelines](#)



Policy Documents

- [USA Gymnastics Transgender Athlete Inclusion Resources](#)
- [IOC Framework on Fairness, Inclusivity, and Non-Discrimination](#)
- [IOC Framework on fairness, non-discrimination, and inclusivity - Media Round Table](#)
- [IFSC Policy Statement](#)
- [IFSC Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations](#)
- [Transgender Policies by Organization](#)
- [Canadian Centre of Ethics in Sports' Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participation](#)

**Portions of this document have been taken from USA Swimming Policy for Transgender Inclusion, USA Lacrosse Recommended Practices for the inclusion of Transgender and Non-Binary Youth Athletes, USA Gymnastics Policy for Transgender and Non-Binary Athlete Inclusion, and Canadian Centre of Ethics in Sports' Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participation in Canadian Sport. USAC DEI Committee has modified these publications to fit its needs. All copyrights are property of their respective owner.*