

ACTIVELY ENGAGING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Recommendations for National and Provincial/Territorial Sport and Multisport Organizations

Sport and multisport organizations have an important role to play in actively engaging women and girls at all stages of participation and competition, as coaches, officials and leaders, and in other roles related to sport and physical activity. Gender equitable organizations increase their pool of athletes and leaders, improve organizational performance and decision-making, and contribute to enhancing the Canadian sport and physical activity system.

1. IMPLEMENT GENDER EQUITY POLICIES – Revise/develop and integrate gender equity policies that enable women's and girls' participation and leadership across all aspects of the sport organization, including participation and high performance competition, programming, funding, leadership, and coach and official development. Review all organization policies with a gender lens. Creating a gender equity policy is not the end, but the beginning – there must be implementation.

2. INVEST IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – Provide professional development and mentorship opportunities for all women staff, coaches, officials, educators, and volunteers to increase their skills and confidence. Connect women to CAAWS' Women and Leadership Program and online Network for additional support. The Coaching Association of Canada's Women in Coaching Program, and apprenticeship and internship programs coordinated by Canada Games, Commonwealth Games Canada, and the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association, provide other opportunities.

3. SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS – Develop coaching, officiating and governance models that equally value female and male lives, and offer flexible alternatives to both women and men. Create workplace and volunteer environments that are psychologically, socially and physically safe. Be proactive in recruiting and promoting women into roles at all levels throughout your organization.

4. DEVELOP TARGETED INITIATIVES – Create initiatives designed to increase the involvement of women and girls as athletes, coaches, officials, board members, etc. These could range from female-only programs to targeted recruitment strategies.

5. DO YOUR RESEARCH – Examine current statistics relating to women's and girls' involvement in your organization. Implement a monitoring strategy to track the information over time, evaluate success, and identify areas that require additional investment.

6. ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS – Collaborate with provincial/territorial and community sport and multisport organizations to build participation and leadership development pathways for women and girls across the lifespan. Develop on and off

ramps to support women and girls in transitioning between sports or levels of competition (as dictated by interest, injury, or physical development), into different roles (e.g. from athlete to coach, official, administrator, etc.), and to increase their access to support services.

7. SHARE LEARNINGS – Share policies, resources, program models, mentoring opportunities and other promising practices to enhance gender equity within your sport, and with other organizations. Connect with CAAWS to profile the initiative online.

8. PROFILE WOMEN LEADERS – Invite and actively recruit women coaches, officials, and leaders to share their skills and expertise in athlete, coach and official development sessions, and at conferences and training events.

9. FEATURE WOMEN IN SPORT – Ensure balanced content and visual evidence of female and male coaches, athletes, officials and leaders in newsletters, reports, magazines, blogs and media guides, on web pages, and in coaching/teaching curricula. Challenge stereotypical constructions of femininity and the objectification of women by avoiding producing images and stories that reinforce sexualized and culturally-related stereotypes of women and girls.

10. BE A CHAMPION OF CHANGE – Continuously challenge coaching, officiating and leadership policies and practices that exclude or discriminate against women, and advocate for positive alternatives.

This resource was adapted from Actively Engaging Women and Girls: Addressing the Psycho-Social Factors – A Supplement to Canadian Sport for Life. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. To download the full publication visit www.caaws.ca or contact CAAWS to request a hardcopy.

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