

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

And You Association and its safeguarding activities

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Abstract

During Lausanne 2020 Youth Olympic Games (YOG), an activity to prevent and raise awareness of abuse in sport was offered to young athletes in the Olympic villages of Lausanne and St-Moritz. The activity, called *And You...?*, was not only educational, but also research-oriented. The data collected enabled a better understanding of how young athletes recognize and evaluate the different types of violence they may encounter in their sporting environment. The *And You Association* was set up in the wake of this event as a legacy of the YOG, with the mission of informing, raising awareness and educating as many young athletes and their coaches as possible in French-speaking part of Switzerland about issues of abuse in sport. To this end, the booth created for the YOG is still used, but other formats (such as small-group workshops) have been developed to reach more people at the same time. An evolution of the YOG booth format is currently being considered, including the development of an application that could be used on connected tablets.

Résumé

Lors des Jeux Olympiques de la Jeunesse Lausanne 2020 (JOJ), une activité de prévention et de sensibilisation aux maltraitances dans le sport a été proposée aux jeunes athlètes au sein des villages olympiques de Lausanne et St-Moritz. Cette activité, nommée *And You...?* avait une visée non seulement éducative, mais également de recherche. Les données récoltées ont permis de mieux comprendre la manière dont les jeunes athlètes reconnaissent et évaluent les différents types de violences possiblement rencontrées dans leur environnement sportif. L'Association *And You* a été créée à la suite de cet événement comme un héritage des JOJ et a pour mission d'informer, de sensibiliser et de former en Suisse romande le plus grand nombre de jeunes athlètes et leurs encadrants aux questions de maltraitance dans le sport. Pour ce faire, la cabine créée pour les JOJ est toujours utilisée, mais d'autres formats (type ateliers en petits groupes) ont été développés afin de toucher simultanément davantage d'individus. Une évolution du format de la cabine des JOJ est en cours de réflexion, notamment le développement d'une application qui pourrait être utilisée sur des tablettes connectées.

Mots-clés: prévention, abus, modèle, extrait de film, étude de cas

The *Association And You* (AAY), founded in 2021, aims to promote the development of knowledge and attitudes among young people and those around them to detect and prevent harassment and abuse in the practice of sport.

To achieve this goal, the AAY develops prevention projects in collaboration with the professionals concerned. These projects primarily target sports clubs and associations, schools and training centers, as well as youth associations and other extra-curricular facilities.

Its mission is to reach as many young amateur and elite sportsmen and sportswomen as possible, as well as their entourage, and make them aware of the various forms of abuse in sport.

The history of the Association

The AAY was created in the wake of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) held in Lausanne in 2020. As part of this event, an educational program for athletes, named *Health for Performance*, an original concept described in detail in a previous article in this journal [1], was offered at the Olympic Village sites in Lausanne and St. Moritz. Throughout the Games, athletes were able to experience and engage in health prevention activities, including the “*And You...?*” experience [2].

The Youth Olympic Winter Games in Lausanne and St. Moritz in January 2020 brought together more than 1’780 athletes aged 14 to 17 from 70 nations. As part of the *Health for Performance* educational program, 203 of them took part in the “*And You...?*” activity. The participants’ answers were recorded on a database and analyzed by a research team which has published its findings. [3]

A hundred of staff professionals caring for the young athletes (coaches, medical doctors, physiotherapists or heads of mission from the various delegations) also took part in the *And You...?* experience. The majority of them noted the interest of this preventive concept, and stressed the importance of tackling this theme at an international sporting event.

The *And You... ?* activity

The intervention takes the form of an individual activity, with the participant seated in a booth equipped with a screen (*Figure 1*). A touch-sensitive tablet is used to record demographic data anonymously. After a few brief instructions,

5 movie clips of around one minute each are shown, illustrating different types of abuse possible among adolescent athletes (psychological, sexual, physical abuse, neglect) and involving different contexts (parents, coaches, peers) (*Table 1*).

After watching the clips, participants are asked to rate each clip on three separate dimensions using a visual analog scale (rated from 0 to 100) by answering the following questions:

1) How did the participant feel when watching the clip?

“If I were the athlete, I would feel...” (from 0 = Good to 100 = Bad)

2) We ask the participant what he or she thought of the situation:

“I think the situation is...” (from 0 = Unacceptable to 100 = Acceptable)

3) We ask the participant whether he or she or someone else should take action in response to the situation:

“In this situation the athlete or someone should do...” (from 0 = Nothing to 100 = Do something).

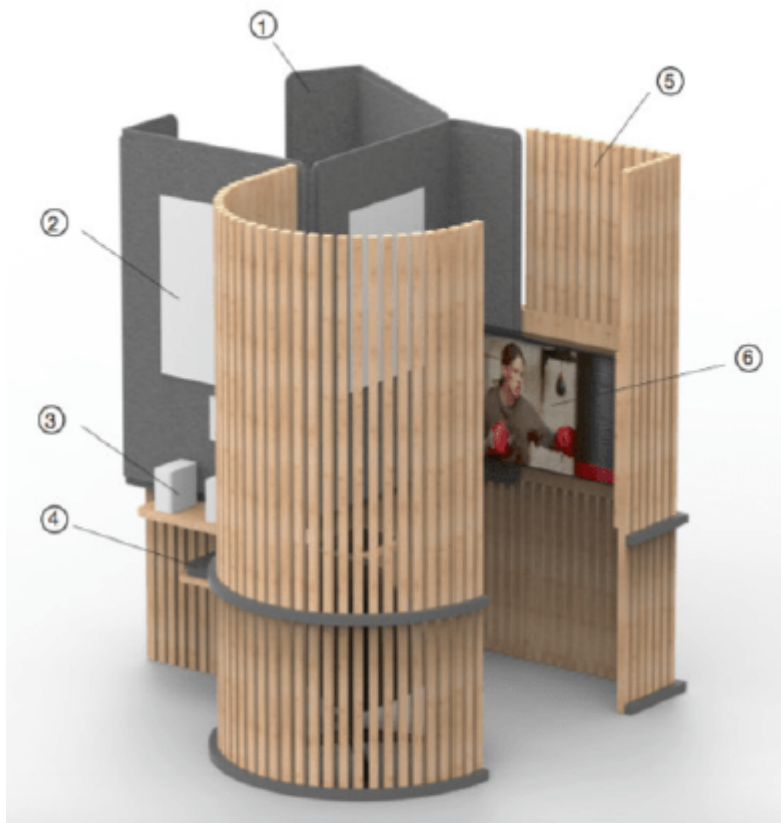


Figure 1: Double booth of *And You...?* activity

- ① Booth n° 1 with touchpad to watch movie clips. Felt panels
- ② Computer screen with *And You...?* signage
- ③ Printers for results on business card format
- ④ Computer for launching movie clips and collecting data
- ⑤ Wood cladding panels
- ⑥ Booth n° 2 with TV screen to watch movie clips.
Wood panels

Movies	Types of relationships	Types of violence	Reinforcing factors
Basketball Diaries	Coach and teenager, No direct witnesses	Psychological (risky equivocal solicitation)	Asymmetrical relationship (age, authority), Closed-door
I, Tonya	Mother-coach and daughter, Active witnesses (other parents)	Psychological (lack of empathy, pressure, insults), Neglect	Dependency relationship (age, kinship, loyalty), Coach's substance use
Million Dollar Baby	Boxers (young adults) Peers, passive witnesses	Psychological and sexual (humiliation, denigration, sexual harassment), Sexist discrimination	Group harassment, Male bastion
Whip it!	Young teenager and older pairs, Passive witness (coach)	Psychological (threats, intimidation), Physical (confinement)	Trivialization on the part of the protective adult Closed-door
Whiplash	Teenager and coach Passive witnesses (peers)	Psychological (shouting and verbal aggression), Physical (throwing objects), Neglect (injury)	Asymmetrical relationship Closed-door

Table 1: The 5 movie clips presented in And You...? (Adapted and translated from [3])

These three questions assess young athletes' attitudes to situations of abuse. They also aim to question the ethical and legal aspects of this issue in relation to the different contexts experienced by the athletes. Finally, they explore the athlete's ability to ask for help if faced with an abusive situation.

After the final sequence, participants are given a credit-card-sized leaflet with their answers printed out for each movie clip, along with general information about abuse. The answers are then discussed with the professionals supervising the activity. These professionals are either psychologist or social workers and are trained to lead this type of discussion with young people. Their function is to initiate dialogue with the participants based on their answers to the questions asked when viewing the films, to discuss their impressions and to pass on important prevention messages, including "If you feel like something's wrong, then something's wrong!", "Mistreatment in sport, let's talk about it", this to invite participants not to remain alone with their experiences and concerns.

The last page of the results/feedback card includes links to specialized websites and telephone numbers for young athletes (*Figure 2*).

A contact person (sports psychologist or social worker) is present during each event in case someone reports a case of abuse and a protocol is defined if something pops up.



Figure 2: Reply-card received by participants at the end of the *And You...?* activity

Results of the YOG Lausanne 2020 study

The results vary in terms of the emotions associated with possible violence, but show fairly homogeneous responses on how to assess the situation and the necessary steps to be taken. These variations in the assessment of violence according to the context presented in the films can be partly explained by the fact that violence is hierarchical, with physical abuse being more severely punished than psychological abuse. The authors also observe that a situation is perceived as more reprehensible when several types of violence are committed simultaneously. Finally, the results show that psychological violence of a sexual nature is just as harshly condemned by women as by men [3].

The situation shown in *Basketball Diaries* [4], which presents a situation at risk of sexual harassment, is the extract that was evaluated with the least amount of concern on the three dimensions measured. It's also the only extract which does not feature any explicit violence (physical, psychological nor sexual), but represents a situation at risk of sexual violence. The hypothesis of the study's authors is that the absence of direct, explicit representation of violence masks the potential danger of the adult's behavior depicted in the clip. Interestingly, when faced with this situation, the girls report significantly higher negative feelings than boys. What is more, compared to boys, the girls evaluate the situation as more unacceptable. The clip from *Whip It!* [5], which shows a scene of intimidation, with psychological and physical violence, is the one that was most severely evaluated on all three dimensions. This clip is the only one to show physical violence between two sportswomen inscribed here in a hierarchical relationship linked to age and years of experience in the discipline. The authors also point out that this extract features violence between women, which tends to be perceived as more taboo than violence between men [6,7].

As for the clip from *Whiplash* [8], which depicts a situation of psychological and physical abuse

and neglect, there is a clear gender difference: girls feel significantly more troubled, find the situation more unacceptable and feel more strongly that a third-party reaction is needed, as compared to boys.

In the discussion, the authors explain that *“the fact that girls evaluate the situation presented in Basketball Diaries more severely than boys could be explained – at least partially – through the hypothesis that sexual violence affects young women more often and that they are therefore more aware of this type of risky situation than boys, and therefore better able to identify it; boys, on the other hand, are more at risk of suffering physical violence”*.

According to the study, the clip from Whiplash is evaluated less severely by boys. The authors refer to the normalization and systemic nature of violence in sport. Violence is internalized, normalized and seen as an integral part of the path to excellence. The “no pain, no gain” belief, unfortunately still highly prevalent in the performance world, would allow abusive and mistreating situations to arise: *“The ideology that without effort and work success is not possible raises the question of how far violence in sport is tolerable. This questions the limit between the benefits of a form of consented and more or less legitimate violence on the one hand, and the damage caused by mistreatment and abusive behavior on the other, i.e. more generally that of the limit of commitment aimed at a goal, however ambitious it may be.”*

In the light of these results, it is clear that a change in culture, attitudes and ways of acting must take place in the sporting world. Considerable efforts still need to be made in terms of prevention and training for all those involved in sport.

Perspectives – evolution of And You’s activities

The *And You Association* (AAY) is a legacy of the YOG Lausanne 2020. Its prevention activities with the And You...? booth formed the basis of its “raison d’être” and its first intervention tool with the sporting population. Since its creation, the Association has reached nearly 700 people through its activities, targeting athletes, coaches, parents, club managers and other members of the support staff.

The *And You...?* booths were reused for a large-scale event (Fête Cantonale Vaudoise de Gymnastique) and were a great success (*Figure 3*).

However, these devices require considerable logistics and only allow a limited number of people to pass through simultaneously. AAY has therefore thought its prevention activities over, so that more people can be reached in a short space of time.



Figure 3: Prevention stand at the Fête Cantonale Vaudoise de Gymnastique at Yverdon-les-Bains in 2022.

For athletes, AAY has developed interactive workshops in small groups (maximum 15 people) lasting around 1 hour, organized in several parts: a brief theoretical part, a part for viewing one or two film extracts (from the initial *And You...?* experience) and a part for discussion in small groups of 3 or 4 people in relation to “vignettes” describing situations of abuse they might encounter in their sporting environment.

This format enables the athletes to discuss together and argue whether the situation is acceptable or not. A plenary session with the speaker is then held to discuss these fictitious situations. The workshop ends with the same prevention messages as the initial *And You...?* experience, plus links to specialized websites and telephone numbers for young athletes, if needed. Athletes also have the opportunity to take away credit-card-sized leaflets containing the resources mentioned.

Specific training modules have been created for coaches, parents, health professionals and club managers.

With the possibility of being present at sporting events to reach a wide audience, AAY aims to develop the booths into a more functional version, adapted to a greater number of participants, while retaining the essence of the concept initially proposed.

The aim, for example, is to move away from “physical” booths in favor of a lighter device: an application installed on touchpads fitted with headphones. This would enable the *And You...?* experience to be replicated almost identically in terms of content, but on a larger scale, with a dozen pads, for example, that could be used simultaneously. The rest of the experience would remain the same, with a debriefing session following viewing, led by specialist speakers responsible for transmitting prevention messages and dedicated relays.

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ABUSE CASE STUDY MOVIE CLIP PREVENTION ROLE MODELS