

MODULES

1. Recognition
2. Language
3. Visibility
4. Documents
5. Spaces

6. Protection

7. Innovation
 8. Intersectionality
 9. Communications
- Extra: Legal issues



We make a binding commitment to develop a protection policy for gender diversity that acknowledges and respects the privacy and increased security needs of all trans, intersex, and non-binary athletes.

What does a protection policy have to do with trans, intersex, and non-binary (TIN) participation in sports?

1. Acknowledging and considering the increased security needs of TIN people.

Şeyda, an 18-year-old trans woman, is walking to badminton practice. She is excited, but also a little nervous. Practice used to be held during the day at a gym in the center of town. But the men's team now needs the more popular gym at that time slot, so Şeyda's practice is now being held at another gym at the edge of town and has been pushed to later in the evening. It's her first time attending practice in the new facility. On the online map, Şeyda saw that the gym was in an outlying area and that she would have to cross through an unlit park to get there. Şeyda read in the newspaper about a trans woman of color who was violently attacked in the same park just a few weeks earlier. So, on her way through the park, she feels more apprehensive than she normally does when she's out alone in the evening. When she finally makes it to the gym, she's exhausted before practice even starts.

On average, TIN people experience more discrimination on a daily basis than people who are not TIN. One study found that 34 percent of trans people surveyed reported that they had been threatened with or experienced physical violence at some point over the past five years (FRA, 2015).

Certain groups of trans people, particularly those who are affected by multiple forms of discrimination at the same time, such as trans feminine people of color, are at an even higher risk of experiencing violence. Alongside domestic and professional situations, violence is frequently perpetrated in public spaces (e.g., public facilities or public transit). The example clearly illustrates how this affects opportunities for TIN people to participate in sports activities. Şeyda has a valid concern that something might happen to her on the way to the gym. Ultimately, this may lead her to decide that she will no longer attend practice.



Taking responsibility as an organization for protecting TIN people

Identify potential risks for TIN people: As you begin to think about the topic of protection at your organization, you could consider the potential risks TIN people might encounter there. This is not limited to the risk of physical violence; it may also include the risk of discrimination (e.g., harassment or misgendering). On top of the danger they may face on their way to practice, any situation in which a TIN person is outed (intentionally or unintentionally), for example, in the changing room, in the bathroom, or when their identification is checked, may be dangerous for them (EM 4 Documents). To increase your awareness of this topic, it can help to read studies and first-person accounts of violence or discrimination against TIN people.

Prevention is the best protection against violence: The best way to protect people from violence is to inhibit discrimination from occurring in the first place. This is what we mean by prevention. By implementing the recommendations in this Charter and training the members of your organization, you will already be preventing numerous situations that could lead to violence.

Take responsibility as an organization for protecting TIN people: If TIN people are left to fend for themselves, this can create additional barriers to entry at your organization. It can be challenging and even overwhelming for a single person to attempt to change existing structures and constantly devise creative solutions for problems. And even as an organization, you cannot change the basic conditions in parks and other public spaces. At the same time, officers at your organization and all members should be involved in helping to create structures that protect TIN people. For example, you could encourage sports groups to think about how they could work together to avoid situations in which discrimination might occur (e.g., a dangerous route to the sports facility). Developing a protection policy as described in the next section and designating protection officers can help you foster change throughout your organization.



Protection policies help prevent violence and define a process for handling experiences of violence. Such policies center around multiple factors, such as analysis, structural change, agreements, discussion, and the general attitude of the organization.



2. Failing to develop policies for handling violence can put the burden on those experiencing discrimination

You remember Mo (→ EM 5 Spaces) Mo is non-binary, uses a wheelchair, and was laughed at by boys from another sports group in the changing room prior to Mo's first practice session. Afterwards, Mo speaks to the coach about the issue. The coach doesn't know what to do – he has never dealt with this before. At the same time, he sees how it has affected Mo and wants to help Mo feel more comfortable. So, he agrees to take care of the problem. He also mentions the case to his friend, who sits on the board. He addresses the issue at the next board meeting, and everyone agrees that the club has never had a case like this before, so it would be best for Mo to find a solution to the problem. For example, couldn't Mo just use the women's changing room next time? When the coach tells Mo about the decision, this makes Mo very sad, and Mo decides to switch to a different club.

This example makes it clear that both the discrimination itself and the actions taken as a result – or in this case, the failure to act due to a lack of information – can be stressful for TIN people. When an organization fails to respond to violence, harassment, and discrimination, this can send the message to TIN people that they will not be taken seriously and that protecting them is not a priority for the organization. Verein nicht wichtig genug ist.



Working together as an organization to develop protection policies for violence against TIN people

What elements could be included in a protection policy?

Handling difficult situations: What will you do if discrimination occurs? As the example illustrates, a prompt response is important for the person affected by the incident. For this reason and others, we recommend developing and documenting standardized protocols and simple, accessible options for affected parties to report discrimination. For example, you could nominate dedicated protection officers who can be contacted (anonymously, if needed) in the event of discrimination (e.g., by e-mail) and who are trained to respond appropriately.

Distribute a code of conduct for members: This may include information on how to handle discrimination, either as an affected party or a witness, and the exact protocols to employ if a case of discrimination becomes public.

Help those affected by discrimination process their experiences: You can ultimately support people affected by discrimination by providing them with the opportunity to

process their experiences. For example, you can create a list of counseling services for members. Just like with our other recommendations, we suggest making binding decisions about the personnel responsible for development, implementation deadlines, and opportunities for all members of your organization to get involved.



Questions for consideration

- What do the members of your organization want in a discrimination policy?
- What are the current potential dangers or risks for discrimination at your organization?
- Can you identify specific situations involving discrimination in which you are/were unsure about how to proceed?

Additional reading:

LesMigraS: Provide support. 2011. Online (German only):

https://lesmigras.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LM_Broschuere_Tapesh_UnterstuetzungGeben.pdf



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