



Read this:

Having a good team culture is important to us! We want everyone to feel included and supported and to have a positive experience on our team. This is why we have rules: to ensure safety and respect.

Sometimes rules are clearly broken, but other times, it's not as easy to tell. This month's Safe Sport Monday is about understanding our team's culture and the rules we have.

Discussion Questions:

What is our team culture?

>Safe Sport says: Simply speaking, culture is "what we do here." Do you cheer for each other during tough sets? Wear team gear when you travel? Always clean up your area after a meet? Host team-building events? If so, that's your culture! Make "what we do here" positive things like support, respect, fun, hard work, and achievement.

Listen to each of the following scenarios and decide if it's okay or not okay:

1. Teasing a teammate for wearing glasses: Okay or not okay?

>Safe Sport says: This is not okay. Even if the teasing is "in good fun," it's never right to pick on someone for a quality that makes them different.

2. Using SnapChat in the locker room: Okay or not okay?

>Safe Sport says: This is not okay. In fact, it is against the rules to use a camera (even the one on your phone!) in the locker room. It's great to want to connect with your teammates on social media, but that should only happen outside of the locker room. You wouldn't want to accidentally catch someone changing their clothes in your Snap!

3. Getting upset with your teammate for goofing off during practice: Okay or not okay?

>Safe Sport says: It's good to uphold your team's value of hard work, but there is a way to do this without getting upset. Use positive encouragement during the set, ("Let's beat this interval by 7 seconds!"), and then address it one-on-one during a break or after practice. If this is a persistent problem, tell your coach.

4. Going into an opposite-gender hotel room on a team trip to grab something: Okay or not okay?

>Safe Sport says: Sharing a sleeping room with someone of the opposite gender is against the rules – and so is going into their room. If your teammate has something in his/her room that you need, a better alternative is to ask them to bring it to the door or into the hallway. If you want to hang out with your teammates, find a common area to play games and hang out.

Wrap It Up:

What are three things we can do as a team to build up our team's culture?

>Safe Sport says: This can be anything that supports your team's positive culture! Make posters for the pool deck, do random acts of kindness for teammates, or have fun challenge sets that encourage lots of cheering.

*For Coaches: Refer to your team policies and codes of conduct to talk with your swimmers about what is expected of their behavior. For more resources, visit www.usaswimming.org/protect or contact Safe Sport at safesport@usaswimming.org.