## AMA YOUTH RUN CLUB


CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN GIRLS AND GENDER \& SEXUALLY DIVERSE YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION IN SPORT +
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
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GO! (previously GO! Run) is a free, fun and flexible program developed to increase girls' as well as gender and sexually diverse students' participation in physical activity. Creating safe and inclusive spaces and opportunities where girls and gender diverse student's focus on age-appropriate skill development helps to not only build confidence and self-esteem but insitlls a love of physical activity for life-long participation.


## WHY GO!

## TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY



Offering opportunities like GO! directly support girls and gender diverse youth, where they are most needed, to ensure that all children and youth can participate in activities of their choosing.

- "Not every woman or girl experiences sport in the same way. Even if they share the same gender, other aspects of identity also impact how people experience sport differently. To achieve true gender equity, we must address the needs of women and girls who are racialized, have a disability, are LGBTQI2S+, are from low socio-economic backgrounds, and other marginalized intersections." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2021) We want to create an environment in which they feel comfortable practicing, performing, failing and learning.
- It is important to note that co-ed programs are still necessary and that some women and girls may feel comfortable and challenged playing in a co-ed team. Some gender diverse youth might also be more likely to participate in physical activities and sports that are not gender segregated. (Greenspan et al., 2019). Ultimately, it is important to provide choice for both co-ed and girls only clubs in schools to reach the most girls, women and gender diverse students.
- Having coaches, instructors, referees and youth leaders who are also women will also help attract more participants.
- Having coaches, instructors, referees and youth leaders who are gender diverse may also invite participation.
- Be flexible with uniforms! Have options or encourage
"Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs, and decision making fairly to all genders without any discrimination on the basis of gender, and addressing any imbalances in the benefits available to people of different genders." (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020). participants to choose what they are most comfortable playing in. This is especially important if participants' clothing options are influenced by their culture. Avoid penalizing students who arrive without active clothing and instead offer opportunities for low-impact participation.

According to Sport Canada's 2005 "Sport Participation in Canada" report, minority girls and women are the most underrepresented in the Canadian sport and recreation system. Black, Indigenous, and women and girls of colour experience additional barriers to accessing sport spaces, including racism, Islamophobia, limited accommodations for familial responsibilities, and lack of accessibility for low income families (Joseph \& Lavallee, 2021).
"One solution may not work for ALL women and girls in experiencing sport. While more research is needed on the experience of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) in sport, we know that they experience sport in unique ways. If we don't acknowledge this, we risk building more barriers to equity." (Joseph \& Lavallee, 2021).

TO ENGAGE MORE GIRLS AND (1) GENDER DIVERSE YOUTH IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Only 2.5 percent of girls aged 12 to 17 are getting enough physical activity (Statistics Canada, 2016).
"Age 10 is the key! If a girl doesn't participate by age 10 there is only a $10 \%$ chance she'll be physically active at age 25" (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2015).
"In adulthood, almost twice as many Canadian men (45\%) participate in sports, compared to women (24\%)" (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2013).

- More than $1 / 2$ of younger kids who identify as LGBTQ2S+ have never participated in before school, after school or lunchtime activities organized by their school.
- Only $1 / 10$ kids who identify as LGBTQ2S+ have participated in physical activities with a coach. (Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey, 2015)
- "Boys aged 5 to 17 twice as likely as girls to meet physical activity guidelines" (Statistics Canada, 2019)
- "A dropout rate of 1 in 3 girls leaving sport by late adolescence compared to teenage boys which is only 1 in 10" (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2020)
- Only $18 \%$ of women aged 16-63 stay involved in sport (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2020)
- "Sport participation for girls in Canada steadily declining from childhood to adolescence, with $62 \%$ of girls not playing sport at all" (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2020)

Girls-only programming increases opportunities for girls to meet Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines and can counter the trend of inequality in adulthood. GO! is one strategy to close the gap so girls and gender diverse youth can access the important physical, social and emotional benefits of participation that include increased school connection, positive development, improved grades, and better educational and employment outcomes (Greenspan et al., 2019a).

TO INCREASE ENJOYMENT
13. FOR GIRLS AND GENDER DIVERSE YOUTH
"Only $1 / 10$ high school girls enroll in optional physical education classes." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2015).
"According to research by the University of Manitoba, by age 7 girls report feeling lower levels of movement competence and confidence than boys." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2015).

Barriers reported by girls:

- $43 \%$ said the quality of the sport experience was a barrier.
- 1 in 3 girls reported barriers from: low confidence, negative body image, perceived lack of skill, poor perceptions of belonging, and not feeling welcomed. (Canadian Women \& Sport, The Rally Report 2020)

Girls-only programming also allows for the opportunity to address issues specific to girls and emphasize aspects of participation that are most important to them. Giving girls the space to be active may be enough to enrich the experience of participating in physical activity, especially for girls who perceive themselves as less active or not confident in their abilities.
"Intersectionality is a concept that can help policy makers and sport programmers understand how different types of discrimination - like racism, homophobia, and ableism combine to prevent some women and girls from participating in sport." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2020)

It is important when creating girls-only opportunities to think about intersecting identity factors and how those can play a role in girls participation in sport. Creating a girls only opportunity and a culturally appropriate program can help to bridge the gap in promoting racialized girls' participation in sport and physical activity. Programming that embraces and celebrates gender diversity will also allow youth who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment to participate in sport and physical activity.

By providing Girls Only and GSA Only run/walk clubs, especially for youth in junior and senior high, we hope to increase participation and provide an experience that results in sustained increases in levels of physical activity for life.

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## COACH CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOSTING A GO! CLUB

1. Emphasize participation and acceptance before skill and effort.
2. Don't fear having competition; rather, create an environment where differing levels of competition are welcomed and appreciated.
3. Be mindful of gender neutral language, ask for and use your participant's pronouns, and consider how your language might affect your participants. Microaggressions can be unintentional, but still, impact participants. By avoiding stereotypes (negative and positive), you can celebrate each student individually!
4. Monitor your participants to ensure everyone is getting equal opportunities and activities are accessible to all.

Create an inclusive identity and unity within your team to prevent cliques.
6. Encourage the participants to plan and make decisions, allowing them to have input into the design of the program.
7. Reinforce the social and emotional benefits of moving and actively dissociate these from appearance - especially weight. Health promotion is key, which means avoiding any comments about student bodies and celebrating student participation instead!
8. Teach the basics: invest some time into developing physical literacy and fundamental movement skills. TARGET is a really great, easy to follow model to work on progress over perfection.
9. Engage women and gender diverse adults as positive role models to legitimize sport as a safe and appropriate activity.
10. Always emphasize fun!


## TOP

## TIPS FOR ENGAGING AND MAINTAINING PARTICIPATION

1. Allow participants to test out GO! for a period of time without commitment expectations, allowing them to see for themselves what it's all about. Support their right to pass and their agency in how they choose to participate. There is no right way!
2. Celebrate a year well run with year end prizes for everyone!
3. Incorporate music and let participants have a say in what they would like to hear. You could ask this as a question on your All About Me Sheet.
4.Participate in events. Search for local fun runs or host your own. Consider a virtual marathon where your participants set the destination, and to celebrate reaching the destination, host a final themed fun run!
4. Create leaders within your club so that as your participants move to older grades, they get to participate and also experience a leadership role. Youth leadership is instrumental in addressing inequalities for all youth (Kulick et al., 2019). Representation matters! One way to celebrate diversity is by ensuring that participants have leaders and role models that reflect their identities.
5. Create opportunities for your students to connect with other clubs or organizations outside your school - remember that representation and community-building matters.
6. Have your participants fill out the goal setting sheet so they can keep track of their goals and their progress. Don't forget to celebrate all the milestones!
7. Find a balance between competition and fun. Some participants enjoy the competitive side of sport while others enjoy the social side of it. Don't be afraid to add competition in but work to create an environment that celebrates participation over skill.
8. Keep it growing year-to-year. Build annual traditions so there is familiarity in the program. Consider adding something new and exciting each year to keep your participants engaged and excited, and don't forget to get support from your administration and school community.
9. It is so important for coaches to gather participants to discuss and reflect on relevant topics. Group discussions can support team and relationship building, fostering a sense of belonging and leading to increased and continued participation. See the talking points on page 6 with further content to support these pointed discussions.


Get to know your participants when they sign up using the All About Me sheets available in the Appendix. Invite students to complete these sheets so that you can learn how to best support them in the club environment.

Allow students to self identify. Acknowledging at the start of your season that all students have the option to use the name and pronouns that feel good for them will go a long way in supporting students who may not feel included in the use of the pronouns "he" or "she" (check out further helpful hints on this from the Minister of Education for Alberta here on page 5).

Use gender neutral language. Try using, "Hi Team" instead of "Hi Guys or Hi Girls." There are loads of gender inclusive greetings that you can use including folks, runners, crew, friends, everyone, y'all, cool cats, and more!


Make inclusive bathrooms and change rooms available! Many kids who identify as LGBTQ2S+ don't participate in sport and physical activity because they don't make it past the change rooms or bathrooms. Creating at least one gender inclusive bathroom at your school allows for all children to have a safe space to change into their physical activity clothes. (You can find guidelines for creating. inclusive bathroom spaces from the Minister of Education for Alberta here on p. 9)!

Co-create group rights or community agreements with your group to define what a safe and inclusive space looks like. Consider things like respect, participation, safety, boundaries, and support in your conversation and encourage students to share ideas and examples that are meaningful to them. Student voice and choice are so important in creating welcoming environments. Review these rights/agreements regularly and when new members join.

## T <br>  K IN $\square$ TIPS

## GO! CLUBS ARE NOT ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS/WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

GO! is a free, fun and flexible Girls Only and GSA-only running/walking/movement program developed to increase participation in physical activity, foster physical literacy and promote long-term development for girls and gender diverse students.

The best way to talk about weight and weight loss is by NOT talking about weight and weight loss. There are so many benefits to running and walking and we want to keep that the focus of GO! Weight-centred health promotion is often rooted in biases and negative values about body weights and sizes. It is important to reflect on the types of weight biases that we are surrounded by and have learned. Weight bias can harm participants and has been associated with a whole host of negative health outcomes, including anxiety, depression and issues with body image (Alberga \& Russell-Mayhew, 2016). By taking a weight-neutral approach to coaching, we can support the success of our participants and encourage well-being across all domains, including physical, emotional, social and more. We encourage you to challenge negative weight-based stereotypes and comments if they arise and remind participants that all bodies are GOOD bodies that can do amazing things!


## TA LK IN G TIPS

## GO! CLUBS ARE NOT ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS/WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Here are some other suggestions that might be helpful:

- Much like weight, children and youth do not have control over how their bodies grow, how tall they are, and how wide their shoulders or hips are. In times of fast growth and change, it's important to remember how self-conscious our participants might be. We can create a safe space amidst this change by avoiding any comments about body size, height, and weight-period. Even when we think we are giving a compliment, we might be reinforcing biases or making participants feel pressured to maintain a certain appearance.
- Change the narrative by focussing on different motivations for physical activity and being physically active. Talk about the positive mental health benefits, the importance of social connection, how to learn about your community through running and walking, and how to appreciate the functionality of the muscles, tendons, and joints that help us move in different ways. Sport is an incredible opportunity for girls and gender diverse youth to build positive relationships with their bodies.
- Encourage participants to tune into their bodies and pay attention to how and what they feel as they move. Encourage students to find ways to move that feel good, and create opportunities for choice so that students can tune into their bodies.
"Generally, it is good practice to keep the discussion relevant to participation in the activity. Ensuring girls become physically literate opens up more opportunities and allows them to have more freedom to choose how they wish to use physical activity throughout their lives - to be competitive in sport, to be recreationally engaged, to simply enjoy moving, etc. Physically literate women and girls have the confidence and competence to successfully engage in sport and physical activity that enhances their physical and psychological wellbeing, and are able to pursue a level of sport excellence in line with their ability and motivation." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2012, Actively Engaging Women and Girls: Addressing the Psychosocial Factors).

Content by: Elizabeth Tingle

## talking TIPS

## SELF ESTEEM

Through GO! you have the opportunity to support participants in increasing their selfesteem by increasing the competence and confidence of all participants. As a coach, you can assist participants in increasing their self-esteem by creating a positive social environment where participants build friendships and have positive social interactions.

This resource outlines keys ways coaches can keep girls in sport through social connection.

We may be vulnerable to low self-esteem in sport and physical activity if we perceive our bodies to be inadequate, unfit or inappropriate for our selected activity. We may feel that our self-worth is judged on our losses and wins versus our abilities and intentions. Intensive participation in sport may lead to social isolation and a lack of family support. All of these negative emotions need to be refocused in order to build positive self-esteem.

Coaches, physical education teachers, and active living leaders can positively influence self-esteem and provide girls and women with ongoing incentive to participate and personally succeed in physical activity endeavors." (Canadian Women \& Sport, 2003, Self Esteem, Sport \& Physical Activity).

## BODY POSITIVITY

Body image and body positivity are important topics to broach with girls. The influence of the media on girls' perceptions of their own bodies has the potential to be damaging. However, there are some great resources to aid you in redirecting the conversation on body image towards the positive.

There's significant evidence that media education can counter unrealistic media representations of men's and women's bodies. For example, a 2010 study found that showing the video Evolution (created by Dove to show how media images of women are manipulated) significantly reduced negative effects on confidence and body satisfaction of young girls when they looked at pictures of ultra-thin models afterward" (Media Smarts. Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy).

Check out these helpful links: http://mediasmarts.ca/body-image/body-imagegirls
http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/body-image

## TALKING TIPS

LGBTQ2S+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, TWO SPIRIT, AND OTHERS)

Students who do not identify as a boy or a girl, who are transitioning, or who find identity within the LGBTQ2S+ community may feel safe and inspired to participate in a GO! club, especially as part of our GSA-only clubs

GSA-only clubs can and should include all sorts of activities. Poll the students and see what they are interested in and what activity would keep their participation.

Here are some ways that you can support gender and sexually diverse students in a GO! Run setting:

- Provide opportunities for a range of low-, moderate- and high-intensity activities that participants can choose from.
- Provide students with options accessing changing rooms spaces and ensure that there are single occupancy spaces available.
- Allow students to dress for their comfort, and recognize that while some clothing may appear unconventional for physical activity, students often choose to wear clothing that makes them feel safe or affirmed in their identity.
- Establish a code of conduct, group guidelines, or community commitments that all participants will adhere to and ensure that inclusion and respect are explicitly considered.
- Talk about locations and walk/run destinations that feel safest for participants, and encourage them to map out routes.
- Create a check-in routine that builds a sense of community and allows opportunities for students to share their names and pronouns. It is normal for students to use different names and pronouns as they learn more about themselves. Normalize asking for pronouns.
- Avoid assumptions, challenge stereotypes, and intervene in matters of harassment and discrimination.
- Embrace more gender neutral language by saying "folks" or "all" instead of "guys."
- Be open to learning from your participants, but also know that there are a wealth of resources available to you about gender and sexual diversity.

Resources for creating inclusive environments for gender and sexual diversity: https://www.viasport.ca/sites/default/files/LGBTQI2S_Creating_Inclusive_Environments.pdf https://www.viasport.ca/sites/default/files/LGBTQI2S_Inclusion_in_Sport_Coaching_Resource_05-26.pdf https://phecanada.ca/sites/default/files/content/docs/phe-canada-lgbtq2s+inclusionguidebook-en-final.pdf
$\qquad$ Please take a moment to fill in this 'All About Me' sheet. The information you provide will only be seen by: $\qquad$ You do not need to provide an answer for each prompt; fill in as much or as little as you feel is necessary. Thank you!

Choose how you fill out this sheet: use works, emojis, draw, cut and paste pictures, etc.!


| May I use these pronouns in front of the class? | YES | NO |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| May I use these pronouns when I contact home? | YES | NO |
| May I use these pronouns in front of other teachers? | YES | NO |

My Favourite Ways Play


Words that Describe Me
(CIRCLE)
Active
Creative
Careful
Serious

Excited
Shy

## How I Like to Interact with Others

(CIRCLE)
Large Groups

Small Groups

By Myself
With Pictures
In Quiet Spaces
With my Teacher There
Partners
y Mself

Watching Others

The Easiest Way for me to Show what I Know Is
(CIRCLE)

With my Actions
Not in Front of the Group
With my Words
Slowly

I Like
I Do Not Like

Things I Would Like you to Know About Me

Question(s) For:
$\qquad$ Please take a moment to fill in this 'All About Me' sheet. The information you provide will only be seen by: $\qquad$ You do not need to provide an answer for each prompt; fill in as much or as little as you feel is necessary. Thank you!

Choose how you fill out this sheet: use works, emojis, draw, cut and paste pictures, etc.!


| May I use these pronouns in front of the class? | YES | NO |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| May I use these pronouns when I contact home? | YES | NO |
| May I use these pronouns in front of other teachers? | YES | NO |

My Favourite Ways to be Active

Words that Describe Me

## How I Like to Interact with Others

(CIRCLE)
Large Groups
Observing Others
By Myself With Pictures

Small Groups
With my Teacher There
In Quiet Spaces
Partners

The Easiest Way for me to Show what I Know Is
(CIRCLE)
With my Actions
With my Words
Not in Front of the Groups
By Giving me Some Time

I Like
I Do Not Like

Things I Would Like you to Know About Me

Question(s) For:

## GOAL SETTING SHEET

We want to learn more about you to help you reach your goals! Please fill out this sheet to the best of your ability with any information that you think will helpful. Let's crush some goals this year!

NAME AND PRONOUNS:

MY GOAL(S) FOR THIS PROGRAM ARE:

THIS GOAL IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE:

## RUNNING GAMES

Want to add some fun to your program? Include games as a warm-up before or a cool-down after your run or walk. The following games all fit within a set of criteria to keep girls moving, motivated and confident all practice long!


## RUNNING GAMES



## Equipment: None

Time Required: 5-20 min
Recommended For: K-12
How to Play:

- Similar to rock paper scissors
- There are two teams and each team gets 5 seconds to huddle and decide which they would like to be (bear, fish, mosquito)
- After each team has decided they meet face to face in the middle of the playing area and just like rock paper scissors when facing your opponent everyone calls out "bear, fish, mosquito" and then act out the animal they chose.
- The losing side has to run to the clearly marked safety line while the winning side tries to tag them. If tagged you join the other team.
- Bear beats fish; Fish beats mosquito; Mosquito beats bear



## RUNNING GAMES



Equipment: None
Time Required: 5+ min
Recommended For: K-12
How to Play:

- Set up cones in the shape of a butterfly.
- This butterfly should be big enough to let kids run and jog around it for a decent amount of time.
- This particular butterfly shape should be symmetrical, with a straight line down its center.
- This center line is called the "sprinting lane" while one side of the butterfly is the "jogging lane." The other side of the butterfly will be the "walking lane."
- Have your kids start to jog around one side of the butterfly shape, then have them sprint down the center of the butterfly before walking around the other side of the butterfly.
- Have them run on the course until tired.



## RUNNING GAMES



Equipment: None
Time Required: 5+ min
Recommended For: K-6
How to Play:

- Choose one person to be IT.
- Play begins when IT yells, "GO!"
- IT chases other players and when IT comes near, players can avoid being tagged by quickly lying on their backs with arms and legs raised in the air, like a turtle on its back.
- As soon as IT has gone by, they can keep running 1.again however, if you are tagged you are the new IT
- Identify 2 end lines on either side of activity area using pylons. Instruct participants to stand on one end line and assign one of three animal names (lion, tiger, bear)
- Two participants will be the zookeepers. Zoo keepers begin in the middle of the activity area and call out the name of one animal at a time
- When the name of their animal is called, they travel to the opposite end line without being captured Should an animal be captured, they become zookeeper assistants and try to capture all other animals.
- Should an animal make it to the opposite end line they wait for their name to be called again.



## RUNNING GAMES

Equipment: Blackfoot Marking Sticks
Time Required: 2 min
Recommended For: K-12
How to Play:

- Participants take in a big breath of air, start running, and at the same time scream out loud until you can no longer scream without taking a new breath, this is the spot where the scream stops and it should be marked with the marking stick



## RUNNING GAMES



# The Aberta Medical Association Youth Run Club is proudly supported by: 



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