

Scenario 1.

You are watching a very close grassroots game on a Sunday.

Among the spectators is a person you have got to know over the past couple of years and who you have become friendly with.

They have always been passionate, but today they are more animated than you have seen them before. They are pacing the sideline openly passing comment on the game, yelling constant instructions to players, and aggressively questioning and criticising decisions made by the players and the referee.

You have not heard any abusive or discriminatory language, but your friend's behaviour is negatively impacting the enjoyment of those watching and those involved in the game itself.



Scenario 1. Facilitator notes – good practice examples

Prompt questions

Tackle.

- It is appropriate to say something - even if the behaviour isn't abusive or illegal, it's still harmful.
- Choose a moment to speak privately and calmly with the person focussing on de-escalation. E.g.
 - **"Are you okay? You don't seem yourself today?"**
 - **"I know you care about the team, but I think the shouting is putting a lot of pressure on the players and ref."**
 - **"the atmosphere feels a bit intense – I feel like everyone would enjoy it more if there was less shouting"**
- You might not feel it appropriate to confront somebody in the moment perhaps a word at half-time or after the game is more effective using calm, **"I feel"** statements: **"I feel like it's getting too much and I'm not sure others are enjoying it."**

What would you say to open a conversation?

What might be stopping other people from saying something in this situation?

Would it be different if you didn't know the person?

Would it be different if they did use abusive or discriminatory language? If "yes" how would you act?

Assist.

- Check in with others who may be affected (e.g., parents, players, officials or spectators)
- Signal support with comments like, **"you're doing great"** to a player or to an official
- If someone expresses discomfort, take it seriously and explore how they'd like to address it
- Reassure others that it's okay to ask someone to tone it down – football is for everyone to enjoy

Have you seen or experienced similar behaviour before? What happened, and what did you learn from it?

Pass.

- If behaviour continues or escalates, report it to a match official, welfare/safeguarding officer, steward / marshal, club official or county FA
- Are there others around who are better placed to have a chat with the person (e.g. a closer friend, a partner etc)
- If it becomes a regular issue at matches, raise it through the club's welfare/safeguarding officer

Scenario 2.

You are in the car park after a very tight cup game which was won following a contested penalty.

As you approach your car you recognise the match official who appears to be of South Asian descent putting their kit into a vehicle about 10 meters away.

An individual is marching across the car park towards the official, shouting loudly: “That was never a f***ing penalty...” followed by a racial slur. They continue to approach the official, who appears visibly nervous.



Scenario 2. Facilitator notes – good practice examples

Prompt questions

Tackle.

- If directly engaging the perpetrator, think carefully about how to do so safely and in a way that de-escalates the situation. Avoid direct confrontation if you feel unsafe.
- It may be possible to distract the perpetrator to prevent them approaching the official. For example: **“Hey mate, do you know if there’s a petrol station near here?”**
- If engaging with the person’s behaviour, stay calm and use non-confrontational language, for example: **“I know you’re upset, but this isn’t the best way to deal with it.”**

How could you interrupt or de-escalate the situation without putting yourself at risk?

If you didn’t feel safe to intervene directly, what other actions could you take to support the official?

Assist.

- Is it safe to go over and stand with the official? You might start a conversation to show support, such as: **“Hi, I’m [your name]. I’ll stay with you until they’ve gone.”**
- If it wasn’t safe to approach immediately, go to them as soon as it is safe. Check in and ask how they are: **“Are you okay?”**, **“I’m really sorry that happened,”** or **“That was completely out of order.”**
- Offer to stay with them if they seem shaken.
- If possible, collect evidence: What did the person look like? Did anyone else witness it? Can you take their contact details? Can you record safely without escalating the situation?
- Only record if it is safe to do so. Taking out your phone may provoke further aggression. Recordings are personal and sensitive, they belong to the person who was harmed and should never be shared without their permission. Always check with them what they want to do with any footage.
- If the official wants to report the incident, offer support, for example, as a witness or by helping identify the appropriate person or organisation to report to.

What impact might witnessing or experiencing this type of abuse have on the official?

If someone else witnessed the incident but did nothing, how would that affect the person being targeted?

How might your role (as a parent, coach, teammate, or spectator) shape your responsibility in this situation?

Pass.

- If you feel anyone is in danger, call emergency services immediately.
- Report the incident to the club, county FA, league, Kick It Out. Consider if the police need to be called.
- If others are nearby (such as team coaches, stewards, or spectators), alert them—especially if they are better placed to intervene.
- If the perpetrator is known (such as a parent or team associate), make sure the club’s safeguarding or disciplinary process is triggered.

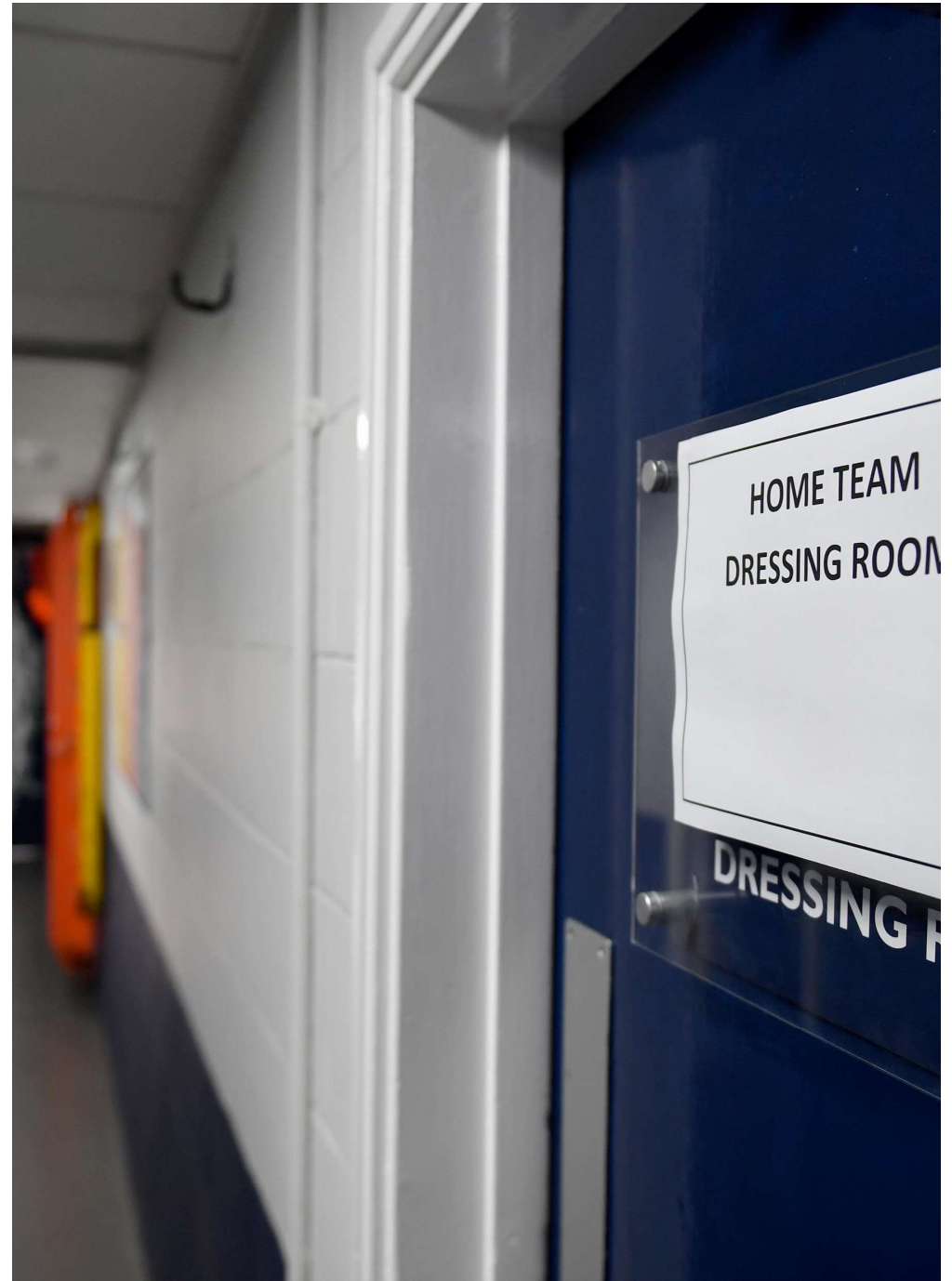
Does your identity change how you act, e.g. what if you shared the same race as the person being targeted?

Scenario 3.

It is a Tuesday night, and you arrive early at the club for training.

On entering the club house, you hear a voice which is coming from the changing room.

As you approach, you notice the changing room door is mostly closed, with just a small gap. From inside, you hear a voice, likely a player from the Under 16 team, protesting: “Stop it, don’t touch me!”



Scenario 3. Facilitator notes – good practice examples

Prompt questions

Tackle.

- If you hear a child say something like **“Stop it, don’t touch me!”**, you must take action, even if you’re unsure what’s happening.
- If you feel safe, and it’s appropriate to do so, go into the changing room immediately. You might want to announce yourself: **“Hi, it’s [your name], just coming in to check everything’s okay.”** Or it might be more appropriate to go in as you would normally do.
- You don’t need to know exactly what’s going on to step in. The priority is to make sure the child is safe.
- If you’re not the right person to go in or do not feel safe, get someone appropriate immediately, but don’t leave the situation unaddressed.

What factors might make it not appropriate to enter the changing room? How else could you intervene in these circumstances?

What should you do if the child or someone else says everything is fine, but you still feel unsure?

Why is it better to remove the child from the situation and report, even if it turns out to be nothing?

Why should we avoid trying to “get to the bottom of it” ourselves?

What are the reporting options at clubs?

Assist.

- If it’s safe and appropriate, speak directly and gently to the young person: **“Are you okay?”** or **“Do you want to step outside with me?”**
- It may be that you find there was nothing to worry about (e.g. siblings messing around) but if there’s any doubt at all, take the child out of the situation and stay with them somewhere safe and quiet.
- You don’t need to investigate, just make sure they’re safe and supported. Reassure them: **“I’m here to help. I just want to make sure everything’s okay.”**
- Be aware that someone causing harm might try to downplay or dismiss the situation. That doesn’t mean nothing happened.
- Do not ask lots of questions. Let the child speak if they want to, but focus on being calm and supportive.
- Ensure the child knows who they can talk to if they need to: **“If you’re worried about anything, speak to an adult you trust.”**

Pass.

- If you are left with any doubt at all, you should report what happened to the **Club Welfare Officer** or **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If in doubt, report it.
- If a situation is urgent and an individual cannot report at their club, league or County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, they can contact the NSPCC Helpline for expert advice and support on **0800 800 5000**.
- If it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, individuals should call the Police or Children’s Social Care in their area.
- Write down exactly what you heard, saw, and did, including the time, place, and who was present. Stick to the facts, avoid assumptions.
- Don’t delay or try to decide whether the concern is valid. If there is any doubt, report it. It’s not your job to work out what happened, it’s your job to act on concern and pass it on to the right people.