Responding to Racism and Discrimination.



This factsheet provides practical guidance for Associations and Clubs to prevent, recognise and respond to racism, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour within community netball.

Everyone has a role in creating a respectful and inclusive netball environment. Racism and discrimination should never be accepted as a part of sport. Responding consistently, respectfully and promptly helps create a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and welcome.

WHAT IS RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION?

Racism occurs when someone is treated unfairly, excluded, disadvantaged or subjected to negative attitudes or behaviour because of their race, ethnicity, cultural background, nationality or perceived racial identity.

Racism can be:

- Overt, such as racial slurs, jokes or direct abuse
- Interpersonal, such as exclusion, stereotypes or inappropriate comments between individuals
- Systemic or organisational, where policies, practices or processes create unfair barriers for groups
- Indirect or unintentional, where a behaviour or practice may disadvantage people even when discrimination was not intended

Discrimination can also occur based on other characteristics, including religion, disability, gender, sexuality or age.

Understanding these behaviours helps organisations recognise that racism and discrimination are not always obvious.

WHAT CAN RACISM LOOK LIKE IN NETBALL?

Racism may occur on or off the court and can involve players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators or other members of the community.

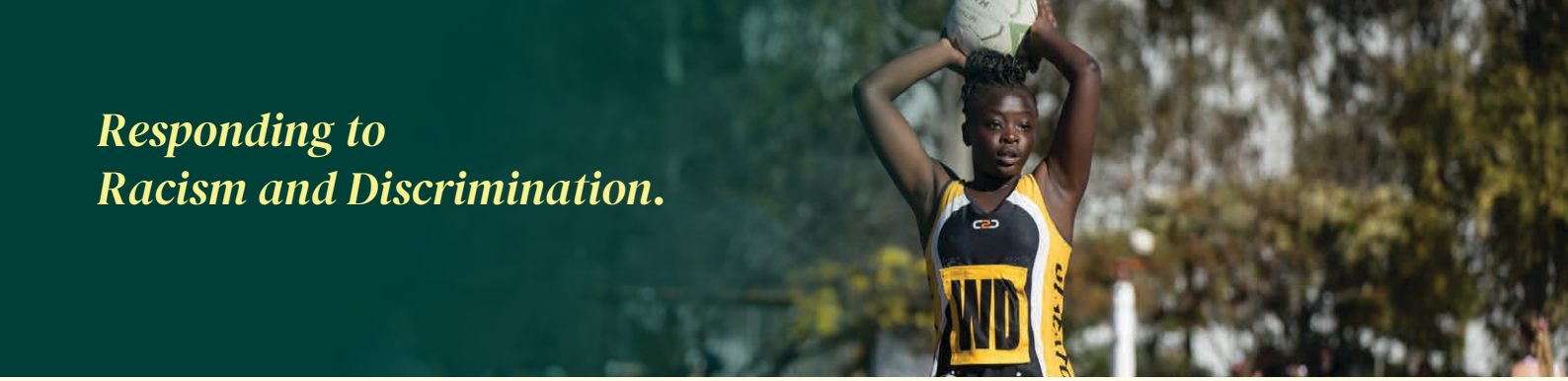
Examples may include:

- Racial slurs, insults or offensive jokes
- Comments about someone's accent, language, culture or appearance
- Stereotyping people based on their cultural or ethnic background
- Excluding someone from a team, social activity or conversation because of their background
- Making assumptions about a participants ability, behaviour or experience based on their culture
- Mocking cultural traditions, clothing, names or religious practices
- Sharing racist or discriminatory content through social media or group chats
- Encouraging or tolerating discriminatory behaviour from spectators or members
- Applying rules of expectations differently to people because of their background

Some behaviours may be dismissed as "banter" or "just a joke", but the impact on the person and the wider environment still matters.

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CREATING A CULTURE THAT PREVENTS RACISM

The strongest response to racism is creating an environment where it is less likely to occur and where people feel confident speaking up.

Associations and Clubs can:

- Clearly communicate that racism and discrimination are not acceptable
- Promote respectful behaviour across all teams and activities
- Include inclusion and respectful behaviour within member inductions
- Ensure coaches, umpires and volunteers understand their responsibilities
- Display clear information about expected behaviours and reporting pathways
- Celebrate cultural diversity throughout the year
- Encourage members to speak up when they see inappropriate behaviour
- Ensure concerns are taken seriously and responded to appropriately

Inclusion should be part of everyday club culture, not only addressed when an incident occurs.

RESPONDING WHEN RACISM OCCURS

If you witness or become aware of racist or discriminatory behaviour, don't ignore it.

Prioritise Safety

If the situation is escalating or someone is at immediate risk, prioritise the safety of those involved and seek appropriate assistance.

Address the Behaviour

Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, calmly make it clear that the behaviour is not acceptable.

For example:

"That comment is not appropriate or respectful."

or:

"We don't use that language here. Everyone is expected to treat others with respect."

Support the Person Affected

Check in with the person privately where appropriate.

You might say:

"I saw what happened. I wanted to check that you're ok."

Or:

"I'm sorry that happened. Is there anything we can do to support you?"

Avoid putting pressure on the person to explain, confront the person responsible or share personal information.

Follow Organisational Processes

Racism and discrimination should be managed in accordance with your organisations policies and relevant Netball Australia and State/Territory Member Organisation requirements.

Make sure concerns are directed to the appropriate person and are recorded and managed appropriately.

Follow Up

Where appropriate, check in with the person after the incident and ensure they know what action has been taken or what support is available.

A response should not end when the immediate incident has been addressed.

IF YOU ARE UNSURE WHAT TO SAY

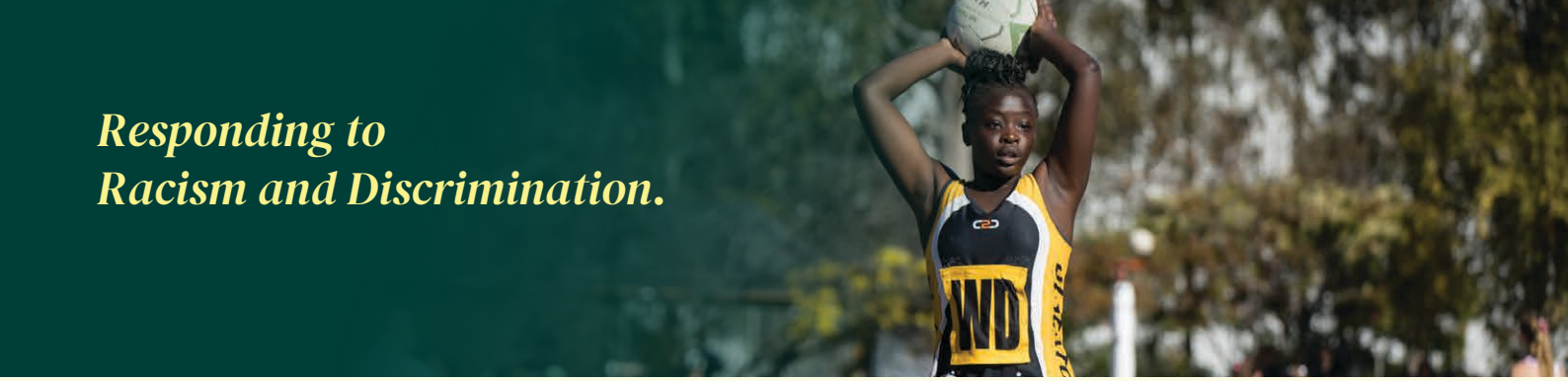
It is normal to feel unsure about how to respond, particularly when you are concerned about saying the wrong thing. You don't need to have all the answers.

Simple actions can help:

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Acknowledge what has happened
- Avoid making assumptions
- Ask what support the person would like
- Take concerns seriously
- Follow the appropriate reporting process
- Seek advice from your Association, State/Territory Member Organisation or relevant support person where needed

Doing something respectful is generally better than saying nothing.

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SUPPORT THE PERSON AFFECTED

A person who experiences racism may feel angry, embarrassed, isolated, upset or uncomfortable returning to the club.

Consider:

- Giving hem space to talk if they wish
- Listening without questioning or challenging their experience
- Respecting their privacy
- Asking what support they need
- Providing information about appropriate reporting pathways
- Checking in with them after the incident
- Taking steps to ensure they feel safe returning to netball

Avoid asking the person to educate others about racism or expecting them to resolve the situation themselves.

WHAT NOT TO DO

When responding to racism, avoid:

- Dismissing the incident as "just a joke"
- Telling someone they are being too sensitive
- Asking why they did not speak up sooner
- Making assumptions about what happened
- Expecting the person affected to confront the person responsible
- Sharing details of the incident unnecessarily
- Promising a particular outcome before the matter has been assessed
- Ignoring behaviour because it may be uncomfortable to address

A calm, respectful and consistent response helps maintain trust.

BYSTANDER ACTION

Everyone can play a role in challenging racism.

If you see something inappropriate, consider the ACT approach:

A – Address

If it is safe, calmly challenge the behaviour.

C – Check In

Support the person who may have been affected.

T – Tell

Report or raise the issue through the appropriate organisational pathway.

You do not need to be an expert to be an active bystander. Small actions can help create a culture where racism is not tolerated.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

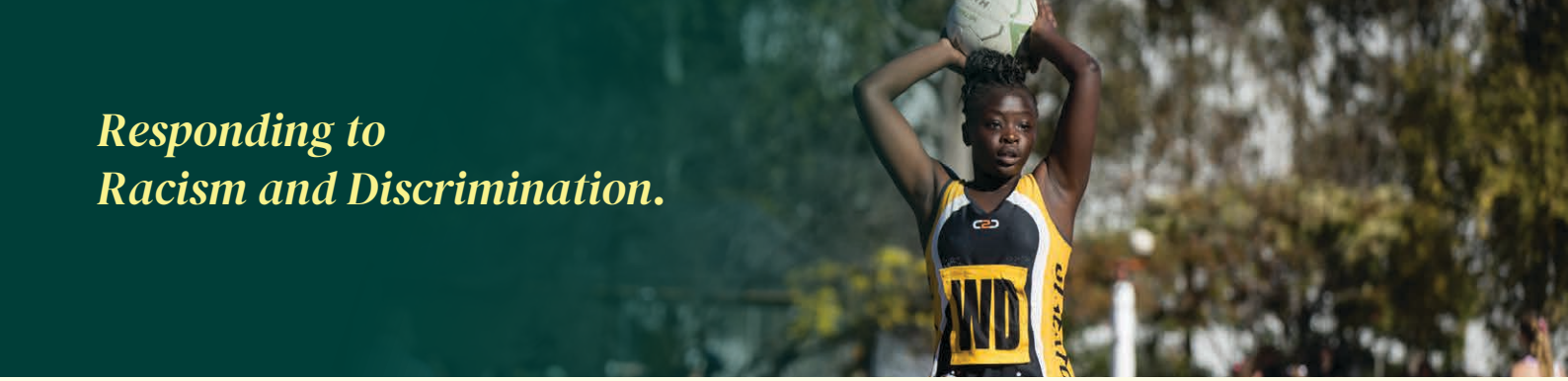
Children and young people should be able to participate in netball free from racism, discrimination and bullying.

Clubs and Associations should:

- Use age-appropriate language when discussing respectful behaviour
- Make expected behaviours clear to players and families
- Ensure coaches and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Provide safe and appropriate ways for young people to raise concerns
- Listen to children and young people when they report inappropriate behaviour
- Follow relevant child safeguarding, integrity and reporting requirements

Concerns involving children and young people should always be managed in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

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LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Committee members, coaches, umpires and volunteers play an important role in setting the standard for the organisation.

Leaders can demonstrate inclusion by:

- Modelling respectful language and behaviour
- Addressing inappropriate behaviour consistently
- Ensuring policies and procedures are understood
- Supporting members who raise concerns
- Providing education and awareness opportunities
- Reviewing whether organisational practices create barriers for particular communities
- Regularly communicating that racism and discrimination are not acceptable

When leaders respond consistently, members are more likely to understand that inclusion is a genuine organisational priority.

PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS

Consider whether your organisation:

- Clearly communicates that racism and discrimination are not acceptable
- Includes respectful behaviour expectations in member and volunteer information
- Provides coaches, officials and volunteers with inclusion education
- Has clear and accessible processes for raising concerns
- Ensures members know who they can speak to if they experience or witness racism
- Responds to incidents promptly and consistently
- Supports people affected by racism and checks in with them afterwards
- Promotes cultural diversity through positive storytelling and activities
- Reviews policies and practices to identify potential barriers
- Creates opportunities for members to learn about and celebrate different cultures
- Encourages bystanders to safely speak up and support others

KEY TAKEAWAY

Racism has no place in community netball.
By setting clear expectations, creating safe ways to speak up, responding to incidents consistently and supporting those affected, Associations and Clubs can build environments where people from every cultural background feel respected, valued and able to belong.