TOP TIPS: TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC, AND TRANSPHOBIC ABUSE

Although more people think homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse is wrong — and more people recognise it when it happens — too few of them report it. Such abuse can only be stamped out if the authorities know when and where it’s happening, so everyone should call it out whenever they witness or experience it.

Keep in mind that abusive language doesn’t need to be directed at LGBT people for it to be a problem. Chants which reference sexual acts, slurs, and misgendering are all forms of abuse — even if you don’t think an LGBT person will be directly affected. Abuse can also take the form of graffiti, stickers, or purposefully excluding someone from social activities.

1. Learn how to report abuse. There could be different ways to report it — online, in person, by phone. The key thing is to report it as soon as you can after the incident. Also, make sure you involve the victims of anti-LGBT abuse, if there are any directly affected, in the reporting process and in any decisions made in reaction to the abuse.

2. If you feel confident and the situation is safe, challenge the language yourself in a positive, non-aggressive way. Tell them that anti-LGBT language is abusive and hurtful, even if it’s not directed at a particular person at the time. Doing so sends a strong message to fellow fans, players, and the workforce that anti-LGBT abuse isn’t acceptable. If they know they’ll be challenged, they’ll be less likely to do it.

3. Some major sports arenas display advice on reporting abuse on the concourses or in the toilets. They often advertise a club- or stadium-specific number you can use to report abuse discreetly. If there are stewards around, tell them about the abuse — they’ve been trained to deal with these situations.

4. If you witness abuse at any other sporting event — e.g. a smaller ground, community event, or casual fitness session — tell the officials as soon as possible. Then report it to the host organisation and the national governing body.

5. Take screenshots of anti-LGBT abuse you see online and report it to the social media platform concerned. Attacks on social media are especially harmful as they endure after the game, throughout the post-game social, and at home.

KNOW WHO TO CONTACT FIRST:

✔ Involved in football: download the Kick It Out App.
✔ Playing in a BUCS / university fixture: speak to your Sports Coordinator
✔ Participating in a mass activity event: speak to a steward, or check online for helplines
✔ Other sporting events – from professional leagues to one-off events – will have online information

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