



Read this:

Your team is sharing outdoor pool space with another team this summer. Swimmers from the other team make a lot of sexual jokes and even some homophobic and sexualized threats to other swimmers in the locker room. Some of your teammates have started to join in, and you're really uncomfortable with it.

What do you do?

>Safe Sport says: Speak up. Talking—even if it's joking—about explicit sex acts or making homophobic comments is not okay! Everyone has a right to feel safe at swim practice on deck, in the water, AND in the locker room.

How do you speak up without become a target of the threats?

>Safe Sport says: Practice useful phrases like, "we don't talk like that here" or "not cool, guys." You can also change the subject or tell your coach or parent that this is happening. Chances are that others also feel uncomfortable and will support you speaking up. If you do nothing else, walk away. Jokers hate to lose their audience. Go tell your coach or parent.

What kinds of rules are in place about this?

>Safe Sport says: Your team might have an athlete code of conduct or honor code that addresses how teammates behave in locker rooms and speak to one another. If these kinds of behaviors are not mentioned in a code of conduct, or you don't have one, now is a good time to put one in place!

How should your coach help the situation?

>Safe Sport says: If this kind of behavior is happening in the locker room, your coach should be informed. Your coach will be able to take the situation to the coach of the other team, as well as work with your teammates who were joining in.

What kind of boundaries are involved in this situation?

>Safe Sport says: These are behavioral boundaries. Simply speaking, behavioral boundaries are what you will or won't do. They are the actions and behaviors that define your character. If someone is pressuring you to participate in something that you don't feel comfortable with, they are crossing your behavioral boundaries, and that's not okay.

Wrap It Up:

Even if the swimmers making the jokes and comments are not on your team, the behavior is not okay. Your coach can take that information to the other team's coaches, but work together with your team to decide what kind of locker room behavior and conversation is appropriate. Talking about explicit sexual stuff and making jokes and comments that make anyone feel uncomfortable should not be part of the healthy team culture you're creating.

***For Coaches:** If you're sharing facility space with another team, talk with the other coaches and your own team about behavioral expectations for the locker rooms. Safe Sport strongly recommends putting a locker room monitoring policy in place, as well as an athlete code of conduct. For these and more resources, visit www.usaswimming.org/toolkit or contact Safe Sport at (719) 866-4578 or safesport@usaswimming.org.