



Read this:

Your coach wants to change practice times for your group. If they change the time, many of your teammates will no longer be able to participate in another activity at school.

How do you talk to your coach about keeping your practice time the same so that you and your teammates can participate in both swimming and the other activity?

>Safe Sport says: If you're not comfortable going on your own, ask a teammate to go with you to speak with your coach. Even if your teammate does not say anything, they can provide support to you while you speak. You can also write a letter to your coach explaining your thoughts and the reasons to not change practice time then ask them if they have time to read it with you.

What if your coach says no?

>Safe Sport says: Be respectful in your letter or conversation and realize that your coach may still not do what you would like to have them do but they understand your thoughts and will appreciate you sharing them.

What if what you need to talk to your coach about is more serious than scheduling? What kinds of things can you talk to your coach about?

>Safe Sport says: You should be able to talk to your coach about a variety of topics—school, stress, and things that are weighing on your mind! Your coach can be a mentor and will set appropriate boundaries about your conversation topics.

What if someone is hurting you or making you feel uncomfortable? Even though you know you need to tell someone, you're nervous.

>Safe Sport says: If someone is hurting you or making you feel uncomfortable, that's not your fault! If you're nervous to talk about it, you can use some of the same strategies we just talked about. You can bring a friend, write down your thoughts, or have the talk with just the coach.

Where and when should you talk to your coach so that you feel safest?

>Safe Sport says: Your coach should help make sure that you're talking in an open and observable environment, like the pool deck. If you need to talk in the coach's office, there should be someone else there for support and safety, like another coach or teammate.

Wrap It Up:

It's coaches' jobs to care about you! Of course, coaches care that you're improving in the water and enjoying the experience of being on the team, but they also care about how you're doing in life! Swimming should be a safe place. If someone is hurting you or making you feel uncomfortable—either at swimming or elsewhere—think about who the people are whom you can talk to about it. They could be one of your coaches, a teammate's parent, or even another teammate who can help you.

***For Coaches:** Be receptive and listen. If a swimmer tells you that someone is harming them or making them feel uncomfortable, it's not your job to investigate, however it is your job to report. In fact, under the new federal legislation (S. 534), you are mandated to report suspected child abuse and/or sexual misconduct within 24 hours of knowing the situation. For more resources, visit www.usaswimming.org/toolkit or contact Safe Sport at (719) 866-4578 or safesport@usaswimming.org.