

Player Support Program Presentation (PSP)

The Player Support Program (PSP) was created to educate players on a variety of topics and to help players manage life's challenges and resolve personal problems before they become more serious.

Team and QMJHL staff members can also refer to the Player Support Program.

Billeting families or parents may refer to the program but it must be for the well-being of a player and not to address their personal issues.

Individuals may receive support in person, via email, or via telephone by calling our toll-free number. The required support may be given by the team's resource person, a member of the team's personnel, or by the Director of Player Services or by an external resource person.

Once an individual reaches 14 years of age in the province of Québec and 16 in the other provinces, it is not mandatory to inform the parents when an intervention occurs with a player. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances, and after having discussed the issue with the player, it would be important that the parents be made aware of the situation. Although most players do not live with their parents during the hockey season, their parents still have responsibilities towards their children and will, in some cases, have to be involved in the process. Each case should be analyzed on an individual basis.

Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality is an important element in this program so the player and anyone else who refers to the PSP must feel that they can use the program with confidence.

Sessions will be entirely confidential, as far as the law permits. For example, in the event that the player's safety or any other person's safety is compromised, certain information must be divulged, for example (suicidal tendencies, violent behaviour, criminal acts).

The player must also consent to being referred to the Player Support Program or to go to counselling. At times, the player will have to initiate the process himself, with the help of the Director of Player Services, a resource person or a member of his team's personnel.

To maintain confidentiality, the player will not participate in group counselling sessions.

A network of internal caregivers

Players who need help have the choice to confide in whomever they choose to. If they are not comfortable with the team's identified resource person, they can turn to any other member of the team's personnel, the Director of Player Services or other services.

The resource person who was identified by the team does not prevent the team physician, the therapist or any other member of the team's personnel to collaborate on the program or take on the role of a resource person on occasion.

A network of external caregivers

A network of external caregivers (psychologist, social worker, substance abuse counsellor, nutritionist, etc.), should be available in every region where the QMJHL has a team. A list of these service providers should be sent to the PSP Coordinator.

The contact information for the external service providers will be compiled and filed into a **general directory** available to all players and all team personnel.

External professionals will work with the players in accordance with their area of expertise.

Independent Committee

An independent committee has been formed to be consulted to make recommendations on the various issues facing players and to develop new tools and strategies to better educate players and team staff. This committee will also have the mandate to participate in the management of certain problematic situations.

Members of the Player Support Program Committee:

- François Bernier, retired police officer from the SPVM, contact person for the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada
- Patrice Bernier, former professional soccer player, former QMJHL player, post-training supervisor at the Montréal Impact Academy, analyst for TVA Sport
- François Boisvert, Special education teacher, Syna-Psy Clinic, resource person for the Shawinigan Cataracts
- Lyne Chantal Boudreau, Professor and researcher, educational administration program, Moncton University, Education consultant, Speaker with EL2ES Inc.
- Sylvain Croteau, Executive Director of Sport Aide
- Simon Gagné, former QMJHL player and lawyer at LAVERY, DE BILLY, L.L.P.
- Sylvain Guimond, sports psychologist, lecturer, and author of several books
- Isabelle Leclaire, Head of Sport Excellence, Head Coach Women's Hockey, the Université de Montréal Carabins

The role of the Director of Player Services in the PSP:

- To work in a confidential manner. This person has knowledge of drugs and doping products as well as training and work experience in psychology, counselling, social work, or other related fields.
- To serve on the PSP committee.
- To respond to various requests for help from players and people surrounding them.
- To be able to make an initial assessment when necessary.
- To refer players or team personnel to resources or help the resource person direct the player to the appropriate resources.
- To follow up with players or others who refer to the PSP.
- To suggest tools and strategies for players to achieve their goals.
- To assist and support the various stakeholders in the event of a positive antidoping test, a drug use problem, or a behavioural problem.
- To assist teams in problematic situations.
- To educate the League and the teams on the various issues to which players and team personnel are exposed.
- To provide documentation and information on the QMJHL support program.
- To document and maintain the records of the support program.

The resource person's role in each team

Each team's resource person must ensure that their interventions conform to confidentiality requirements. The resource person's role is to raise awareness on various issues with the players, give them advice and ensure follow-up when a problematic situation arises. Ensuring follow-up entails that the resource person must verify how the player feels about the situation, must intervene if it is within his or her expertise, or follows up if the player is referred to an external resource.

The resource person must meet with the players and inform them and present the Player Support Program as it is described in the present document.

The resource person must supply all the information and documentation pertaining to the support program.

For the resource person to be adequately prepared to respond when a problematic situation arises, the resource person must establish a network of care providers in the region where the

team is located as soon as possible. This network must include at least one substance abuse counsellor, one psychologist and one social worker.

The resource person must support the players by demonstrating a clear interest in the various situations which the players are going through. The resource people must work with members of the team's personnel and the Director of Player Services when a player faces a problematic situation.

When a problematic situation arises, the resource person must assist the player, and/or the team, and refer them to the proper resources if necessary. This type of intervention can be done in collaboration with the Director of Player Services and other members of the committee.

The resource person must follow up with the player when he or she has been informed that the player has displayed problematic behaviour, for which the player must go into counselling, or that the player has committed a doping infraction.

The resource person must make a report of these interventions at the end of the season and send it to the Director of Player Services.

PSP Guidelines and Incident Procedures

Responsibilities:

The League is responsible for developing programs and establishing rules and policies to ensure that players are in a safe environment and to ensure their well-being. These measures are put in place because these are 15- to 20-year-olds in a period of their lives where they are more vulnerable because they are in transition from adolescence to young adulthood and are under the pressures of the sport's environment. They are still developing and may not have the maturity to make the right decisions.

Clubs are responsible for the supervision of players because the majority live with billet families, which means that parents cannot fully exercise their authority and responsibilities. Clubs must be aware of the League's regulations and policies and enforce them within their organization. They also have a responsibility to educate their players and establish clear rules.

They must intervene quickly when a problem occurs and immediately inform the Director of Player Services and the QMJHL Commissioner. This is to ensure that the situation does not escalate, and that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. The clubs and the League are committed to providing all necessary support to the players and staff involved in the management of the situation.

Clubs and the League are also committed to keeping parents and agents informed where appropriate.

If a club decides to release a player as a result of a problematic behaviour, it shall promptly inform the Commissioner office so that an assessment of the situation can be made and a follow-up with the player can be done.

Procedures:

Reported situation or incident (mental health issue, suicidal thoughts, harassment, bullying, discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse, pathological gambling, criminal acts, other situations that may be detrimental to the well-being of a player or other person and may cause harm to teams and the League)

Contact the Director of Player Services or a designated member of the committee.

Prompt follow-up with the Commissioner and Director of Communications by the Director of Player Services when an incident occurs.

Analysis of the situation by the Director of Player Services and members of the committee within a reasonable time frame. This analysis will be done in collaboration with the club and all people involved.

Recommendations made as quickly as possible to the team involved to help them manage the situation.

Conclusion of the file with recommendations to the Commissioner.

The commissioner's decision will be shared with the committee and the team involved if there are grounds for sanctions or if measures must be taken.

In the case of a police intervention that requires an investigation, the clubs are obligated to inform the Director of Player Services and the QMJHL Commissioner as soon as possible.

Situations that demonstrate a lack of professional ethics on the part of a club staff member or any other person in a position of authority over the players (teacher, billet family, etc.) must also be reported. Finally, clubs also have an obligation to report any situation that has the potential to make headlines and/or escalate, such as conflict, threats, inappropriate behaviour towards fans, or misuse of social media.

Intervention

When an intervention is required with a player, it will be done by the Director of Player Services or another professional (psychologist, social worker, lawyer, etc.) who is bound by professional confidentiality. No information will be shared unless the player signs a Personal Information Disclosure Consent Form and authorizes one of these individuals to disclose information to a designated individual or individuals. In the event that the player directly informs the Director of Player Services of a problematic situation, and the club is not aware of it, the Director of Player Services will also be required, in keeping with her code of ethics, to have the player sign

the Personal Information Disclosure Consent Form before she can share the information with anyone else.

Sanction

The Commissioner office and the teams must also sanction any behaviour deemed inappropriate by any of its players in a fair manner. The decision to impose a sanction will be made after reviewing all the elements of the case, considering the age of the player (minor or major) and the seriousness of the situation.

A club that fails to inform the Commissioner and the Director of Player Services of a problematic situation as indicated in the paragraphs under “Procedures”, shall provide explanations to justify its decision. If there is no valid reason and a failure to do so, the club will be subject to a sanction.

Player support program in connection with the CHL’s anti-doping policy

Player declaration before an anti-doping control

If a player voluntarily discloses that he has used or is using prohibited substances (see WADA’s prohibited substances list), before being selected for a doping control, he will have to be evaluated to verify if it is necessary to pursue therapeutic intervention with a healthcare professional or by a QMJHL recognized organization. If an intervention is deemed necessary, the player will be quickly referred to the adequate resources. If a player, who has voluntarily admitted to violating the antidoping policy and is currently in therapy to deal with this specific issue, is submitted to a random anti-doping test and the test confirms adverse analytical findings, the player will not be sanctioned. If the doping control test finds prohibited substances which the player has not declared, he will be sanctioned according to the rules outlined in the antidoping policy.

The identified player must sign the player support contract and respect his commitments. He must be present at his scheduled appointments and complete the given therapeutic course of action. If a player breaks his commitments, he will be re-evaluated and could be excluded from the support program and the team. This also means that he could be chosen for an anti-doping control and if the results demonstrate positive findings for doping, the player could face sanctions and be suspended by the League for a repeat offence.

A player who is in therapy will be re-evaluated within three months to check on his progress and assess whether he should continue with treatment or not. As long as the player is in therapy, and respects his commitments, he will not face sanctions if he is chosen for an anti-doping test and his results demonstrate the use of prohibited substances which the player has admitted to using.

In the case where a player declares his use of prohibited substances and does not need to seek therapy (after having been evaluated), he will receive a warning and must cease using doping

substances to avoid a positive result if he is selected at random for a doping control test. In the case of marijuana use, the disciplinary committee will take into account the date on which the player declared its use and the reason behind it in order to determine the level of use and if this case constitutes a doping infraction in the event of a random doping control test.

Player Declaration After a Doping Control Test

If a player declares having used or that he is using substances which appear on WADA's prohibited substances' list, during the doping control test or after the doping control test (if the test is positive) he will have to submit to an evaluation to assess if he must follow a therapeutic course of action with a professional or an organization which is recognized by the QMJHL. If the player must be in therapy, he will quickly be directed to the appropriate resources. However, if he is found guilty of having committed a doping infraction, he will be exposed to sanctions determined by the disciplinary committee. During this sanction, the player may continue to attend therapy and receive the necessary help to get through this difficult period.

The identified player must sign the player support contract and respect his commitments. He must be present at his scheduled appointments and complete the given therapeutic course of action. If a player breaks his commitments, he will be re-evaluated and could be excluded from the support program and the team. This also means that he could be chosen for an anti-doping control and if the results demonstrate positive findings for doping, the player could face sanctions and be suspended by the League for a repeat offence.

A player who is in therapy will be re-evaluated within three months to check on his progress and assess whether he should continue with treatment or not. As long as the player is in therapy, and respects his commitments, he will not face sanctions if he is chosen for an anti-doping test and his results demonstrate the use of prohibited substances which the player has admitted to using. However, a player who has committed a doping infraction could be chosen for another doping control test at the end of the therapeutic course of action chosen for the player.

In both cases, the applicable measures are in effect for one season. If the player continues to play within the QMJHL, he will be re-evaluated at the beginning of the following season and continue therapy if deemed necessary. The player must demonstrate clear improvement after a prolonged period of therapy and evaluation.