

2022 — 2024

STRATEGIC PLAN



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Army of Survivors, Inc. (“The Army of Survivors” or “TAOS”) is the only national organization specifically advocating for and supporting athlete survivors of sexual violence in sports, although the number of athletes who have experienced such abuse is staggering. These athletes’ voices need to be heard. The Army of Survivors was created from a group of 40+ survivors of sexual violence. We come from a diverse group of athletes competing at all levels and representing various types of sports: we are gymnasts, divers, runners, softball players, volleyball players, football players, and more. Our unique history allows us to bring awareness to the systematic problem of sexual abuse of athletes. Our goal is to end sexual violence in sport by ensuring all perpetrators, those who collude with perpetrators, and those who fail to act are held accountable; creating transparency in reporting; building an environment where athletes do not fear retaliation when reporting abuse; and advocating for meaningful change that supports athlete survivors.

The Army of Survivors’ board and staff, equipped with guidance from athlete survivors and currently available data, created its 2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan to guide its efforts toward movement building and social change. The goals relate to TAOS’ three organizational pillars: Advocacy, Education, and Resources. The following is an overview of the goals and objectives included in the plan:

The background of the right side of the page is a photograph of a large outdoor stadium. In the foreground, a person is running on a red track. The stadium seating is visible in the middle ground, and a brick building with arches is in the background under a clear sky. Three white rectangular boxes with teal text are overlaid on the right side.

ADVOCACY

EDUCATION

RESOURCES

GOALS + PILLARS

GOAL ONE

ADVOCACY

Advocate for inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed national and international laws and policies that support survivors of sexual abuse in sports.

- Garner public support for and promote athletes' rights.
- Elevate and be guided by survivors' voices in advocacy efforts.
- Reform laws related to the sexual assault of minors.
- Coordinate with other organizations on advocacy efforts.
- Expand communication channels for advocacy efforts.

GOAL TWO

EDUCATION

Provide inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed education related to sexual abuse in sports.

- Create a menu of trainings and corresponding curricula to conduct training and technical assistance for athlete organizations, athletes themselves and other stakeholders.
- Generate funding through educational opportunities to enhance sustainability.
- Implement the Compassionate Coach program.

GOAL THREE

RESOURCES

Provide inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed support related to sexual abuse in sports.

- Create resource material that supports athlete survivors, secondary survivors, allies, and the community.
- Create an Athlete Survivor Leadership Network (ASLN).
- Enhance TAOS sustainability through new funding sources.
- Coordinate and collaborate with allied agencies/organizations and the Athlete Survivor Leadership Network to create resources.
- Ensure resources are created with, and for, diverse groups of survivors.

WE WILL CONTINUE AS SURVIVORS TO SUPPORT ADVOCACY ACROSS THE NATION, TO MAKE SURE THESE BILLS GET PASSED, TO MAKE SURE WE HAVE A VOICE AND THAT WE ARE EMPOWERING SURVIVORS AND CHANGING THE CONVERSATION AROUND SEXUAL ASSAULT.

— GRACE FRENCH, TAOS BOARD PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER

The Army of Survivors, Inc. 2022-2024 Strategic Plan,
is approved by the following:

Grace French, Board President & Founder

Louise Harder, Board Treasurer and Strategist

Dr. Danielle Moore, Board Secretary

Mary Cain, Board Director

Dwight Hicks, Board Director

John-Michael Lander, Board Director

Desire Vincent Levy, Board Director

Alexander S. Rusek, Board Director

Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, Executive Director

Alyssa Girardi, Director of Marketing & Communications

Additional thanks to the following founding TAOS Board Members: Honorable Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, Senator Curtis Hertel, Jr., Sara Teristi, and Olivia Venuto.

MORE THAN A MEDAL



VISION

To eliminate sexual violence in sports.

MISSION

Bring awareness, accountability, and transparency regarding the sexual violence of athletes at all levels.

LEGAL PURPOSE

The purpose or purposes for which The Army of Survivors, Inc. was formed are: exclusively for charitable purposes and for the prevention of cruelty to children, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, and herein stated as follows: to advocate for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, to raise awareness of the prolific nature of childhood sexual abuse, and to support efforts to end childhood sexual abuse.

BRAND PLATFORM

Imagine getting the courage to speak up about something that happened to you, only to be told you misunderstood, or you must be wrong. Imagine that happening hundreds of times. This is the type of abuse that led to the creation of The Army of Survivors. As athletes across many types of sports, and survivors of sexual abuse, we were joined together through incredibly traumatic circumstances. We lifted each other up when we were in our darkest moments, and now we work to be the support that survivors of sexual violence in athletics desperately need.

The Army of Survivors stand together to create a culture where sexual assault and abuse survivors feel safe and supported when speaking their truth. We support survivors and work to change society through resources, advocacy, and education. We strive to bring awareness, accountability, and transparency regarding sexual violence against athletes at all levels. Our hope is that someday, sexual violence will no longer exist in sports.

CORE VALUES

- Empower athlete survivors to know their rights including their right to report sexual abuse if they choose to do so.
- Create a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse in sports.
- Support athlete survivors through the development of resources, allowing survivor athletes to guide our efforts, and developing partnerships with allied organizations.
- Advocate for survivors by demanding change to hold abusers and enablers accountable.

ADVOCACY

OUR GOAL

Advocate for inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed national and international laws and policies that support survivors of sexual abuse in sports.

OBJECTIVE 1:
**GARNER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AND
 TO PROMOTE ATHLETES’ RIGHTS.**

Activity 1:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Create a mechanism for professional athletes to publicly support the Athletes’ Bill of Rights on social media.	TAOS Staff	Dec 2022	Dec 2023
Activity 2:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Recruit a national sponsor to promote athletes’ rights and well-being in sports.	TAOS Board and Staff	July 2022	Dec 2024
Activity 3:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Develop and disseminate model athlete safeguarding policy(ies) for sexual assault prevention and trauma-informed practices in sports organizations.	TAOS Board and Staff	Mar 2022	Mar 2023
Activity 4:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Partner with national and international organizations with similar missions to garner public support for and to promote athletes’ rights.	TAOS Board and Staff	July 2022	Ongoing

Measurable Outcome(s):

Athlete Bill of Rights and Athlete Safeguarding Policies completed and available for public consumption. Social Media Campaign completed to promote Athlete Bill of Rights. Partnered with organizations with similar missions to promote athlete rights and safeguarding.

OBJECTIVE 2:

ELEVATE AND BE GUIDED BY SURVIVORS’ VOICES IN ADVOCACY EFFORTS.

Activity 1:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Conduct focus groups and survey(s) with a diverse group of athlete survivors to assess advocacy priorities.	TAOS Staff	Jul 2023	Jul 2024
Activity 2:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Create a diverse Athlete Survivor Leadership Network to guide programming and advocacy efforts (see resources goal).	TAOS Board and Staff	Jul 2023	Ongoing
Activity 3:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Create an athlete survivor speakers' bureau, with a library of survivors' stories, to help spread the word on advocacy priorities through survivor voices.	TAOS Board and Staff	Jun 2022	Ongoing
Measurable Outcome(s):			
Focus groups and surveys completed. ASLN offered input and guidance regarding advocacy priorities. Athlete survivor speakers' bureau created.			

OBJECTIVE 3: ***REFORM LAWS RELATED TO THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MINORS***

Activity 1: Collect data to inform policy recommendations.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Staff	Start Date: Jun 2022	End Date: Ongoing
Activity 2: Allocate funding and resources to conduct legislative advocacy trainings for survivors.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Staff	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: Nov 2022
Activity 3: Raise funds to hire a legislative advocacy consultancy.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Board and Staff	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: July 2022
Activity 4: Engage in activities to promote new or reform existing laws that support athletes regarding sexual assault.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Board and Staff	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: Ongoing
Measurable Outcome(s): Data collected. Legislative advocacy consultancy hired. Legislative advocacy training completed. Engaged in activities to promote laws that support athletes regarding sexual assault.			

OBJECTIVE 4:

COORDINATE AND PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Activity 1:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Engage with organizations with similar missions to advocate together for accountability (including ending of sponsorships) of entities that cover up abuse.	TAOS Board and Staff	Jun 2022	Ongoing

Activity 2:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Secure at least one corporate sponsorship and support from well-known athlete(s) to advance advocacy efforts and generate revenue.	TAOS Board and Staff	Mar 2022	Dec 2024

Measurable Outcome(s):

Partnered with organizations with similar missions to advocate for accountability of entities that cover up athlete abuse. Secured one corporate sponsorship to advance advocacy efforts.

OBJECTIVE 5:

EXPAND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

<p>Activity 1:</p> <p>Explore new communications channels such as a podcast or new social media platforms that will advance TAOS' mission and highlight survivors' voices.</p>	<p>Person(s) Responsible:</p> <p>TAOS Staff</p>	<p>Start Date:</p> <p>Jul 2022</p>	<p>End Date:</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Activity 2:</p> <p>Create social media campaign with the Athlete Survivor Leadership Network (ASLN) highlighting survivors' voices and experiences.</p>	<p>Person(s) Responsible:</p> <p>TAOS Staff and Board with ASLN</p>	<p>Start Date:</p> <p>Jul 2023</p>	<p>End Date:</p> <p>Dec 2024</p>
<p>Activity 3:</p> <p>Utilize Facebook Live, Instagram takeovers, and/or other social media platforms for survivor interviews, panel discussions, and film screenings online.</p>	<p>Person(s) Responsible:</p> <p>TAOS Staff and Board with ASLN</p>	<p>Start Date:</p> <p>Jul 2022</p>	<p>End Date:</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Measurable Outcome(s):</p> <p>Expanded communications channels for advocacy efforts. Created social media campaign with the ASLN and utilized Facebook Live, Instagram takeovers and or/other social media platforms for survivor interviews, panel discussions, and or film screenings online.</p>			

EDUCATION

OUR GOAL

Provide inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed education related to sexual abuse in sports.

OBJECTIVE 1:

CREATE A MENU OF VIRTUAL AND/OR IN-PERSON TRAININGS TO CONDUCT FOR ATHLETE ORGANIZATIONS, ATHLETES THEMSELVES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

<div>Activity 1:</div> <div>Create corresponding curricula for virtual and/or in-person delivery for trainings*</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 1:</div> <div>Set fee structure for trainings.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jun 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Jan 2024</div>

Measurable Outcome(s):

Created a menu of trainings, curricula and fee structure.

*Trainings may include, but are not limited to topics such as the following: Shades of Racism and Rape, Sexual Assault Prevention, Dynamics, and Prevalence in Sports (Include Power and Control Wheel), How to Write a Victim Impact Statement and Tell Your Story, Parent Training, Mental Health First Aid, How to Be An Ally to Sexual Assault Survivors in Sports, Training for RAINN, law enforcement, and other partners on athlete specific dynamics, Survivor Leadership Training, Media Training: How to Interview Survivors and/or general information about sexual assault in sport such as information on assault with the absence of consent, Athlete Sexual Abuse Against Other Athletes

OBJECTIVE 2:

GENERATE FUNDING THROUGH EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY

<div>Activity 1:</div> <div>Explore online course sale options to generate funding.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jan 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Dec 2024</div>
<div>Activity 2:</div> <div>Secure paid speaking opportunities.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 3:</div> <div>Seek grant funding for events, trainings, data collection, and evaluation.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jan 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 4:</div> <div>Explore options to monetize Compassionate Coach in the future (after completion of the pilot referenced below), particularly for large entities.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff and Board</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Dec 2023</div>

Measurable Outcome(s):

Explored online course sale options to generate funding, secured paid speaking opportunities, sought grant funding opportunities for events, trainings, data collection, and evaluation, and explored options to monetize Compassionate Coach.

OBJECTIVE 3:

IMPLEMENT THE COMPASSIONATE COACH PROGRAM

Activity 1:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Create Compassionate Coach specific training for coaches, parents, and athletes.	TAOS Board and Staff	Jan 2022	Jun 2022
Activity 2:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Conduct small pilot program.	TAOS Staff	Mar 2022	Jul 2022
Activity 3:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Evaluate, improve, and consider options for replication in three years after the establishment of the Athlete Survivor Leadership Network.	TAOS Staff	Jul 2022	Dec 2022
Measurable Outcome(s):			
Created and then conducted pilot of Compassionate Coach training for coaches. Explored creating Compassionate Coach for parents, athletes, and/or other populations that work with athletes. Evaluated, improved and considered options for the replication of Compassionate Coach post the establishment of the ASLN.			

RESOURCES

OUR GOAL

Provide inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed support related to sexual abuse in sports.

OBJECTIVE 1:

CREATE RESOURCE MATERIAL THAT SUPPORTS ATHLETE SURVIVORS, SECONDARY SURVIVORS, ALLIES, AND THE COMMUNITY

Activity 1:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Develop Power and Control Wheel for Athlete Survivors of Sexual Assault	TAOS Staff	Feb 2022	Jul 2022
Activity 2:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Develop an online toolkit for clubs, gyms, and other community institutions on supporting survivors and appropriate athlete/coach relationships.	TAOS Staff	Jul 2022	Dec 2024
Activity 3:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Develop QR Codes for survivors to access resources for reporting, healing, and self-care materials.	TAOS Staff and Contractor	Jul 2022	Dec 2024
Activity 4:	Person(s) Responsible:	Start Date:	End Date:
Ensure athlete survivors have a guide that offers a clear understanding of the processes involved in reporting sexual assault including, but not limited to reporting mechanisms, where to access support and resources, and what to expect after reporting. This may include information via flowcharts, infographics, videos, and/or audio files.	TAOS Staff and Board	Jan 2023	Dec 2024
Measurable Outcome(s):			
Developed Power and Control Wheel for athlete survivors, an online toolkit, QR codes and the guide for survivors.			

OBJECTIVE 2:

CREATE AN ATHLETE SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP NETWORK (ASLN)

<div>Activity 1:</div> <div>Create online and in-person forums for athlete survivors to create relationships, to offer support to survivors when needed, and ensure TAOS efforts are continuously led by survivors.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Jun 2024</div>
<div>Activity 2:</div> <div>Conduct listening sessions with Athlete Survivor Leadership Network to receive feedback and seek future ASLN efforts.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 3:</div> <div>Explore best online forums for the network including, but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, and Slack.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Board, Staff and ASLN</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 4:</div> <div>Determine if members of the Network would like to continue Survivor Speak Outs.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Dec 2023</div>

Measurable Outcome(s):

Established online and in-person athlete survivor forums. Conducted listening sessions with the ASLN and determined if they would like Survivor Speak Outs to continue. Explored online forums for the ASLN.

OBJECTIVE 3:***COORDINATE WITH ALLIED AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS AND THE ATHLETE SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP NETWORK TO CREATE RESOURCES***

Activity 1:

Explore existing sexual assault phone applications and determine if there are gaps in apps and other online resources.

Person(s) Responsible:

TAOS Staff

Start Date:

Sept 2022

End Date:

Feb 2023

Activity 2:

Create a power map of different organizations doing related work and how they intersect with TAOS.

Person(s) Responsible:

TAOS Board and Staff

Start Date:

Mar 2022

End Date:

Mar 2023

Activity 3:

Create a tool that describes who's who of sports governing bodies, their roles and responsibilities specific to disclosures of abuse by athletes and whistleblowers.

Person(s) Responsible:

TAOS Board and Staff

Start Date:

Jan 2022

End Date:

Jun 2022

Measurable Outcome(s):

Explored existing sexual assault phone applications and determined if gaps exist in applications as well as online. Created a power map of different organizations doing related work and how they intersect with TAOS. Created a tool describing who's who of sports governing bodies, their roles and responsibilities specific to disclosures of abuse by athletes and whistleblowers.

OBJECTIVE 4:

ENHANCE TAOS SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH

NEW FUNDING SOURCES

<div>Activity 1:</div> <div>Cultivate individual donors.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Board & Staff</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jan 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>
<div>Activity 2:</div> <div>Build relationships with one new foundation each year.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff and Board</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jan 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Dec 2024</div>
<div>Activity 3:</div> <div>Host one major fundraising event each year (5K, art-based event, etc.)</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff and Board</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jan 2022</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Dec 2024</div>
<div>Activity 4:</div> <div>Integrate fundraising opportunities, including corporate sponsorships, within a majority of TAOS' events.</div>	<div>Person(s) Responsible:</div> <div>TAOS Staff and Board</div>	<div>Start Date:</div> <div>Jul 2023</div>	<div>End Date:</div> <div>Ongoing</div>

Measurable Outcome(s):

Cultivated individual donors, built relationships with one new foundation each year, hosted a major fundraising event each year and integrated fundraising opportunities within TAOS' events.

OBJECTIVE 5:

***ENSURE RESOURCES ARE CREATED WITH
AND FOR DIVERSE GROUPS OF SURVIVORS***

Activity 1: Diversify TAOS Board.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Board	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: Ongoing
Activity 2: Diversify TAOS Staff.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS ED	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: Ongoing
Activity 3: Establish an accessible database of local, national, and international resources (may be the same as or have overlap with toolkits).	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Staff	Start Date: Jan 2022	End Date: Ongoing
Activity 4: Ensure Athlete Survivor Leadership Network is made up of a diverse group of survivors.	Person(s) Responsible: TAOS Staff	Start Date: Jul 2022	End Date: Ongoing

Measurable Outcome(s):

Diversified TAOS Board and Staff and ensured the ASLN is diverse. Established an accessible database of resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL

CONTEXT

Content warning: Mention of abusers' names, sexual violence, and police brutality.

This TAOS Strategic Plan was written to guide the next three years of work for the organization. However, the TAOS board and staff fully recognize that goals, objectives, activities, and timelines will need to be adjusted based on pertinent environmental factors. The contextual factors described below are just some of the major influencing issues that occurred prior to and during the development of the 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On January 21, 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed the first case of the coronavirus in the United States of America (USA). On February 3, the USA declared a public health emergency due to the coronavirus outbreak and on February 11, the WHO declared the coronavirus/COVID-19 a pandemic. In the months following, the world and the ways people worked and communicated changed drastically. Many who were once working in offices began working remotely and organizations that once relied on face-to-face interactions to do business worked to shift their operations to virtual when possible and appropriate. In the first year of the pandemic, there were over 500,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the USA and in August 2020, the coronavirus was the third leading cause of death in the country, impacting communities of color at a higher rate than white communities.

As vaccines were developed and administered, and new variants of the virus emerged, the world continued to live with the pandemic in full focus in 2021. The pandemic required organizations to regularly reassess and shift their priorities, operations, and activities. TAOS made decisions about program operations with the pandemic in mind to ensure the safety of staff and the survivors served by the organization. One such way the organization did this was by offering remote advocacy events such as “Survivor Speak Outs” and online panel discussions. The organization utilized social media to distribute a large amount of its communications and continued to assess what additional platforms needed to be utilized not only to meet the challenge of the pandemic but also to continue organizational development as the world moved largely to digital/online communication forums.

TRAUMA WARNING

THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a Black man was murdered by Derek Chauvin, a police officer, during an arrest after a store clerk suspected he may have used a counterfeit \$20 bill in Minneapolis, MN. Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck and back for 9 minutes and 29 seconds. After his death, protests against police brutality, especially towards Black people, quickly spread across the United States and the world. This movement, which was emboldened by tragedy, increased many organizations' efforts toward the desperate need to promote racial justice and equity. Systemic racism permeates our systems and culture, and athletics are no exception.

In 2020, TAOS partnered with I'm a Survivor Inc., She Will Speak Series, Voices of Hope, Voices Beyond Assault, and author Astrid Ferguson for an educational event titled Shades of Racism in Rape about the intersectionality of race and sexual violence. The event discussed racism in sexual violence, the underrepresentation of victims of color in the justice system, and how best to support survivors of color. The Army shared statistics about sexual assault and abuse in sport with BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities through social media including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts for multiple months. Resources from this campaign are available now on the TAOS website.

The 2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan was created with racial justice as a central focus and TAOS recognizes the need for diverse and inclusive services and programs. TAOS has committed to diversifying its board and staff, ensuring data is collected from a diverse group of athlete survivors, and being led in all of its efforts by the voices and guidance from survivors who are Black and brown, LatinX, Indigenous, Asian, LGBTAI+, living with a disability, and others who identify as people of color.





TRAUMA WARNING

SAFESPORT DATA

Also in 2021, the U.S. Center for SafeSport published the following statistics from a survey they conducted among athletes:

Nearly 68% of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment indicated that they did not feel they had a place to talk about their sexual harm experiences with their governing body of sport.

6.7% of athlete participants who reported experiencing sexual harm indicated that they had made a formal report/complaint about unwanted sexual harassment or sexual contact they experienced during their involvement with the sport.

Those who have been an NCAA or NAIA varsity athlete (13.9%) were more likely to have reported their experience with sexual harm compared with those who have not been a varsity athlete (4.1%).

27.5% of athlete participants think sexual, emotional, or physical misconduct is a problem in their sport – but far more (48%) are aware of coaches developing sexual relationships with athletes.

93% of individuals who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact did not submit a formal report/complaint of it.

18.1% of individuals having unwanted sexual experiences also indicated they were retaliated against.

More than half of athlete participants who indicated having unwanted sexual experiences said that some or all of those experiences happened when they were under 18.

9% of athlete participants experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement.

Approximately 65% of athlete participants indicated experiencing at least one of the 18 indicators of psychological harm or neglect.

21.7% of athlete participants indicated being physically harmed.

Overall, athletes who experienced sexual harm reported that the biggest impacts included: their perception of themselves being negatively impacted (37.5%), their mental health suffering (33.9%), and their friendships and other important relationships being negatively impacted (31.4%).

As shocking as these data are, it is well documented that sexual abuse data is widely underreported and often reflects just a fraction of the actual abuse occurring. Additionally, these data only represent some of the athlete population and future data collection efforts need to be broadened to ensure a diverse representation of athletes. TAOS intends to collect such data to build on the existing information available regarding athlete survivors of sexual abuse, their experiences, needs and priorities.

TRAUMA WARNING

DOJ REPORT ON FBI HANDLING OF SEXUAL ABUSE INVESTIGATION

In July of 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report of findings of its investigation into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) handling of allegations of sexual abuse by former USA Gymnastics physician, Larry Nassar. The report provided that the FBI and a number of other institutions failed to protect numerous young athletes who courageously reported the abuse they had experienced, perpetrated by Nassar. In the time between July 2015 when the first complaint against Nassar was filed with the FBI, and August 2016, when the Michigan State University (MSU) Police Department received a separate complaint of sexual abuse by Nassar, approximately 70 young athletes were sexually abused. The lack of action by the FBI caused avoidable trauma for survivors. The OIG report further illustrated the need for accountability. The Army of Survivors issued a statement following the report urging the DOJ to conduct a criminal investigation into the FBI officers who led the unethical and insufficient investigation.

The Army of Survivors Founder and President Grace French said this in response to the report: "It's disheartening to know that it took this long for the public to truly get a glimpse into what happened with this investigation. We have been waiting for this day for years. I hope that this brings about more accountability to the institutions who allowed athletes to continue to see Nassar, like myself, long after multiple reports were being investigated. They left these athletes at the disposal of a predator. Survivors deserve to know why that happened. Survivors deserve justice."





2021 OLYMPICS

Amidst the pandemic, the 2020 Olympics were moved to 2021. The Olympics brought new media contacts to TAOS as they sought answers about the prevalence, dynamics, and how to support athlete survivors of sexual assault. Notably, Simone Biles withdrew from the women's gymnastics competition saying that the Olympics had been very stressful for her. With the increased attention on this world-renowned athlete's mental health, it was once again brought to light that she had been sexually assaulted by Larry Nassar, along with so many other athlete survivors, particularly elite gymnasts. The reminder of this traumatic experience inevitably had an impact on many who were abused by Nassar and other perpetrators. Simultaneously, TAOS worked to raise awareness of resources and services available to athlete survivors and provide education about sexual assault in sports.

***MONITORING AND
COMMUNICATING THE
STRATEGIC PLAN***

MONITORING THE PLAN

The TAOS Board of Directors assumes the ultimate responsibility of monitoring progress on the TAOS 2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan. The board and staff together will determine if TAOS will utilize a specific project management application or program to track goals, objectives, activities, and timelines of each. Responsible parties are identified for each activity as described in this Strategic Plan. The Strategy Committee will oversee the progress of each goal and objective on a regular basis. The Executive Director will follow up with annual audits of each goal, objective, and activity with the assistance of the Strategy Committee.

The following questions will be asked during each audit:

Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the plan? If not, why?

Should the deadlines for completion be changed?

Do personnel have adequate resources (money, equipment, facilities, training, etc.) to achieve the goals?

Are the goals and objectives still realistic?

Should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?

Should the goals be changed?

What can be learned from our monitoring and evaluation in order to improve future planning activities and also to improve future monitoring and evaluation efforts?

The Executive Director will report the following to the Board of Directors on an annual basis (within 1 month of conducting the review):

Trends regarding the progress (or lack thereof) toward specific goals, objectives, activities, and timelines.

Recommendations about the status of goals, objectives, activities, and timelines.

Any actions needed by the Board of Directors to accomplish goals, objectives, and activities.

COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

Every TAOS board and staff member will receive a copy of the Strategic Plan including the executive summary which will include the TAOS brand platform and will be graphically designed prior to external distribution. The executive summary will be published on the TAOS website and submitted to funders and other stakeholders as appropriate. Any external distribution of the full Strategic Plan will be pre-approved by the Executive Director or the Board President.

In order to effectively communicate the TAOS Strategic Plan, those presenting the plan on behalf of the organization should offer historical information about the organization and describe the intent of its founders. Sharing where the organization came from and how it has grown is a powerful way to frame the communication about the Strategic Plan. Portions of the plan may be utilized to create other planning and strategy documents both for internal and/or external use.

It is important to utilize and communicate the Strategic Plan regularly within the organization, assisting Board and Staff to maintain a unified focus on the goals set herein. While monitoring the plan, it is vital to collect board and staff feedback on the progress made thus far and where the organization needs to refocus efforts in order to accomplish stated goals. TAOS will continue regular communication about stated goals, objectives, and activities by connecting board and staff reviews/evaluations to the plan activities, include information in TAOS newsletters/blog posts about successes associated with the Strategic Plan, and create an infographic that summarizes the organization's focus areas, so they are clear for internal and external stakeholders.



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