

Video 15.2 (00:05) thank you so much to everyone for joining us we are extremely honored and privileged to be hosting a webinar today titled hockey culture solution and strategies my name is Dr Taylor McKee I'm an assistant professor of sport management here at Brock University and we are unbelievably fortunate to be joined today by Sheldon Kennedy as you can see him here on the screen here Pete Sobelak and Hilary Finley we will be having a brief introduction before we get started we're going to have some questions through each of our panelists

(00:34) are going to be giving it a lot of time to respond to those questions and at the very end we are going to have a question and answer period so if you've got a question and Jessa sort of indicated to us just crosswave from the center for sport capacity and Calvin Pietro are both here also they're going to be handling the questions if they are submitted through the chat so if you've got a question throughout the duration of this webinar feel free to fire it out into the chat and Jess will handle it

(00:57) for you and make sure it reaches it reaches me so I'll be moderating this session I'll be asking the questions I'll be ensuring that our wonderful panelists have enough time to respond to each of the questions themselves but a little bit before we get started I think it's important that we introduce everyone if you're not familiar with any of our panels that's totally fine first I'll uh first of all we are very very fortunate to be joined uh by Sheldon Kennedy Sheldon spends eight years the

(01:22) National Hockey League where he spent time with the Detroit Red Wings, Colorado Avalanche and Boston Bruins the 1990s in recent years he's become a public figure as an advocate for victims rights he's devoted his post-hockey career to Child Abuse Prevention and education as the co-founder of the Respect Group Incorporated which provide training to thousands of people with messages and tools of empowerment to help people involved in amateur sport and education systems to prevent bullying harassment and abuse Kennedy and the Respect Group (01:47) fully support the necessary systematic changes needed to improve sport to ensure the safety of Youth now we're on moving on to Peter Soberlock Pete's played three seasons of professional hockey where he experienced verbal and physical abuse which led him to leave the sport at the age of 23.

(02:03) Soberlock now studies sports psychology and sociology and serves as a lecture at the in the faculty of education at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops in addition to his role as that as athletic performance advisor with the University's varsity teams and Dr Hilary Finley is a retired Brock University Professor spending her professional career in the Canadian sport system as a lawyer Advocate teacher and researcher Finley works with Finley's work is focused on athletes and participatory rights and obligations in

(02:30) the regulation of sport including organizational fairness and responsibility in the provision of a safe sport environment so those are some brief introductions about our wonderful panelists I think you're going to get to know them a little bit more as we move forward throughout their questions and I think the best way to get started here is by asking uh very and the questions themselves to which the panels will be responding to them are very broad with a very very wide ranging levels of responses so let's start very very

(02:58) broadly and the reason that we organized this webinar entirely is because of an absolute crisis point that has emerged in in hockey over the past summer certainly this is something that's not new and something that we have seen for for many years now but too often we hear about problems in hockey culture hockey culture's broken hockey culture is in

need of repair but we need uh we thought here at the center of support capacity it would be a good idea to start discussing what are possible solutions

(03:25) what can be done about these problems I think it has been very well articulated some of the problems that are out there but it's a time that I think we start discussing some of these Solutions there are three panelists here are actively evolved in providing Solutions and and remediating outcomes that can can help and fix the the problems in hockey culture so let's start very broadly with a first question and I will ask Pete sober like first given your expertise and expertise in it given your experiences and expertise how would you

(03:53) describe the current state of hockey culture in Canada take it away oh Pete you're muted that's totally normal yeah thanks Taylor and thank you very much for inviting me to be on this panel I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to speak with um uh everybody about the topic and and by no means am I an expert on this but I do have a lot of background and experience in in understanding hockey culture and and and the work I've done over the last 20 30 years um I think I think generally the state of hockey

(04:36) right now is is in a state of I would I would I would refer to it as crisis in terms of what's gone on um with with Hockey Canada um some of the things that have happened in the past I think what what's happening now is with the movement in in mental health and and our our willingness to discuss uh um uh cultures and and systemic culture I think we're opening up the uh the discussion to be um one that now is getting inside uh inside the doors the the previous closed doors of of how the how the system

(05:17) operates uh what needs to change where we can begin to build a foundation to kind of I think change the course of of some of the some of the things that are going on within within the hockey culture and I think in a lot of a lot of terms sport culture as well but um I'm looking at this at this time as is a really a kind of a watershed in terms of the ability to really to make some concrete steps in terms of of changing some of the values some of the ideals some of the uh um I guess uh situations that have occurred

(05:55) have really brought to the Forefront that we need to look and examine at how how our young athletes are are being brought up in in in these systems and and what we can do to help them understand how to have a a more positive holistic experience in sport and we need to address some of the concerns that that are coming to light now um in terms of you know Equity diversity inclusive inclusivity um uh negative attitudes and cultural uh um um you know misogynistic attitudes towards women um all kinds of things that now

(06:37) um we're discussing and we need to discuss and we need to start I think start fresh in terms of looking at the system how the system uh um brings young people through what what they're taught uh uh and all the values that that that coincide with with the experience of being involved in in a sport like hockey perfect thanks Pete for that introduction that's a great a call for a fresh start we'll save a little bit of that for later when we talk about uh what our thoughts are for the future as well so thank you so much for that Pete

(07:09) uh Hillary I'll turn to you here now given your experiences and expertise how would you describe the the current state of hockey culture in Canada thanks Taylor and I'm I'm happy to be here uh display more from a learning uh um perspective more than a giving perspective here but um I think it's interesting that that you've entitled this uh you've included the word culture culture of hockey in this webinar um and so that's the focus because that's a fairly new framing of this a whole issue and it's not just in hockey

(07:46) it's in sport in general and so I think we need to sort of situate this culture aspect a little bit more broadly both in sport generally and in society generally we know that abuse is deeply embedded within sport including hockey and the focus has been on sexual assault recently but I think it's important to keep in mind that when we talk about abuse it's much broader than that and I think that the new universal code that has been mandated at the national level and will be seeping through the sports system takes a

(08:18) broader look at abuse so psychology logical and emotional abuse really is the more dominant form of abuse or the more prevalent form of abuse and that of course includes intimidation angry outbursts swearing ignoring of athletes Etc sexual abuse is the second most frequently reported and that ranges from sexual comments touching to to assault physical abuse actually is the third most prevalent and that really speaks to return to play to early a punishment exercises a punishment those sorts of things and then of course

(08:57) neglect failing to act in the face of complaints ignoring red flags all of those sorts of things and that's common across Not Just Hockey but across sport in Canada and globally and and there's there's plenty of research to to support that what's interesting is that in the past we focused on individuals the individual Bad Apple permeating the the healthy sport organization but what we're now starting to look at are the systemic failures in sport such as not having appropriate policies or not

(09:33) implementing the policies and following through with them not monitoring athletes coaches and other staff and others and we speak about the culture and what this culture mean the corporate culture of hockey or of sport in general and that really culture really has an identity of its own and it has an impact of its own and it's it's an intangible it refers to the beliefs the values the Norms the structure of the organization of sport as a whole of hockey it speaks to leadership styles it speaks to the

(10:09) policies so getting a handle on culture is difficult but it I think what's important to recognize is that it is an entity and it has an impact on Sport and we're finally starting to recognize that in a vague sort of way so I'm interested to see where we go from that today foreign well done that's an excellent articulation of I think a really important aspect of this I think the word culture is used so frequently so tossed around so flippantly but yet so ill-defined and so nebulously uh considered when it comes to what you

(10:43) know changing cocky culture would look like what are the evaluative metrics we would even use to to evaluate a changed culture for instance would be one of the questions that I think frequently comes to mind and again as a reminder to our panelists if you have a follow-up or if you've got something you'd like to respond to one of the other answers feel free you can just sort of you can use your hand function or you can even just pipe up at the end of it here but I'll turn to Sheldon here to end our first

(11:03) round of questioning uh Sheldon given your experiences and expertise how would you describe the current state of hockey culture in Canada well it's an honor to be here with you all um this morning beautiful Monday morning I uh well I I think you know we for a lot of years we've been talking about culture and we've been talking about systemic and I think that they're really misunderstood and I think they don't have a lot of clarity that come with them I think they bring a lot of fear so I think that a lot of

(11:35) people that are either involved in the organizations when they hear culture they get scared because they think that includes them and they hear systemic and and uh you know

we're really not sure what systemic means and uh so you know systemic is about a system it doesn't really point the finger at any individual it's about the way a system has been built over generations and decades right so it's uh that's what systemic is um we uh myself and Camille Terrio and Daniel Silva show had a chance to look

(12:08) at the whole Canadian hockey league independent review and we you know we looked at we looked at everything and and uh um you know and the more we looked at the information that was provided the more it became clear that you know this isn't one individual making bad decisions this is a system making bad decisions and uh and and to me I think when you have a systemic culture um it's you can have all the you can have the best programs in place that you want in the Grassroots but unless that's believed in uh and and and lived and (12:45) understood um from the top none of that's going to work the way it should work and and so to me when we look at you know the state that hockey's in right now we're you know I mean sport in general I think sport in general is struggling um especially coming through the pandemic with trying to attract uh our young people and participants uh you know I mean if we look at one thing that was glaring in my opinion through the pandemic it was the value of sport activity exercise um for our mental well-being and I think

(13:16) that you know we saw that in my household anyway um during the pandemic I mean exercise was just critical and being included and being feeling part of something and I think that that's those are the important pieces of sport and I think we've we've there's been a major disconnect that's happened between high performance and entry-level sport right it's like we're preparing an eight-year-old to be an NHL player uh and you gotta choose now you know it's good it's either it's going to be hockey

(13:48) now or and no nothing else and and to me it's not Not Just Hockey that's doing that but I think it's you know that we need to get back to you know I feel I don't know where when the shift was but there was a shift that really took took it from the time that you know you're making the decision to come and play the game or sign up that you know you you're gonna make it all the way instead of just coming in to take to participate in sport for what sport has to offer um uh and that's about you know being a

(14:22) part of something right that's about having fun with your friends that's about feeling included to learn you know to learn the the healthy teachings of sport but you know I think that um you know to me uh a systemic culture is to to shift that and to shift culture um it's a taught skill and I think communication is one of the uh Communications is one of the barriers uh that comes with uh a systemic culture I think there's a there's an overarching fear uh of voice of of having a voice

(14:59) in a systemic culture if you look at sport in general how many people feel confident to speak out step up and step in if they see something that's not right in any sport and I'm talking about the leadership in sport not very many people ever do it right like if there's a crisis that happens it's crickets and to me that's what we're talking about you know we need to bring a confidence to these issues we need to bring a Clarity um around these issues for everybody right and and and to me that's that's

(15:34) that's the shift that we need but to me it's about teaching how to communicate on these issues if you if you you know walk down the street you know in most cases and ask people give me the definition of all forms of abuse bullying harassment in all forms of discrimination and you know your legal and moral responsibilities around that what do you

think the odds are we get the right answer not very good but you know when it comes right down to it we're all expected to do the right thing and we better know

(16:00) what we're doing and I think it's you know I think that you know when it comes down to it um it has to be a priority within a organization it cannot be off the side of the desk if you look at back in 2004 there was the London declaration all the sport ministers got together the London declaration and they were supposed to identify every national sport organization was supposed to identify a harassment officer for every sport and I think there was you know I don't I don't I don't know exactly but I they were

(16:33) under 75 percent of the people uh Sports actually had a harassment officer um and nothing got followed through uh in that from 2004. now there's another London or there's another Red Deer declaration I think it was in 2019 that basically States you know all of the above again and uh you know we'll see how that gets we'll see how that gets rolled out but to me it's about commitment it is about understanding as a sport leader in this country what are we doing like are we going to prioritize this

(17:08) stuff or aren't we is this going to be our number one priority or isn't it and until it is our number one priority the safe and well-being uh experience of all participants we're never going to get to where we need to get to very strongly articulated I think that you've even articulated I think the answers are what we're going to be getting into in our next question a little bit with that so it's a perfect dovetail into this and that's to speak of solutions you are you are I think

(17:33) themes of accountability uh came up in your response there and demand for accountability perhaps even articulate what accountability might look like um so I thank you for that and we'll move to back to back to Pete here so Pete we're here for our second round of questioning uh based on your current work Pete what Solutions if any are available to decision makers in the hockey industry to improve the state of Canadian hockey culture well I I think there are a lot of a lot of good initiatives currently underway

(18:02) uh you know personally I'm working with the Western Hockey League along with Sheldon and Wayne with respect group and and I think we've really tried to take things a step further than than having you know policy on paper and and and some programs up front in the front end I think those are very important from a foundational piece we need to understand we need to have those programs in place um everybody needs to go through them and and and and get a grasp of of the information and understand but I think

(18:36) what needs to happen post that is we need to start having a conversation on the ground and that's from um people right from the top leaders and if you're looking at the hockey structure uh um you know the people in hockey Canada right through down to uh um people in charge of the leagues to people working in the front offices to people in the dressing room every day we need to start having and like Sheldon said make this a priority this should be practice like the power play like penalty killing we should practice how

(19:14) to treat each other and we should have these discussions and I think that you know I'm proud of the work we we've started to begin with the Western Hockey League in terms of we are now having groups engage in conversation about these issues these issues were never any type of of issues we're talking about now have never been discussed let alone uh um you know in a dressing room in a locker room amongst players with coaches present I think the discussion needs to take place and I think also the education

(19:48) I think we we we often focus on educating the players and trying to keep up with with things with with the players but I think the coaches and I think the people who um make decisions and have that power yeah within within within these system within these cultures and locker rooms I think we need to focus more of our attention on educating the leaders so we can practice um practice these uh uh dealing with with these issues and and and understanding them I think in a lot of cases uh people don't understand

(20:30) um what uh type of behavior is okay if we talk about uh uh you know how to treat people in a locker room well we should be treating people in a locker room in in a in a sport locker room the same that we should be expected to treat people in a business or or or somewhere else with respect but I think sometimes those lines get blurred in terms of what's acceptable in a sport locker room and that hyper competitive environment so I I think we need to take all of this information and really work at becoming really work at having it become

(21:10) um commonplace discussions um um sessions where we can really get in and have everybody involved understand um what uh we need to do to move forward so I think the discussion piece is the biggest thing and it needs to be it needs to be practiced on a daily basis and understood by all thank you so much people that know notion of certainly practicing these skills is an interesting one as well I think that the default assumption so often is uh you know we get a zoom call for these players and uh you know three hour session and then we'll have

(21:45) fixed all these issues because at least we told them about it and the idea that it needs to be repeated over and over again and also appreciate the notion of needing to educate leadership as well I think that's something that this summer has really revealed is perhaps uh there's a huge education gap on the part of the leadership uh maybe willingly or otherwise and and I think that's something that we need to certainly address as well and a quick note for all of those of you who are in attendance

(22:07) here I've just noticed that the chat function is actually turned off we'll be using the Q a function on teams if you have a question as well and we'll be doing that when we finish up everyone's third question so again if you've got a question uh Jess from the CSC will be handling your questions you can feel free to fire those off at any time and when we start the Q a period we'll be able to get to them so Hillary uh returning to you here uh we'll ask you the second question again you're based

(22:29) on your current work what Solutions if any are available to decision makers in the hockey industry to improve the state of Canadian hockey culture well certainly I think educational programs training programs [Music] investigations some have called for Royal commissions all of those things are are valuable and are part of the solution but I'm going to suggest to you and others that the failings of the organization need to be considered not as a moral or ethical wrong but as a legal wrong um and and by that I mean

(23:10) the organizations need to be held accountable as as really the instigators of an environment that allows abuse in the past and currently we focused on individual perpetrators as I said before the Bad Apple but you know if you look at how long this has persisted decades decades this is persisted we've had programs we've had investigations it's persisted across all sports it's persisted globally this is a systemic issue this is not an individual Bad Apple it's not that there aren't bad apples I'm not precluding that at all

(23:51) saying that perhaps the focus needs to shift to the systemic nature and that is that the elements that allow the growth of this abuse are embedded within the culture of the sport and

those cultures that toxic culture the organization needs to be held accountable for from a legal perspective not from an ethical perspective or a moral perspective but legally and we're starting to see that currently there are I believe six class action suits um against Sports in Canada at the national level and there are other

(24:28) lawsuits pending but there are six and several of them are taking a slightly Innovative approach and they're looking at systemic negligence which is a new take on negligence it's not individual negligence and it's not vicarious liability which has been the focus of most lawsuits in the past and has resulted in for example organ the vicarious liability really results in organizations trying to reduce harm by putting in further screening measures or more credentialed individuals and and just by way of

(25:05) comment I don't know why the more prudentialed you are the less likely you are to abuse I think we've we've seen that isn't true with the Larry Nassar and U.S gen gymnastics that that's not true at all but that's that's been our traditional approach um and you could call it some some researchers have called it the Honeypot approach that is that the sport sport um attracts the Deviant person in an otherwise healthy environment the Deviant person is allowed to seep through the cracks somehow and this

(25:39) really this notion really developed through the residential schools in the RCMP but sport has a similar sort of uh environment that way um another way of looking at this is is The Crucible sort of an analogy of The Crucible and that is that the culture the toxic culture of the organization permits it actually develops uh from it is the the abuse is born of that toxic culture and and when you start looking at the talk what makes a toxic culture well organizations typically are this is what the research is showing they're rigid

(26:20) they won't change they don't change they perpetuate the same thing year after year after year after year um and and the strength and they it can grow very strong and become more and more rigid and feed upon itself and what's the surrounding culture like that can actually uh influence the organizational culture so what's this what's the culture of sport as a whole and what's the culture around hockey in society as a whole um and and I would suggest that hockey is very rigid not really willing to move

(26:52) very much in terms of its culture a second characteristic is the inability to admit wrong to see the red flags that society as a whole sees to refuse to to actually deal with that to be willfully blind and you can back up a little bit and just say the organization not seeing those red flags starts to normalize Behavior it becomes part of the culture part of the normative culture and the last is a preoccupation with image that is what the self-perceived image of the organization is and perpetuating that and so not wanting to interrupt

(27:33) that perception so not dealing with things you know Sheldon talked about why don't people step up but why don't they perhaps it's some of these underlying things that we have to talk about um so there are three elements I'm just sort of reading off a couple of notes that I made here from from the research there are three elements that are conducive um to the development of this sort of culture and normalizing these kinds of behaviors and the first is isolation um elements within the organization that

(28:08) isolate people and allow this toxic the these toxic behaviors to Fester secondly a power imbalance the greater the power the greater the control [Music] and the more power that an individual has the more control that an individual has the more they tend to operate from their own vantage point and they don't take a broader perspective and the third major feature is the

hierarchical nature of the institution or the organization now you're always going to have an element of hierarchy but the greater that hierarchy the more disparate

(28:47) persons within the organization are and that and the time spread and the power tends to stay at the top in the most vulnerable tend to be at the bottom let's look at sport who's at the bottom the athlete the most vulnerable of all and the power those at the top have the power and the controller and are quite separated um and we can also look at the real lack of diversity within an organization which once again tends to the the the homogeneity of that power at the top tends to lend itself to the control as

(29:24) well um so I think that what we're starting to see from a legal perspective is a change in the way that people are approaching these lawsuits and they're looking more at the systemic nature of the organization and this toxic culture that allows individuals to learn to be it's permissive it allows them to operate in a wrong-headed abusive sort of a way and in fact it reinforces it it gives commission to do it so I think we have to start looking from that perspective those are excellent thoughts Heather I

(30:00) think moving larger of everything you just said there is this uh extreme need for when we're implementing Solutions or when we're conceiving of solutions to ensure that they are evidence-based and driven by things that we know about things that that that that can actually provide a positive impact there because you mentioned those three factors and certainly the comparison between the Honeypot and The Crucible I think that that's a very good sort of dichotomy in terms of to understand the way the sport

(30:22) does seem to produce abusive situations certainly also the notion of the legal accountability is something that I think has become readily apparent to many sports organizations certainly in Canada right now the notion that they can be legally liable in the sense of a from a systemic point of view and I also appreciate what you noted there about essentially stop considering the apple and let's start paying attention to the orchard so to speak here let's let's start considering the factors that keep

(30:47) seemingly producing endless amounts of bad apples so that's fantastic and to finish up the second round of question we'll turn to Sheldon Sheldon based on your current work what Solutions if any are available to decision makers in the hockey industry to improve the state of Canadian hockey culture um yeah well first off I mean the points that Peter and Hillary brought forward I thought were excellent and you know really on Mark um you know I mean I think that if you look at this horrible situation that is

(31:14) as uh you know brought this discussion to the Forefront in London um um with the alleged sexual assaults uh that went that happened and the alleged cover-ups and you know I think that the the bigger picture with all of this is the systemic culture and and that's the overarching that's the overarching I think um uh issue that's in front of us and and you know um and and to me it's the silence that comes you you you can come into an organization what I've learned about systemic culture you know a toxic

(31:52) culture um is that you come in with an open-mindedness and and it makes you question what's right uh what your morals are what you learned outside of this systemic culture was right and when you come into this to this you know this toxic culture um it makes you question everything it makes you wonder uh you know um it makes you comply with the way that culture is and so to me you know what the evidence and research that I've seen around culture is that a healthy culture uh is about better performance I mean you know and and there's no



(32:37) correlation between any sport and performance around this type of work at all right now right now it's about oh we have to do this oh boy oh right and uh you know if I look at you know some of the you know some of the organizations that we work with in this in this country I mean we've we've trained close to two million coaches and parents and and and some athletes but around these issues through respect and Sport uh and respect in the workplace trainings across this country um you know you look at some of the the

(33:08) branches uh and member partner hockey organizations across this country I mean the ones that I know are doing a lot they're doing as much as they can I know there can always be more without the support of the national body right and and that I know is is there and so you know I mean Hockey Canada has never made training for all of its membership mandatory ever they've left it up to the put it on the shoulders of the member partners and branches right and I mean if you look at the you know you look at

(33:45) the after the the the emails that came out last week um around they'll never sign up for independent third party reporting mechanism which is why why wouldn't you like you know like to me that's huge and and if I look at you know part of the solution is you know I think that you know and I can go back to when I told my story but when I told my story we didn't talk about nothing we didn't talk about mental health we didn't talk about abuse we didn't talk about any of this stuff and and so I think it was a

(34:19) it was like climbing a mountain just to get people to say okay we're gonna we're gonna do a little bit of training and we're going to update our policies to say that uh to acknowledge that this is a problem in sport that was a huge leap for sport organizations and and and over the years I mean that was 26 years ago over the years I think we've got to the point now where you know we're at and part you know pardon my my ignorance here lack of a better words but you know level two of uh of you know where we

(34:50) need to be and I think that there's an expectation from society because remember we're just not educating people in in in sport like you know we're just kind of starting there in sport but you know back in the day you know 20 years ago we were educating in schools as well these issues and healthy relationships and and so you know our kids are now those kids if we were educating back then are now parents they're the ones signing up there's an expectation that things are better there's an expectation

(35:20) that things are in place there's an expectation that we operate this and they're not scared to talk about these issues they're not scared to talk about this issue the people that are scared to talk about these issues is the leadership group within sport organizations because they're not sure where the yard where the where the line is Where's the Line in the Sand with this stuff in our organization and I think Clarity clarity is huge when it comes to these issues I think when you talk about these issues

(35:50) of abuse bullying harassment discrimination Equity inclusion diversity mental health I mean you you put that under you know the wellness umbrella or psychological safety umbrella and physical safety umbrella these issues carry a significant amount of fear and you know we don't have to create phds but what we need to do is we need to create a platform and a confidence for people to feel vulnerable to be able to discuss any types of these issues within their sport organizations I mean at you know we've we've done over

(36:27) 20 000 child abuse investigations and these kids are abused over 95 percent of these kids are abused by somebody they know right and over 50 percent of these kids are abused by

a parent or caregiver so it's not just what's happening bad in the sport organization it's 50 of these 20 000 kids and that's just in Calgary so you know so if you look at it where are they going they're going to be part of our sport organizations we need to have the tools to know if a child discloses to us something that's

(37:06) going on in their world what do we do with that how do we help how do we support where do we go with that how do we learn how to listen like I think that we need to understand when we put our hand up to be a volunteer coach because nobody else wants to coach and we're just we're going to do it out of the goodness of our heart we need to as a sport organization in my opinion we need to make sure that we are giving all of these tools to those people that that put their foot forward to say I want to volunteer to to

(37:38) because it's not just about making sure that they're not a bad apple if that's the term that we're using but it's about you're the you're a very good person and we need to give you the tools to be even better because you know what we need to understand who's coming in that locker room and we talk about power we want to know who who why why is Sport attractive to pedophiles and people that want access to kids it's because power it's the ultimate it's the ultimate position

(38:07) of power all you have to do is put your hand up to say I'm a coach and boom you've got access to all the kids and they think you're God right and and to me with that comes responsibility and in that responsibility we're in a position where we may be the only trusted adult in this kid's life and if they disclose to us something that's going on do we know how to handle this do we know how to handle it do we know how to respond and that would be my question so I think there's two there's two things that

(38:38) we're looking at and I think one of the biggest concerns that comes with the you know the incident in London that's you know present and awful um is that you know we had allegedly ate other players or people in that room and not one of them had enough confidence Clarity or knowledge to put their hand up and say you know what this isn't right and to me that's that's that's huge and to me that's not just that situation that's the problem when we're talking about a systemic culture is people are scared to

(39:21) stand up for what's right they're scared to voice their opinion because they're repercussions and that's what we need to change right we need to we need to create a confidence within people we need to give people because in my belief the the large large majority in sport of people in sport that I know are great people and want to do the right thing we need to make sure we create a clear pathway for them to be able to do the right thing for them to be able to uh to be able to you know do the you know whether

(39:57) it's an independent third party line or reporting to however you report that but we also give them need to give them the confidence to be able to speak up and step in without the feeling of repercussion and that is how these issues go on and on and on and on in my opinion so to me how do we do that well we teach it and that's through conversation and we need to start having these conversations let people be vulnerable is this about being perfect absolutely not I don't think we're ever going to be perfect in this

(40:31) space but what we need to do is practice and we get better in this space when we practice when I went to my psychologist for the first time I didn't even know how to explain how do you feel I'm like I couldn't explain nothing right well after 10 SEC sessions of practicing it and learning it and paying attention to it I got a little bit better and you know after 20 years I'm

a lot better at it I can I can put my finger on why I feel the way I feel so to think that you know it's just gonna happen is like

(41:00) living in Unicorn Land like this has got to be a sustained exercise built into the infrastructure of the organization as a practice skill no different than the power play or penalty killing or whatever it might be and until we get to that place we're never going to see the shift and the change that I think we all expect Sheldon thank you for that I mean you you begin and ended your your response there with with questions responding to the notion of Silence where you began by talking about the sounds when you enter

(41:32) an organization then you ended it sort of by talking about The Silence from those physically present and the sort of in between that we we understand I think a little bit better now from from your comments about what is expected if we would like to actually physically change these things when it comes to the locker room Dynamics for sure and I think as we get into our last line of questioning here I think that was a perfect way to sort of introduce ourselves to this sort of forward-looking aspect of this and

(41:54) and again just as a reminder to all those present if you've got a question for any of our panelists please fire it in the Q a tool on teams if you have a look on the team's menu there you'll see a section labeled as q a you can ask the question just field them and then forward them during the Q a period which will follow the responses to this question and Pete we will end or begin there for last uh series of questions with you Pete how if at all do you foresee the future of hockey culture in Canada evolving over the next 10 years

(42:24) well I I can tell you how I'd like to see it evolving and and with me it starts it starts from uh a transition or a shift away from from the focus of high performance at such a young age I mean I think that that's where the danger is and and I think in terms of the hockey system you have boys and girls coming in at four five six seven years old five six seven years old um and you automatically see a segregation of kids and and it becomes families and they go off in different passes uh Pathways based on skill level

(43:06) um and I think that that real focus of high performance and and an end result and a return on the investment of my participation in hockey from parents and kids is is is a dangerous focus and what I believe it creates is a is a is a pathway for not only not only kids but uh parents to develop uh you know a sense I think a sense of separateness a sense of entitlement uh uh and ultimately potentially a sense of hubris and and I think the culture in a lot of cases when you combine that with what Sheldon says the

(43:44) fear of these these issues and then the I think the the separateness and and and and and how the system [Music] um focuses on on that the development of high performance athletes I think we're missing we're missing the boat we are missing the purpose for for sport involvement at a young age is particularly from the ages of six to twelve and and in my research we looked at that it's so Paramount for young kids to have a wide variety of sport experiences wide variety of uh um mixing in different different

(44:23) um uh sport venues with different coaches different kids different parents or sorry different parents uh um I I think the fact that we get kids in in at a early age uh Billy or Susie you're going to be a left Winger you're going to stick with this group and we're going to go up all the way from 5 to 14 with the same coach and the same parent group I think that's I think that for me with my my involvement in in hockey and studying and working at it I think we need to really look at what's the

(44:57) purpose of getting our kids involved in sport and I've had people tell me well we're going to pick this coach because this coach knows how to put a kid into the to the major Junior ranks so my response to that is well what about the other 25 kids okay I I may not necessarily think this this person is the right person at this age to to foster a healthy and positive environment but I think we need to I think in terms of hockey in the future I think it needs to to be refreshed I think it needs to be looked at okay what

(45:29) is what what is our purpose um what do we want these young athletes to learn to embrace to absorb through their participation in our organizations that those those I those ideals and values and goals need to be completely I think uh refocused sure there's still a lot of a lot of room for high performance high and development but that in my opinion needs to come a little further down the road when we've established you know um those foundational things that I think sport involvement should carry with it so

(46:10) um that's where I think we can begin to change that that toxic culture or that entitlement or that hubris within and I think we're seeing that today and I'm uh you know I think we're seeing that in a lot of cases and we see it all over and I've been someone involved in hockey I I see it and it's it's a concern for me and I think we need to really address where where it's going the system and how we produce uh young people and young athletes I think that your response there really

(46:41) does speak to something we brought quite frequently today which is that notion of the system and how the system produces athletes how the system produces some of the issues that we've brought up as in terms of abuse the system is some has been discussed at Great Lengths but I like that your response are addressed changes that could be made to the actual production of athletes I think that's a really interesting way to sort of uh yeah answer that question uh Hillary turning to you how if at all do you

(47:05) foresee the future of hockey culture in Canada evolving over the next 10 years well I think that there have to be and I think that there will be some very bold very bold systemic changes I don't think we can nibble around the edges we have to there have to be some dramatic changes in sport as a whole and in hockey specifically but I think that it'll be influenced by the changes in sport um it's it's interesting to look at the impact that different policy positions taken within sport have and how they

(47:43) trickle down back in the 80s uh the the funding structure of sport changed and winning became a a predominant theme and in fact funding is dependent upon performance and that that creates a certain perspective at a certain priority in terms of policies programs ways of approaching things Etc so the way that sport is funded very much impacts the culture of sport and becomes part of the culture of sport and we can look at a number of things that have happened harassment policies uh in I think they became mandatory for National

(48:25) organizations and about 2009 um Sheldon spoke to the fact that many organizations did not have a policy or did not have aspects required by the policy there was virtually no oversight in those policies it was a mandated policy funding would not be provided by the government if if the policies were not there to my knowledge not one sport organization had its funding pulled um we can look at the emergence of athlete groups worldwide globally but also in Canada well why why is that happening I think that's almost an organic emergence of

(49:08) the athletes because the athletes understand that they need to become their own Advocates because nobody else is doing it they need to be part of the decision making they

need to be part of the dynamic instead they've been relegated to the most vulnerable position when we talk about the hierarchy of sport and so we're seeing changes there and I think that that they will become part of the power structure or a greater part they already are a greater part um and a required part but a not a token part that where that they are in some (49:39) instances at least globally I think too that sport has Sports have shown that they cannot uh properly regulate themselves there's not a great deal of transparency there's not a great deal of accountability and so instead of seeing self-reg the the self-regulatory system of sport that we have today and guard guard very very firmly we're going to see more supervisory regulation I think sport will be giving up some of that as we move forward we'll be required to give up some of that so from a from a

(50:12) broader perspective I think there are going to be some dramatic changes um in in how sport operates and I think that sport individual sports will have to not just accommodate these changes but we'll have to be a little bit prescient and take these actions themselves I spoke about the lawsuits um that's a form of hammer it's a it's a harsh way of dealing with matters but you know at the end of the day if nothing else is happening then that's where you go and we're starting to see these class action suits in sport in the

(50:45) last five to seven years I think we'll see more of them the class action that there's a reason for class action lawsuits and the biggest reason that the courts look when they are are allowing a class action suit is deterrence to deter wrongful Behavior abusive behavior in this in this sense and that's what I mean by this abuse of behavior that is inculcated within the sport becoming a legal wrong on the part of the sport the sport being held accountable for its culture its toxic culture I think we're going to see

(51:23) more of that the Class Act the class action suit is intended to try and deter that to change to see some dramatic culture cultural change in societal change but it's going to take that kind of dramatic action I think we've kind of snuck our way along I think there's going to be some dramatic action over the next decade perfectly that's that's fantastic I think again an excellent articulation there of both carrot and stick in terms of the ways that these organizations can change um certainly articulating the legal

(51:56) remedies that are possible to sort of force organizations to change I think are absolutely something that uh that certainly hockey can is going to need to become very familiar with in the very near future and I think to end our round of questioning we'll turn to Sheldon and ask the same question uh Sheldon how if at all do you foresee the future of hockey culture in Canada evolving over the next 10 years well I I uh was talking to a good friend of mine who's um in the U.

(52:28) S and very involved in working within uh high-level hockey uh that came from outside of hockey and we were in a discussion about you know just the pushback the push back around change and and I think where we are is we're at the epicenter right now of of change and it's uncomfortable um for many um it's hard but uh you know I think this is when we're talking about toxic cultures and stuff I mean we're getting close to the heart of it and and uh and I think it's it's it's uh it's clear because um changes is uh

(53:06) um in my opinion uh I I think I think that uh [Music] I think that when um hockey was bleeding in this country with membership they were bleeding before the incident before you know before this this you know terrible situation in London and and you know and and all the uh you know all the the media and the the you know the the investigations into I mean hockey

was bleeding hockey was struggling already and and and I think you know so it's it it I I guess you know when I look at it and and if you go and look in in my world I go and look (53:56) back at all the incidences and since for 26 years and and it's just one after another after another after another after another after another and I guess my question would be is like when which one is going to put it over the top where we actually say holy cow like this has to be our number one priority right like which one it's not like this is the only incident right and to me it's like I think if we're gonna get change I mean if you look at if you look at the leadership group within the game I mean you know

(54:33) the majority of their board members I mean they're on the board because they were served in the in the volunteer sport Organization for 30 plus years awesome thank you for your for your for your for your volunteership you know 40 plus years and you know so I think but if you look at you know Hockey Canada's Got 135 million dollars of investment dollars they've got you know I don't know what they would have close to you know 350 000 member players membership across the country I mean you know they

(55:04) deal with large organizations I mean I think to get you know they need they need to be able to uh get a board that um is suitable to to govern an organization like that and to be able to look at all aspects and right now the CEO kind of runs the show uh in my opinion uh and so I think to get the change that we all want you know and I think to save the game in my opinion because it's not in a good spot and you know we can't argue that nobody wants to say it but the elephant in the room is hockey is not in a good

(55:43) spot and uh uh at all and and they need to make significant change and they need to be able to be open-minded enough to be able to get people from outside of the the systemic system that have spent their whole career inside a systemic system to bring new thinking and new ideas and New Concepts to an organization where the people that are internal as we speak are don't have the ability to see outside of that bubble and that systemic system that they've been in for 27 years right and and to me if we want the

(56:24) change you know we got to change and and they need to change and you know and again I think that sometimes when you're in a systemic system when you're in a and and it's a term and it's well known term the hockey bubble you don't see anything outside that hockey bubble you don't have the capability to understand what's happening at a society left level in regards to these issues so you know I think that in you know just given that I think I think that to be able to save hockey and and I think it's at that level

(57:12) um to be able to save the game of hockey and to be able to make it something that we're all proud of again uh there has to be drastic change and and a drastic shift in Direction um I think that you know uh there's been and I'll say it again I think that there's been some very strong efforts by some member branches and and partners uh without the support of their National governing body and to me um you know the national governing body has you know for the most part dismissed this stuff uh and these issues uh

(57:52) without feeling that training is important for them but for everybody else it is and uh you know and that's that's where I'm not with it and I think you know I think that it's possible as everything's possible you know I mean hey my life I was down and out you know eight treatment centers psych wards and you know whatever like there I was I was the last person that anybody would have thought would have had a a hope to become any type of a human being in in their life in in my life right but at

(58:21) the end of the day I think you know there's always hope but you know to me I had to commit to change and that's what I know I don't know how to get to a good place from a terrible place without the commitment needed and without the commitment necessary and until we see that it doesn't matter what kind of action plan it doesn't matter what's happening if you don't get the buy-in and the commitment from the whole organization and the real true buy-in from your guts right and and that's what it's going to

(58:54) take not just this oh we have an action plan well who doesn't have an action plan all of a sudden you have an action plan you know it's not it's not cutting it for me perfect Sheldon wonderful a message of Hope and a call to action what a perfect way to end and look at that right at one so we have exactly 10 minutes for questions uh again I want to thank all of our panelists for their thoughtful answers and their time on the question and answer period here so again if you're an attendee and you'd like to ask

(59:20) a question of any of our panelists use the Q a function as you submitted via the teams chat there on the Q a function we have one uh right off the bat here from Neville Madill and Neville asks relating to Hockey Canada a lot of individuals and experts in the sport industry have called for executives and board members to resign as most people know there has been little movement and development in the in executive turnover this is a question for any panelist if you were hired as an outside organization representative to change

(59:49) the culture of Hockey Canada or any other hockey team slash governing bodies who need Evolution what are a few actions you would do to show an older executive team that change is needed let's start with Hillary there uh how would you answer that question from Neville oh Hillary you're muted it's okay there we are sorry no problem uh you know there's a there's an old saying that probably people have heard of if you keep doing the same thing and expecting a different uh a different outcome that's the definition of

(1:00:28) insanity and and I think that um I I I hear Sheldon's comments about operating in a bubble and I think one has to go outside uh and look at what real governance is about um this is a huge organization this is a big Corporation it's not a small community-run club and I think that one has to really look at the skills as as board members of individuals so there's the the the the the board skills of the individual people and there's also understanding what the mission of the organization is I think maybe they've

(1:01:10) lost their way a little bit and need to go back and identify and clearly articulate what that is and how to to arrive there having said all of that um as we've I think we've all said it's not going to be any good nibbling away at the edges we're going to need some bold strategic action and it may very well mean a totally different approach to board governance because again that Echoes what you made in your what you said in your responses as well call for bold action not just action for the sake of of change uh Pete

(1:01:48) do you have anything to respond to Neville's question there what would you tell an older executive team uh to do if you were brought in to help usher in an error of change well I think I think we've touched on it I think I think change somewhat on mass is is required I think we need fresh perspective I think we need better representation from society in general I think we need and and to Sheldon's Point too when you're in when you're ingrained in that culture for not only as potentially an athlete and as an

(1:02:18) administrator that becomes how you think feel operate so I'm not saying that there are bad people involved they're great people and they're and they're you know there's a lot of

great people but that the system and and the uh um the values that kind of overshadow the people I think in a lot of ways um I think we need I I think we need to blow it apart I think we really need to start at the at the Grassroots and we need to understand what's happened uh where it's gone and how we've created

(1:02:53) this and I think we need to get again get fresh perspective people who um are able to see things outside of the closed door hockey you know uh uh club uh those the the the the locker room culture I think we need to expand beyond that and and start fresh perfect and and one more uh Sheldon answering Neville's thoughtful question here what are a few actions you would do to show an older executive team that changes needed well I mean I think it doesn't doesn't just because you're older doesn't mean

(1:03:31) that um you know you've been in a system forever I think you know I think there's I've met a significant amount of older people that are very open-minded to change and have spent a lot of time learning about how to be better in this space I think that's huge it doesn't just mean because you're old you don't know you don't know what you're doing in this area I think to me it's about taking the time and prioritizing it in your life and I think that you know at the end of the day

(1:04:00) Hillary said it well I mean to me you know we're not talking about little tiny Hockey Canada like oh it's a little Hockey Club no it's a big it's an Enterprise right it is a big operation and they need to skill they need the skills necessary on that board to be a governance board right they are they are about governance that's their job right and when you look at when you look at these issues this is about governance this is about strong governance right and so they need to really look at the

(1:04:37) skill sets that they've had on that board and I know for a long long long time if you put your time in as a volunteer in hockey you got you you worked your way up to the board and great people but again I think if you look at where the where where the actual organization is it needs to skill it's it needs the skills to be able to operate that organization to where it's at today and I feel that they've lost their way a little bit you know I think that you know they've really lost their way like Hillary was

(1:05:08) saying I mean Hockey Canada is about Hockey Canada it's about all the kids that it's about growing the game right and you know it's not just this high level NHL organization and I feel that it's almost got to the place where it's operating in itself like this NHL private NHL club and without the support of supporting their member partners and branches and you know and I think that we need to understand the majority the high high high majority of people and kids and families that want to sign up for our game never

(1:05:43) go anywhere in the game they are signing up because they love the game they want to feel part of their Community they want to be a part of something in their community and they've seen something in the game of hockey that has inspired them to give it a try and if we can't make that experience like over the top good for those families they're not coming back you look at the cost of the game how do you sell that when you look at 135 million dollars in the bank and everybody and their dog across this

(1:06:18) country is raising money to try to buy equipment for kids to get them involved in the game when you look at that picture it doesn't make sense to me you know everybody's struggling to get involved in the game meanwhile the parent company sitting with 135 million dollars in trust funds and condos downtown Winnipeg I get that they invested I get but give a



little back right it doesn't make sense to me and so to me I think that's the Lost way a little bit and I think we need to get back to the place because if we don't

(1:06:50) have kids signing up we don't have families saying yeah let's go try hockey we don't get the next Conor McDavid we don't get the next Sarah nurse we don't get the next right and and and at the end of the day we don't get those families that understand you know the the good things that hockey and playing as a team can teach our kids and our families to set them up to go work in workplaces with other people that you know they have to work in a team to me that's the way that we've lost I think

(1:07:24) we've got away from that and that's where we need to get back to perfect I mean that's again an excellent articulation of not just the crisis we began our our panel but also the existential threat that does exist to this sport if these issues aren't fixed and our final question uh to Hillary we only have about a minute left here Hillary this question is from Aaron Durant uh question for Hillary many nsos have a similar governance structure to Hockey Canada in terms of provincial member organizations appointing

(1:07:48) long-term long-time volunteers speaking to what Shelton just said as board members rather than recruiting boards with skills and expertise has sport Canada made any requirements around board composition in exchange for funding uh to my knowledge no they haven't um but I think that the organizations can certainly do this on their own and Leadership from the national organizations as well again as Sheldon said um you want to reward your volunteers absolutely but it's not a matter of moving up quote unquote up the ladder to

(1:08:22) the executive or board level that's kind of the Peter Principle people who are great coaches are not necessarily great board people it's a totally different skill set and there are some very defined skills that are necessary to operate on a board and and I would just reiterate um and I understand the question goes beyond hockey at the national level but we're talking about a multi-million dollar Corporation here uh you know we don't see this in other multi-million dollar organizations although we do see toxic cultures so I

(1:08:59) think it's a matter of looking at again what is perpetuating these toxic cultures and the research is telling us some of the things and and that's where we need to start looking and certainly board composition board diversity board skills are part of the issue uh and and the the way the traditional way of rewarding people and moving them up through the organization um perhaps is outdated now perfect thank you Aaron for that question and thank you so much to our panelists I want to extend a sincere thank you to Sheldon

(1:09:32) Hillary P for joining us and sharing your your wisdom and your analysis on this very important and complicated issue I want to thank Jess crosswith and Calvin Pietro from the center for sport capacity for their work on the on the behind the scenes organizing this on on such short notice I want to thank all of you for attending again this has been recorded so it'll be available in in perpetuity on the csc's website if you're interested in in watching today's webinar back and again one final thank

(1:09:57) you to all of our panelists and I speak for everyone in attendance to say that that we really value your time and and your analysis thank you all thanks Taylor and everyone thanks Peter and Hillary thank you all thanks thanks everybody pleasure