

### **300 What Is a Girl Worth?**

When Simone Biles literally lost her way in the air at the 2021 Summer Olympics, she explained that she had the "twisties." The "twisties," or a sudden loss of proprioception, or spatial orientation, are extremely dangerous to a gymnast, as the midair loss of muscle memory and spatial awareness increases the risk of severe injury. Similar mind-body disconnects have been linked to childhood trauma and the self-preservation phenomenon of dissociation experienced by many victims of repeated sexual assault.

Although Biles, one of the most decorated gymnasts in the world, felt strong going into the games that summer, she began to suffer from heightened anxiety during her practices and performances. Courageously, she withdrew from the event, valuing her mental and physical health over another medal.

Biles was one of hundreds of victims of sexual abuse at the hands of former team doctor Larry Nassar. Though it took her years to connect that abuse, or the resulting depression, stress, and anxiety, to her performance problems, she later joined a cohort of brave young women to testify in Congress about the impact of this trauma. "I blame Larry Nassar, and I also blame an entire system that enabled and perpetrated his abuse," Biles stated.

"What is a girl worth?" asked Rachael Denhollander, the first survivor to publicly accuse Larry Nassar of sexual assault.