





**National
Coaching
Certification
Program**

Make Ethical Decisions: Reference Material

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Partners in Coach Education and Training

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INTRODUCTION

As a coach, you will deal with a wide range of issues. Depending on the type of issues you encounter, you may experience a variety of emotions and thoughts.

Sometimes, you may feel that an action or behaviour is wrong. At other times, you may suspect or even know that a behaviour is illegal. In other instances, you may feel unsure about a situation and a decision, since there seem to be a number of acceptable alternatives. If you ask yourself this type of question, the issue probably has ethical implications.

A conversation with the person(s) involved is often all that's needed to deal with the situation. However, at other times this is not enough, and you may have to make a more formal intervention or refer the matter to another level of authority.

Values and Ethics: What Are They?

Our values represent a set of deeply held beliefs upon which our thoughts and actions are based; we refer to our values in evaluating our own actions, as well as the actions and decisions of others. In coaching, our core values are expressed as a series of principles defined by the *NCCP Code of Ethics*. A code of ethics defines what is considered good and right behaviour.

Ethical issues arise when our values and the corresponding ethical principles are compromised in some way. When this happens, the decisions are often sensitive and difficult to make. In these situations, the quality of the decisions a coach makes depends on a number of factors, including:

- ❑ An understanding of the facts of the situation
- ❑ An awareness of his or her own values and of the various factors that can influence his or her decision
- ❑ The use of appropriate benchmarks to analyze the situation and understand what is involved
- ❑ The ability to apply a rigorous decision-making framework to the situation at hand

This module deals with each of these factors as part of an ethical decision-making process.

The Ethical Decision-making Process

This module outlines a process that will enable you to make thoughtful and responsible decisions in situations presenting ethical or moral dilemmas. The process has six steps, and each of these steps is covered in this document.

If you follow the ethical decision-making process, you will:

- ❑ Have a thorough process for making sensitive decisions
- ❑ Have solid arguments to justify your decisions from an ethical point of view
- ❑ Feel confident you can assume the consequences of your decisions, knowing that it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Note: The process described in the following sections applies to situations that do not require an emergency response by the coach. In crucial and urgent situations, for instance when a person is injured or there is an imminent risk to people's safety, your duty is 1) to take whatever measures you feel are necessary in the short term to manage the situation and 2) to protect the individuals concerned. The Planning a Practice module contains more detailed information on risk factors, emergency action plans, and coach liability.

STEPS IN THE ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Step 1 — Establish the Facts in a Situation

When faced with any situation or problem in coaching, you must establish exactly what has happened (or is happening) and who is involved in the situation before trying to figure out what to do about it.

At this stage, ask yourself the following questions:

- ❑ What has happened or what is happening?
- ❑ When and where did certain events occur?
- ❑ Who is (or might be) involved in or concerned by the situation?
- ❑ What do the parties involved have to say about the situation (i.e. what are all sides of the story)? Get the facts from all the parties involved, and look at the situation from both sides if there is disagreement or conflict.

Step 2 — Determine Whether the Situation Involves Legal or Ethical Issues

A. *Does the Situation Have Legal Implications?*

Once the facts have been clearly established, the next step consists of determining whether the situation has legal implications. Two useful questions to ask yourself at this stage are:

- ❑ Has anyone been harmed by the action or decision of another, and if so, in what way?
- ❑ Does the action or the situation contravene an existing law?

Examples of Situations that Have Legal Implications

- ❑ **Actions that are criminal or quasi-criminal** — These are wide ranging and could include theft, assault, sexual assault, other sexual offences, possession of narcotics, underage drinking, driving without a licence or insurance, forgery, fraud, vandalism, etc.
- ❑ **Actions that breach a contract** — These could include someone acting outside the scope of his or her delegated authority, violating agreed-on rules relating to the use of a facility or equipment, or failing to meet other contractual obligations.
- ❑ Actions or information indicating there are **reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection**.
- ❑ **Actions that are discriminatory** — Actions of a government, organization, or individual that are contrary to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, or any provincial or territorial human rights legislation.

- ❑ **Actions that constitute harassment** — Harassment is a form of discrimination and is contrary to human rights laws; in its extreme form, harassment may be a criminal offence.
- ❑ **Actions**, even those that are not intentional, **that could constitute negligence**, as legally defined.

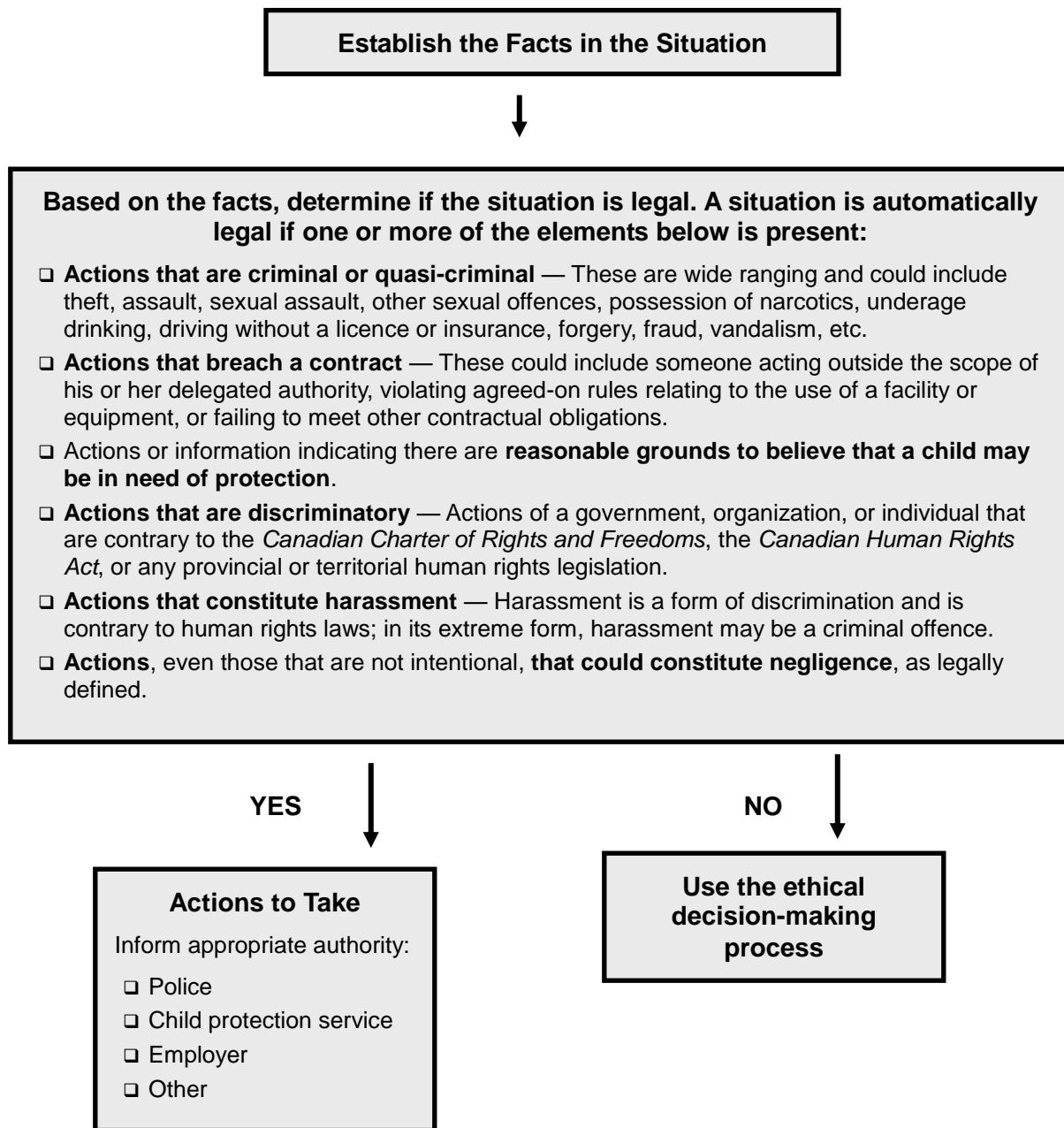
Actions to Take in Situations that Have Legal Implications

A coach occupies a position of authority; accordingly, he or she has important legal responsibilities. When a coach is confronted by a legal situation such as those described previously, he or she has a duty to do something about it.

This would involve:

- ❑ **Reporting the situation to the police**, where the coach is aware of or reasonably suspects criminal or quasi-criminal activity.
- ❑ **Reporting the situation to child protection authorities**, where a coach suspects that a child has suffered physical or emotional harm or is in circumstances where a risk of such harm exists.
- ❑ **Reporting the matter to the employer or to the organization** having authority over the persons involved in the conduct for all other legal matters.

Critical Path: Determining if a Situation is Legal



B. Does the Situation Have Ethical Implications?

Law and ethics are related and overlap, but they are not identical. Conduct that is illegal is always unethical. Yet some forms of conduct may be unethical even though they are legal. The law therefore represents an absolute minimum standard of behaviour, while the standard for ethical behaviour is somewhat higher.

When the coach encounters a situation that does not violate any law but raises moral questions, he or she must make decisions about how best to respond. Under these circumstances, ethical principles are often called upon.

When can a coach know that a situation has ethical implications?

Ethical conduct can be described as a behaviour that meets accepted standards or principles of moral, professional, or just conduct. Unethical behaviour is the contrary, i.e. actions or decisions that are immoral, unprofessional or unjust.

Once you have determined that the situation is *not* of a legal nature, it is important to determine whether it presents an ethical issue. At this stage, ask yourself the following question:

In this situation and given the facts that have been identified, do you feel there is an issue with any of the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety of athletes at stake now or in future? | <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition site safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Equity and equality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency preparedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of respect and dignity afforded individuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unnecessary risk to athletes | <input type="checkbox"/> Breaking an organization rules or policies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authority being exercised or the best interests of the athletes being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> Violation of the rules and regulations of sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-esteem of athletes | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict of interest | <input type="checkbox"/> Dignity and self-control in personal behaviour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competency, qualification, certification, or scope of practice | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect accorded to officials and their decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty, keeping of commitments, or keeping of one's word | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy or confidentiality | |

At this stage, any statement from the above list that you have checked should cause you to believe that there are one or more ethical issues in the situation. Moreover, the checked statements often indicate the ethical aspects that may be at play.

Step 3 — Identify Your Options and Possible Consequences

Because they often relate to sensitive issues, ethical situations may generate some degree of emotional reaction. As a result, some individuals may have a tendency to react quickly and spontaneously and to make quick decisions. Sometimes, this may affect their judgment and the quality of the decisions they make.

Having determined that the situation does have some ethical implications and identified some potential ethical issues (based on the statements listed in the previous step), you should now identify *options for decision or for action* and assess *potential consequences in each case*. This reflection represents an important step in the ethical decision-making process because it shows that you care about what might happen to others.

Start by asking yourself: **What could I do in this situation?** In the process of answering this question, think about a variety of options. The first one to consider should be *not making any decision or taking no action*. This would be the least demanding option, and it could be thought of as representing one end of a continuum of possibilities. As a second step, consider the other extreme of the continuum, and think of the most comprehensive or liberal action you might take in the situation. Then, identify several intermediate options. Do not rule out any option at this stage, even though at the outset it may appear an unlikely choice.

Continuum of Options for Decision or Action



**Do nothing or
make no decision**

**Intermediate
options**

**Most comprehensive or
liberal action or decision
that can be made**

Once several options for decision have been identified, think about **What might happen if**. This will enable you to assess the possible consequences of each option. In many ethical situations where a “Yes – No” decision must be made, the following questions are likely to arise:

- What might happen if the coach chose not to make any decision or took no action?
- What might happen if the coach’s position were favourable to the situation, question, or issue at hand?
- What might happen if the coach’s position were not favorable to the situation, question, or issue at hand?

Factors That May Influence Decision-making in An Ethics Situation

The decisions we make may be affected by various influences that we are not always fully aware of. When we must take a position or make a decision in a situation with moral or ethical implications, it is important to get some perspective to be as objective as possible.

To achieve such objectivity, it is useful to reflect on the various factors that may affect our decisions. This enables us:

- ❑ To become aware of any factor or factors that seem to affect our way of thinking or of seeing the facts of the situation
- ❑ To take into account any such factors in a conscious and rational way when analyzing or deciding
- ❑ To draw a more complete picture of the consequences that may arise from the potential decisions
- ❑ To better understand the importance we seem to attach to certain outcomes.

For the purposes of this reflection, we may consider two major types of influence:

- ❑ Factors arising from internal influences
- ❑ Factors arising from external influences

Factors Arising from Internal Influences

Internal influences are intimately linked to the person making the ethical decision. Among their sources:

Previous Experience

- ❑ Have you been in a similar situation before? If so, what did you do and was the situation resolved?
- ❑ How did you learn to react when faced with such situations?
- ❑ How might your level of experience affect your ability to make a fair and reasonable decision?

Personal Values

- ❑ How would your family have perceived such a situation?
- ❑ What did you learn from your family, your immediate environment, or school about the type of situation you are confronted with?
- ❑ How might your cultural origins or your spiritual or religious values influence the way you assess information?

Personal Circumstances

- ❑ Could this decision affect your employment? (Could your decision affect a person who has interests vis-a-vis the team or an athlete and who might also be in a position of control, authority, or supervision with respect to you?)
- ❑ How might your decision affect the development of your coaching career? (Will your decision have a negative impact on a person who is in a position to make decisions concerning you?)
- ❑ How might your decision affect your reputation within the club, the sport, or the situation at hand? (Is there a chance that your decision would change the perception others have of you personally, your methods, or your approaches?)

Factors Arising from External Influences

External factors of influence arise from society or the environment in which the decision maker lives. Some factors:

Economic and Political Aspects

- ❑ How might your decision influence the financial situation of your team or club (for example, tobacco or alcoholic beverage sponsorship)?
- ❑ What are the influences or political ramifications of your decision (for example, male vs female)?

Gravity of Situation and Urgency of Decision

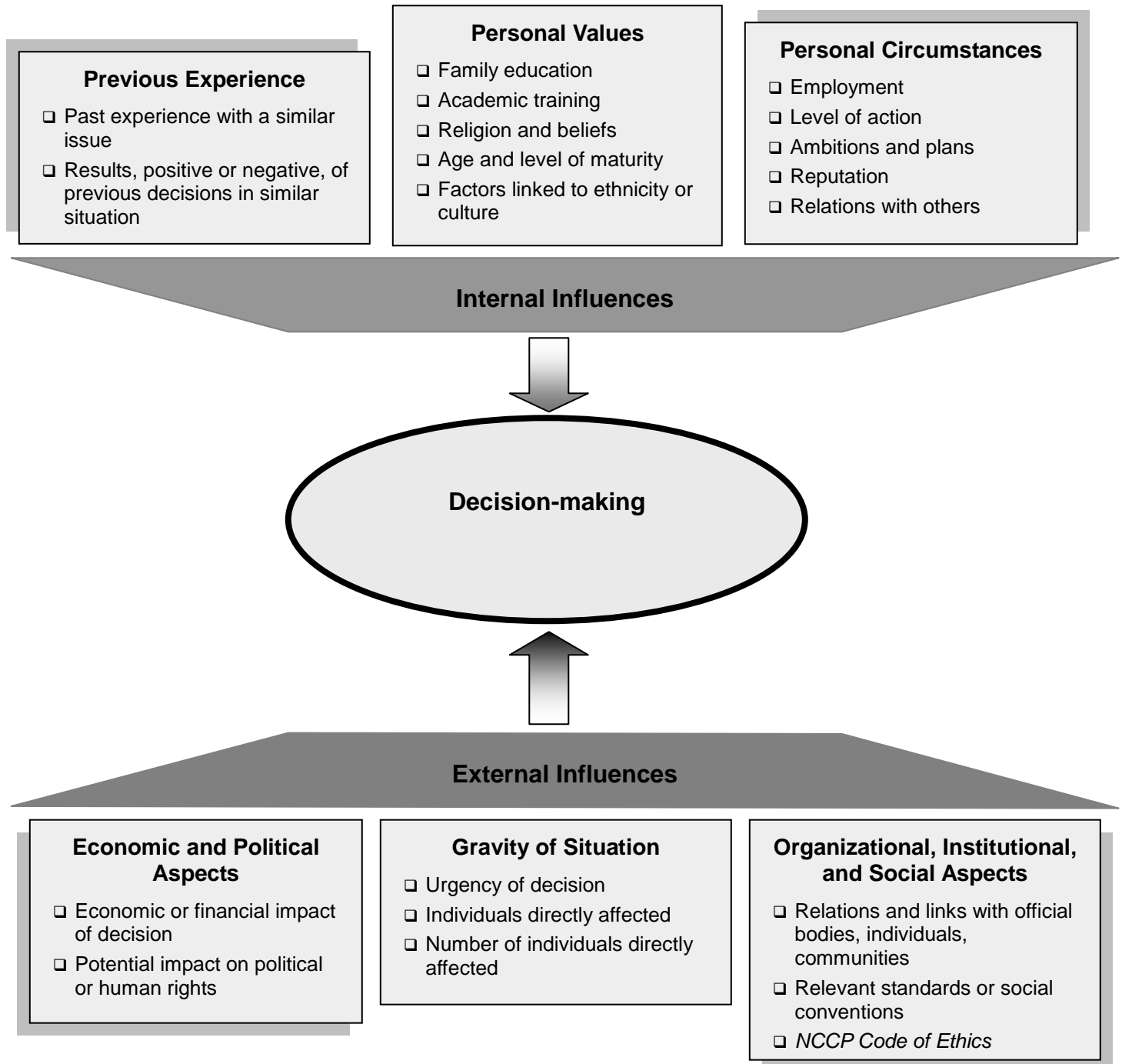
- ❑ To what extent is it important to decide immediately? (For example, is someone's safety at risk? Is there a tight schedule?)
- ❑ Would putting off the decision be prejudicial?
- ❑ How many people are affected, who are they, and to what extent are they really affected?

Organisational, Institutional, and Social Aspects

- ❑ Are the values of the coach consistent with those of the administration or decision-making levels of the club or sports organization?
- ❑ Will the decisions affect members of other organizations? If so, how will relations with them be affected?
- ❑ Do the values of the coach reflect those of the community?

Factors That May Influence How You Perceive an Ethics Situation

Chart adapted from Malloy, Ross & Zackus, 2000





NCCP Code of Ethics

What is a Code of Ethics?

A code of ethics defines what is considered good and right behaviour. It reflects the values held by a group. These values are usually organized into a series of core principles that contain standards of behaviour expected of members while they perform their duties. It can also be used as a benchmark to assess whether certain behaviours are acceptable.

Why a Code of Ethics in Coaching?

Core coaching values have been formalized and expressed as a series of principles in the *NCCP Code of Ethics*. These principles can be thought of as a set of behavioural expectations regarding participation in sport, coaching athletes or teams, and administering sports.

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* can help coaches to evaluate issues arising within sport because it represents a reference for what constitutes both “the good and right thing to do”. For example, the code of ethics helps coaches make balanced decisions about achieving personal or team goals and the means by which these goals are attained.

Values Underpinning the NCCP Code of Ethics

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* is a simplified version of the *Code of Ethics of Coaches of Canada* (formerly the Canadian Professional Coaches Association). However, both codes deal with the same fundamental values of safety, responsible coaching, engaging in relations with integrity, respecting athletes, and honouring sport. These values are expressed as 5 core ethical principles.

1. Physical safety and health of athletes
2. Coaching responsibly
3. Integrity in relations with others
4. Respect of athletes
5. Honouring sport

The following chart provides a description of each principle and outlines some implications for coaches.

NCCP Code of Ethics

Ethical Principles and Their Corresponding Behaviours/Expectations

| Principle | Standards of Behaviour Expected of Coaches |
|---|---|
| Physical safety and health of athletes | Ensure that training or competition site is safe at all times |
| | Be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency |
| | Avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or that are beyond their level |
| | Strive to preserve the present and future health and well-being of athletes |
| Coaching responsibly | Make wise use of the authority of the position and make decisions in the interest of athletes |
| | Foster self-esteem among athletes |
| | Avoid deriving personal advantage for a situation or decision |
| | Know one's limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action |
| | Honour commitments, word given, and agreed objectives |
| | Maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information and use it appropriately |
| Integrity in relations with others | Avoid situations that may affect objectivity or impartiality of coaching duties |
| | Abstain from all behaviours considered to be harassment or inappropriate relations with an athlete |
| | Always ensure decisions are taken equitably |
| Respect | Ensure that everyone is treated equally, regardless of athletic potential, race, sex, language, religion, or age |
| | Preserve the dignity of each person in interacting with others |
| | Respect the principles, rules, and policies in force |
| Honouring sport | Strictly observe and ensure observance of all regulations |
| | Aim to compete fairly |
| | Maintain dignity in all circumstances and exercise self-control |
| | Respect officials and accept their decisions without questioning their integrity |

Step 4 — Evaluate Your Options

Once you've identified your options and their possible consequences, you need to evaluate them, i.e. assess the pros and cons of each. This is a critical step in reaching a decision.

At this stage, the *NCCP Code of Ethics* and the fundamental values on which it rests should be important criteria for you to apply when assessing the merits of the options open to you.

The core principles of the NCCP ethics and the associated expected behavioural standards take into account 1) the **outcome** sought in the decision or action or 2) the **means** used to reach a decision or guide actions. In some cases, both aspects are present.

The notions of **outcome sought** (i.e. striving to do what is good for individuals or the team) and **means used** (striving to do things right) are central to our ethical thinking. Those involved in sport must always keep the following in mind:

- ❑ Some of the outcomes we seek may be commendable, but the means to achieve them may not be. For example, a coach could want to preserve the dignity of an athlete who has been mocked (a desirable outcome) by publicly chastising those who made the affront (a dubious way of proceeding for a person in authority).
- ❑ Conversely, one could follow a process that appears equitable and consistent with the expectations of those involved but arrive at a problematic outcome in terms of values. For example, a coach could ask members of the team to vote (a means of reaching a decision that appears democratic) to choose between a long-term member whose performances are average or a highly talented newcomer for entry in a competition (a result that would penalize either the team or one of the athletes involved).

Coaches' decisions should reflect a fair balance between outcomes sought and the means used to achieve them

Step 5 — Choose the Best Option

Making Decisions That Are Just and Reasonable

We are now reaching a crucial phase of our process, i.e. the one where a *decision must be made*. Steps 1 through 3 of the process provided us with objective information based on issues at play, options for decisions, and potential consequences. In Step 4, we introduced criteria for analyzing the various options using a common reference point: the values of the NCCP Code of Ethics.

Making an ethical decision requires a final reflection on what is the best decision under the circumstances — a just and reasonable decision that will apply where an ethical dilemma is involved. Such a decision:

- ❑ Is “the right thing to do” with regard to the duties and responsibilities of the person making the decision
- ❑ Is made “the right way”
- ❑ Is consistent with the values and behaviours outlined in the NCCP Code of Ethics

However, despite the availability of such criteria, not all ethical decisions are clear-cut. In some instances, a coach may have trouble making a decision because there seems to be more than one reasonable solution. Sometimes, making a decision will even involve sacrificing one value for another. To rank options that seem reasonable with a view to making the best possible decision, we now consider how to prioritize principles to which we adhere, but that appear contradictory in the situation at hand. In other words, what do you do when you are facing an *ethical dilemma*?

Moral Dilemmas and Ethical Decision-making

Certain ethical situations may generate strong feelings or doubts because there seems to be more than one reasonable solution. Sometimes, making a decision even involves sacrificing one value for another. When there are two potentially right solutions, such situations are referred to as **ethical dilemmas — a conflict between values we wish to maintain**.

Here are some examples of ethical dilemmas:

- ❑ Team rules vs. parental rights and authority. A team has a standing policy of curfew being set at 10:00 PM at away competitions. All parents sign off on this and other policies at the beginning of the year. One parent, who often travels with the team, routinely allows his/her son/daughter to stay up past this hour.
- ❑ Team rules vs. winning the competition. A club has a strict policy of no swearing when on clubhouse grounds. The pre-established penalty for such speech is a one-competition automatic suspension. The day before the championship competition, the leading athlete has a temper tantrum during practice and mouths off using foul language to another athlete on the team.
- ❑ Do No Harm Principle vs. athlete’s will/rights to play. An athlete has been experiencing chronic knee pain as a result of a growth spurt. The athlete is begging you to be allowed

to play in a key competition, and the parents support this athlete in his or her eagerness to play.

Priorizing Principles and Values

When someone is faced with an ethical dilemma and is forced to choose between two values, his or her most deeply held beliefs normally dictate the course of action.

If you are faced with an ethical or moral dilemma as a coach, you can resolve the dilemma by asking yourself these questions:

- ❑ What does the NCCP Code of Ethics suggest in this type of situation? Which criterion (or value) do you consider the most important from those listed in Step 4?
- ❑ Is there another value in which you strongly believe and that you would seek to maintain at all costs? If so, which is it?

Do No Harm Principle

Even though it is a sensitive issue to suggest ranking your values, the NCCP considers that it is a coach's duty above all to ensure that the decisions he or she makes and the actions he or she takes do not result in harm, physical or other, to athletes.

It therefore follows that in a moral dilemma, physical safety or the health of athletes is the overriding concern.

The challenge in ethical decision-making is to determine which value you will maintain in your course of action.

Validating Your Decision

Setting aside the priority given to athletes' physical safety and health, one last set of questions may help you validate your chosen option as just and reasonable:

- ❑ Would you make this decision in all similar cases?
- ❑ If you feel you cannot apply your decision to all similar cases, what might be a reasonable and justifiable exception? If so, in which circumstances? Do such circumstances apply in the present situation? What makes you think that an exception might be justified in this case, but not in other situations?
- ❑ Is the decision consistent with decisions made in similar situations in the past that have had positive outcomes?

Going through this last series of questions should give you confidence that you've made the best possible decision under the circumstances. Answering these questions also gives you sound explanations of your decision.

Step 6 — Implement Your Decision

In Steps 1 to 5, you went through a thorough reflection process that has made it possible for you to make a just and reasonable decision in response to an ethical situation. The final step in the ethical decision-making process is to implement your decision.

Putting your decision or plan of action into effect requires that you consider a number of things, particularly if it involves dealing with individuals or groups of people. Consider the following as you establish an action plan:

- ❑ **Choose your path.** Exactly what are you going to do? Plan *carefully* the steps you are going to take.
- ❑ **Think about what may happen.** Consider the likely outcomes of the decision and the how any consequences will be managed.
- ❑ **Identify who needs to know.** Consider who needs to be informed of or involved in implementing the action plan or decision.
- ❑ **Determine if you can deal on your own with the person(s) involved.** Is it appropriate to seek an *informal resolution* in this situation? In issues not involving a contravention of the law, it is often best to try to deal with the issue informally and directly with the individual involved. We often refer to this as adopting the *conservative approach*. It has the advantage of conferring responsibility for actions on the party involved and allows him or her to resolve the situation while maintaining a sense of dignity and self-respect. It also establishes a degree of trust between parties involved. Approach the individual, and tell him or her what you have seen or what has been shared with you. Give him or her a chance to respond, a chance to do the good or right thing.
- ❑ **Warn, don't threaten.** This is an important concept when dealing with a situation at an informal level. This entails informing the individual of the logical consequences of what can happen if a situation is not resolved, rather than threatening the person with an end run. This is Plan B. Keep any Plan B in your back pocket.
- ❑ **Think about what you might do next if the chosen plan of action doesn't work.** If your original decision or plan of action is ineffective, think carefully about what to do next. Inform the individual that you now have to follow up with Plan B. Consider who should be contacted and what level of authority you should now involve in this situation.

General Tips about Ethical Decision-making

- When in doubt or faced with an ethical dilemma, think about the Do No Harm principle
- Never second-guess yourself on decisions made with integrity, intelligence, thoroughness, and based on accepted values, core principles, and expected standards of behaviour.
- Make sure you are clear about your coaching values and that you can talk about them in a way that is clear, simple, and easily understood by everyone.
- Cross-reference your coaching values and principles with the *NCCP Code of Ethics*.
- Pay attention to what is important to kids when establishing your ethical standards.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 — Sample Code of Conduct for Athletes

During training and sport events (if applicable), we want to observe the following:

- ❑ Athletes having fun and enjoying themselves.
- ❑ Practice sessions and activities promoting self-esteem in athletes.
- ❑ Athletes learning the appropriate technical abilities of the sport according to the long-term athlete development principles outlined in the *Canadian Sport for Life* document.
- ❑ Athletes making new friends by demonstrating positive attitudes and tolerance.
- ❑ Athletes having fair and equal opportunity to participate in practice activities and games/competitions, regardless of skill level. Consequently, parents of children who are more skilled should not expect that their child will receive more attention or playing time.

Our *code of conduct* can be summarized as follows:

- ❑ **Listen:** Listen carefully to those who are talking to you.
- ❑ **Respect:**
 - Others (coaches, teammates, officials, opponents, parents)
 - The equipment and facilities lent to you for your use
 - The environment
- ❑ **Work:** Give your best effort at all times, both individually and as a team.

Coach's Responsibilities

- ❑ Be the program leader and be aware of all that is happening in the program.
- ❑ Plan and lead fun, safe, and purposeful practice sessions.
- ❑ Involve parents in the program, and clearly communicate what is expected of them (parents entrust their children to the program leaders during practice sessions and competitions and should not intervene during these times).
- ❑ Create an environment that promotes all the values identified in this code.

Appendix 2 — Sample Code of Conduct for Parents

As adults, we increasingly want to define our rights and responsibilities. Take a few moments to reflect on our rights and responsibilities as parents of children involved in organized sport. Do we have a code of conduct that guides our behaviour and expectations?

Our Rights

The stakeholders of sport, i.e. athletes, coaches, officials, and activity hosts, must:

- Act with respect for themselves — demonstrate dignity, modesty, fairness, justice, maturity, leadership, and a positive attitude
- Act with respect for others in word, in attitude, and in action
- Act with respect for the environment (human and physical)
- Create a sport environment that is fun, safe, and conducive to learning
- Respect the facilities and material to which they have access
- Know the rules of the sport

Our Code of Conduct as Parents

Together, as a team of parents and athletes, we should identify acceptable behaviours (i.e. in the stands, on the sidelines) that demonstrate respect for others and behaviours that promote a positive learning environment. These behaviours should be based on the values that are implied in *Our Rights* (see above).

Here are some examples of behaviours that demonstrate respect

For ourselves

- 1. Accept a mistake made by a player or an official without yelling at him or her**
- 2.**
- 3.**

For others

- 1. Do not yell instructions to the players during the game**
- 2.**
- 3.**

For the environment

- 1. Establish a respectful atmosphere among the spectators**
- 2.**
- 3.**

Reflect on these guidelines and what your role as a parent might be in upholding this code.

Appendix 3 — Sport as a Discrimination-free Zone

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

One of your shared responsibilities with athletes and parents is to ensure that discriminatory behaviour of the type described in the charter and in the NCCP Code of Ethics is not tolerated in your sport environment.

Discrimination occurs when an individual or group is treated unfavourably or unequally because of *prejudice* or *stereotyping*.

Prejudice is the use of prejudgment or having a preconceived opinion about someone.

A **stereotype** is the broad, often inaccurate, belief about the characteristics of a cultural, ethnic, or racial group used to describe an individual thought to be a member of that group.

Harassment is comments or conduct that should reasonably be known to be unwelcome to another; it can include actions such as jokes that isolate a particular group or groups, verbal slurs and insults, and condescending or intimidating behaviours.

What can I do to create a discrimination-free zone with my team?

Many factors affect athletes' ability to treat one another fairly and with respect. For example, athletes may have been exposed to racist or sexist behaviour all around them at school, at home, and at play. The best thing you can do as a coach is to watch what you say and do, to intervene if someone on or around your team acts in a discriminatory way, and to encourage athletes and their parents to intervene themselves if they see or hear this type of behaviour.

Addressing how athletes want to be treated and how they are going to treat others is a great starting point for building a team code together. This will go a long way toward preventing discriminatory behaviour before it happens.

What can I do if I witness discriminatory behaviour?

Understand clearly that not responding is actually interpreted by others as a response; this passive response can indicate that you are OK with what was said or done. While putting you at little personal risk, a passive response does nothing to change or stop the behaviour from happening again.

An aggressive response usually seeks to shame the person who has shown the discriminatory behaviour. This type of response usually escalates the situation and does not model respect for others.

Choose a positive response to intervene effectively

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Passive response: doing nothing</p> <p>Not recommended</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is to ignore the behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes an attempt is made to rationalize the behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Assumes the other person will not stop/change the behaviour even if an intervention is made <input type="checkbox"/> Considers time on task or personal safety more important <p><i>Examples: Laugh along with a discriminatory joke, or say nothing when a discriminatory remark is made</i></p> |
| <p>Aggressive response: confronting</p> <p>Not recommended</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is to stop the behaviour in the short term <input type="checkbox"/> Comes across as judging the person, not the behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Usually results in the other person wanting to retaliate <input type="checkbox"/> Often based on a sense of superior authority, strength, or numbers <input type="checkbox"/> The safety of the person you are confronting is also at risk now <p><i>Examples: "I can't believe you said that. How ignorant can you be?" "Don't you know that what you are saying is wrong?"</i></p> |
| <p>Positive response seeking change</p> <p>Recommended</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is to stop the behaviour in the short term and to change the behaviour in the long term <input type="checkbox"/> Names the behaviour as unacceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Points out what is needed in the situation <input type="checkbox"/> Does not judge the other person <input type="checkbox"/> Is based on modeling respect <p><i>Example: "Please do not say that; it is hurtful. How about treating that person as you would like to be treated, and as we agreed to treat one another as team members?"</i></p> |

By choosing a positive response and intervening when you witness discriminatory behaviour, you are modeling respect for others and attempting to educate for change.

What is inclusion?

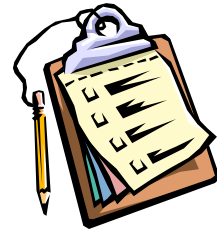
Inclusion is the welcoming and providing of full access to teams and programs for athletes with a disability in your community.

Inclusiveness means active involvement of athletes with a disability in all aspects of the team or sport program. It does not mean that the focus of the team or sport program should be on the athletes with a disability, but rather that they should play just as integral a role as any other member of the team or participant in the program.

A Checklist

Is our team environment a discrimination-free zone?

- Language that demeans a particular person or group is not used
- Posters and other materials that demean a particular group are not displayed or exchanged (e.g., posters, cards, magazines, cartoons, videos/DVDs, screensavers)
- Name-calling is not tolerated
- Jokes that poke fun at specific populations are not tolerated
- Every athlete receives the same amount of coaching attention
- Every athlete is given equitable playing time in community sport
- Every athlete has a say in developing the team code of conduct
- The team code of conduct outlines behaviours that will promote a discrimination-free zone, and this code is enforced by all
- Initiation ceremonies are not practised



How to be a better coach



Learn to listen, especially to the athletes –
they are excellent teachers.

Help each athlete develop all of their capacities:
physical, mental/emotional, and social.

Take a stand against doping and cheating in sport.

Thirst for knowledge
attend coaching courses, get certified, stay up to date.

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