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Community Coaching

Making Ethical Decisions

Reference Material
for CC Workshop

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11.3 Making Ethical Decisions: Self-Assessment

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This section on Making Ethical Decisions expands on the information on Values and Ethics in coaching outlined in both section 1 of the Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material and section 3 of the Community Coaching Reference Material, and will assist you in your role working with athletes at all stages of development.

11.1 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.

Step 1 — Establish the Facts in a Situation

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

Step 3 — Identify Your Options and Possible Consequences

Step 4 — Evaluate Your Options

Step 5 — Choose the Best Option

Step 6 — Implement Your Decision

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; and
- ❏ 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.

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11.2 Steps in the Ethical Decision-Making Process

11.2.1 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.

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Worksheet 1: Establishing the Facts in a Situation

Column 1: The Facts of the Situation	Column 2: Ethical Issues	Column 3: Options and Their Possible Consequences
The situation has legal implications: YES ( ) NO ( ) If yes, what do you do?	• Well-being, health or safety of people, short or long term • Safety at competition site • Emergency preparedness • Unnecessary level of risk • Appropriate use of authority in best interests of athletes • Self-esteem of athletes • Conflict of interest • Competency, level of training or scope of practice of coaches or persons in authority • Loyalty, keeping of commitments or keeping of one's word • Privacy or confidentiality • Harassment • Equity and equality • Respect and dignity • Observance of established principles, team rules or organizational policies and procedures • Observance of rules and regulations in sport • Fair play • Maintaining dignity and self control • Respect for officials and their decisions	Option 1: Do nothing Possible consequences Option 2: _____ Possible consequences Option 3: _____ Possible consequences Option 4: _____ Possible consequences Option 5: _____ Possible consequences

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Worksheet 1: Establishing the Facts in a Situation (working copy)

Column 1: The Facts of the Situation	**Column 2: Ethical Issues**	**Column 3: Options and Their Possible Consequences**
The situation has legal implications: YES ( ) NO ( ) If yes, what do you do?	• Well-being, health or safety of people, short or long term • Safety at competition site • Emergency preparedness • Unnecessary level of risk • Appropriate use of authority in best interests of athletes • Self-esteem of athletes • Conflict of interest • Competency, level of training or scope of practice of coaches or persons in authority • Loyalty, keeping of commitments or keeping of one's word • Privacy or confidentiality • Harassment • Equity and equality • Respect and dignity • Observance of established principles, team rules or organizational policies and procedures • Observance of rules and regulations in sport • Fair play • Maintaining dignity and self control • Respect for officials and their decisions	Option 1: <u>Do nothing</u> Possible consequences Option 2: _____ Possible consequences Option 3: _____ Possible consequences Option 4: _____ Possible consequences Option 5: _____ Possible consequences

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11.2.2 Step 2 – Determine Whether the Situation Involves Legal or Ethical Issues

Key questions to ask when identifying ethical issues in sport:

Is there a potential issue with…	Is this question relevant in this situation? (YES or NO)		Why is this question relevant?
Health and safety of athletes now or in future?	YES	NO	
Competition site safety?	YES	NO	
Emergency preparedness?	YES	NO	
Unnecessary risk to athletes?	YES	NO	
Authority being exercised or the best interests of the athletes being considered?	YES	NO	
Self-esteem of athletes?	YES	NO	
Conflict of interest?	YES	NO	
Competency, qualification, certification or scope of practice?	YES	NO	
Loyalty, keeping of commitments or keeping of one's word?	YES	NO	
Privacy or confidentiality?	YES	NO	
Harassment?	YES	NO	
Equity and equality of treatment of individuals?	YES	NO	
Level of respect and dignity shown to individuals?	YES	NO	
Breaking of an organization's rules or policies?	YES	NO	
Violation of the rules and regulations of sport?	YES	NO	
Fair play?	YES	NO	
Dignity and self-control in personal behaviour?	YES	NO	
Respect shown for officials and their decisions?	YES	NO	

Table 2.1

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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/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/she has important legal responsibilities. When a coach is confronted by a legal situation such as those described previously, he/she has a duty to do something about it.

This would involve:

- ❏ Reporting the situation to the police – situations where the coach is aware of or reasonably suspects criminal or quasi-criminal activity.
- ❏ Reporting the situation to child protection authorities – situations 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.

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Critical Path: Determining If a Situation Is Legal

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(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/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:

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

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.

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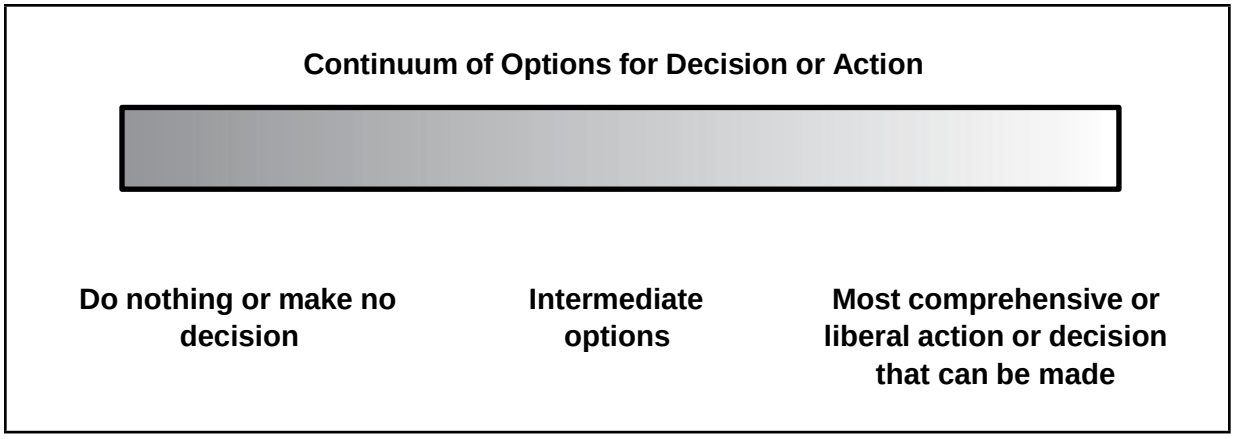
11.2.3 Step 3 – Identify Your Options and Possible Consequences

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.



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 favourable to the situation, question or issue at hand?

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Worksheet 2: Evaluating Your Options

Principles	A coach is expected to: (expected standards of behaviour)	Option Number				
		1	2	3	4	5
Physical safety and health of athletes	Ensure training or competition sites are safe at all times					
	Be prepared to act appropriately in case of emergency					
	Avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or beyond their level					
	Strive to maintain 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					
Number of behavioural standards consistent with Options 1 through 5 =						

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Worksheet 2: Evaluating Your Options (working copy)

Principles	A coach is expected to: (expected standards of behaviour)	Option Number				
		1	2	3	4	5
Physical safety and health of athletes	Ensure training or competition sites are safe at all times					
	Be prepared to act appropriately in case of emergency					
	Avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or beyond their level					
	Strive to maintain 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					
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	Maintain dignity in all circumstances and exercise self-control					
	Respect officials and accept their decisions without questioning their integrity					
Number of behavioural standards consistent with Options 1 through 5 =						

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a) Factors That May Influence Your Decision

Internal Influences		
Previous Experiences	**Personal Values**	**Personal Circumstances**
• Past experiences with a similar issue • Results, positive or negative, of previous decisions in a similar situation	• Family education • Academic training • Religion and beliefs • Age and maturity level • Factors linked to ethnicity or culture	• Employment • Level of action • Ambitions and plans • Reputation • Relations with others
External Influences		
Economic and Political Aspects	**Seriousness of Situation**	**Organizational, Institutional, and Social Aspects**
• Economic or financial impact of decision • Potential political or human rights impact of situation	• Urgency of decision • Individuals directly affected • Number of individuals directly affected	• Relations and links with: • Official bodies • Individuals • Communities • Relevant standards or social conventions
Other Factors (If any)		

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(b) Factors That May Influence Decision-Making in an Ethics Situation

The decisions we make may be affected by various influences that we may not fully recognize. 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; and
- ❏ 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.

i. Factors Arising from Internal Influences

Internal influences are intimately linked to the person making the ethical decision. Their sources may include the following:

- ❏ **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?)

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- ✓ 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?)

ii. 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?

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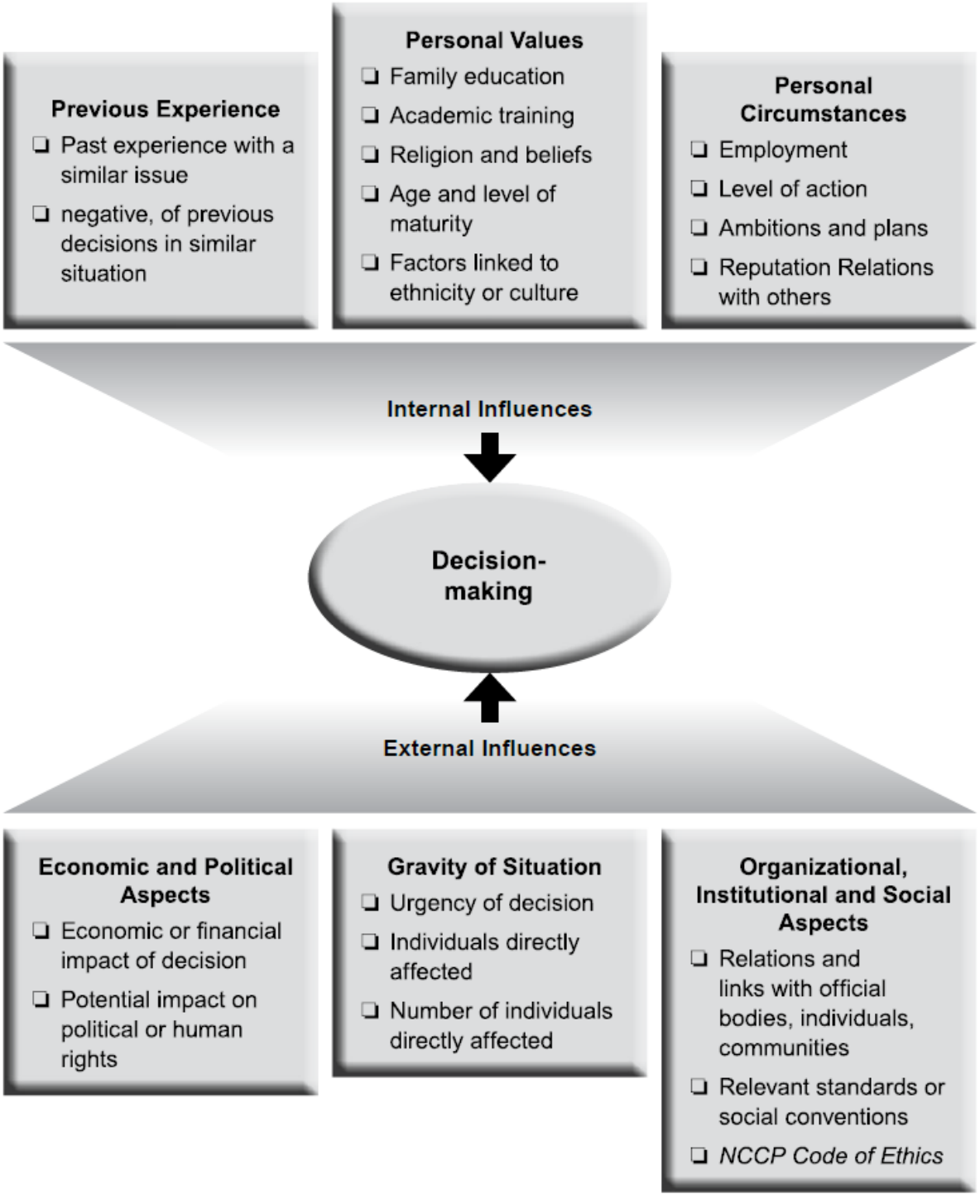
b) Factors That May Influence How You Perceive an Ethics Situation

(Chart adapted from Malloy, Ross & Zackus, 2000)



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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 five core ethical principles:

- ❏ Physical safety and health of athletes.
- ❏ Coaching responsibly.
- ❏ Integrity in relations with others.
- ❏ Respect of athletes.
- ❏ Honouring sport.

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

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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

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11.2.4 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).

> **Coaching Tip:** Coaches' decisions should reflect a fair balance between outcomes sought and the means used to achieve them.

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11.2.5 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 analysing 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"; and
- ❑ 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:

- ❑ **Ski Team Rules vs. Parental Rights and Authority**. A ski 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.
- ❑ **Ski Team Rules vs Winning the Club Aggregate at the Provincial Championships**. A club has a strict policy of no swearing during team activities, including ski practice. The pre-established penalty for such speech is a one-competition automatic suspension. The week before the provincial championships, the top athlete in the club has a temper tantrum during practice and mouths off at another athlete using foul language.
- ❑ **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. They plead with you to be allowed to continue with their training, including intensity training, up to a key competition. The parents support

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the athlete in his/her eagerness to follow through on the training plan and compete in the competition.

Prioritizing 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/she makes and the actions he/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.

> **Coaching Tip:** 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.

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11.2.6 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 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/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/her what you have seen or what has been shared with you. Give him/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.

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❑ 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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11.3 Making Ethical Decisions: Self-Assessment

This self-assessment will allow you to reflect on your current coaching practices. The items that are listed in the self-assessment are the evidences that an Evaluator will be looking for during assignments and observations. They will help determine if you have the required abilities/ competencies. The self-assessment form will help you identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

To rate your ability to use a process for making ethical decisions based on the NCCP Code of Ethics, circle the number at right that best represents whether you achieve the corresponding statement at left (Never, Sometimes, Often, Always).

I make ethical decisions when I coach by…	Never	Some-times	Often	Always
Ensuring that I gather the facts before responding to situations involving ethical issues	1	2	3	4
Knowing the difference between situations involving legal issues and those involving ethics	1	2	3	4
Ensuring that I report situations involving legal issues to the appropriate authorities	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether situations that have ethical implications involve the safety or health of individuals in both the short or long term	1	2	3	4
Respecting the established principles, rules (team rules, rules of the game, etc.) and policies of my sport organization	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether situations that have ethical implications involve obligations, loyalties, or responsibilities to the individuals concerned	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether individuals in a position of authority have used their power inappropriately	1	2	3	4
Ensuring that everyone involved is treated fairly and equally	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether the goals sought by the group or individuals could influence how I respond to situations that have ethical implications	1	2	3	4
Respecting standards of behaviour and practices that are generally considered acceptable in my sport	1	2	3	4

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I make ethical decisions when I coach by…	Never	Some-times	Often	Always
Showing respect for everyone involved	1	2	3	4
Keeping information confidential and respecting the privacy of those involved	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether my personal values may influence how I respond to situations that have ethical implications	1	2	3	4
Identifying at least two solutions before responding to situations that have ethical implications	1	2	3	4
Identifying the consequences of the solutions I have considered	1	2	3	4
Choosing the solution that best reflects the principles of the *NCCP Code of Ethics*	1	2	3	4
Validating that the solution I have chosen reflects the "Do No Harm" principle	1	2	3	4
Developing a plan for implementing the solutions I have chosen	1	2	3	4
Implementing strategies that deal with the consequences of the solutions I have chosen	1	2	3	4
Reflecting on whether my solutions have the desired effect on the individuals involved	1	2	3	4
Critically reflecting on whether my solutions will provide future benefits to the individuals and programs involved	1	2	3	4

DATE: _____

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