



NCCP Make Ethical Decisions

.....

Home Study Coach Workbook



Coaching Association of Canada
Association canadienne des entraîneurs



National
Coaching
Certification
Program

PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

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.



Coaching Association of Canada
Association canadienne des entraîneurs



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Name:

NCCP #:

Email:

What is your experience as a coach?

Describe your experience as a coach including types of athletes and athletes, sports, and your experience as an athlete. Include information on the athletes (who they are, how many, age/stage of development), how many years of coaching, and any other relevant information you require.

Marker's comments only

Marker's Name:

Marker's Email:

Welcome to NCCP Home Study

This Home Study Coach Workbook (referred to as Coach Workbook throughout) is organized to support your independent completion of the NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module.

- Read all of the content in this workbook. If there is content that will further your learning but is not required to complete a learning activity, it is indicated as such.
- Under each section heading, we have indicated the activities you are required to complete. (See 1 in image below).
- Where there are text fields, respond to the questions indicated. You may write as much as you would like to express your learning. (See 2 in image below).
- There are Marker's Comments boxes after each activity. Please don't write in these, they are for the marker's comments only. (See 3 in image below).
- The shaded boxes include additional information that, if you were in the classroom, the Learning Facilitator would share with you. These boxes include information about basic mental skills, learning tips, and guiding questions. (See 4 in image below).
- There will be activities in this module that require you engage your participants, or other people, to practice some of the techniques taught in this module.



2 Ethical, legal and value-based decisions

Ethical decisions are those that live in the gray area between subjective personal morals (black) and a society's objective, shared laws (white). The important distinction here is between ethical and legal decisions. Review the concepts in this section. There are 3 specific activities found in this section:

- 2.1.1 Brainstorm and guided reflection
- 2.2.2 Identifying an ethical dilemma
- 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 Legal vs ethical application questions

1

2.2.2 Identifying an ethical dilemma

For this activity, review the full NCCP Code of Ethics as found in [Appendix A](#). For each of the three principles, describe an ethical dilemma that you have faced in the past in coaching. If you cannot think of an example from coaching, provide an example from day-to-day life. What is it that makes it an ethical dilemma?

1. Leadership and professionalism

2

2. Health and safety

3. Respect and integrity

Marker's comments only

3

From the Learning Facilitator

It isn't crucial to determine which principle or ethical standard of behaviour of the Code of Ethics is violated, but it's important to recognize that there is an ethical dilemma and to follow the decision-making process accordingly. The golden rule of the NCCP Code of Ethics is to Do No Harm. It's your duty as a coach, above all, to ensure that the decisions you make and the actions they take don't result in harm, physical or other, to athletes.

4

1 The National Coaching Certification Program

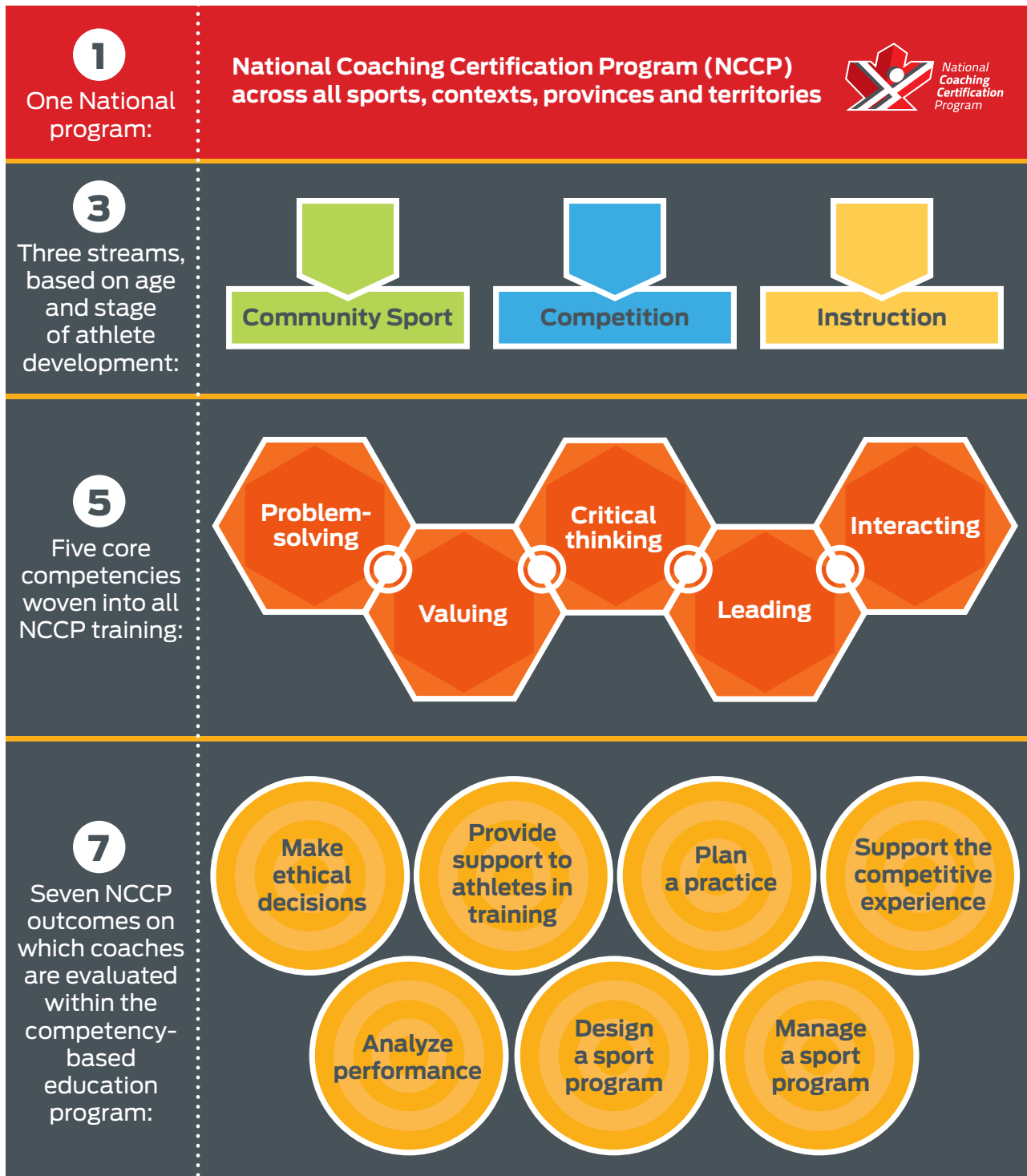
This section includes key information to understand the context of this module and how it will support you as a coach. Read all of the information found in this section.

Welcome to the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Make Ethical Decisions. This module's goal is to support coaches in making ethical decisions in their day-to-day practice as a coach.

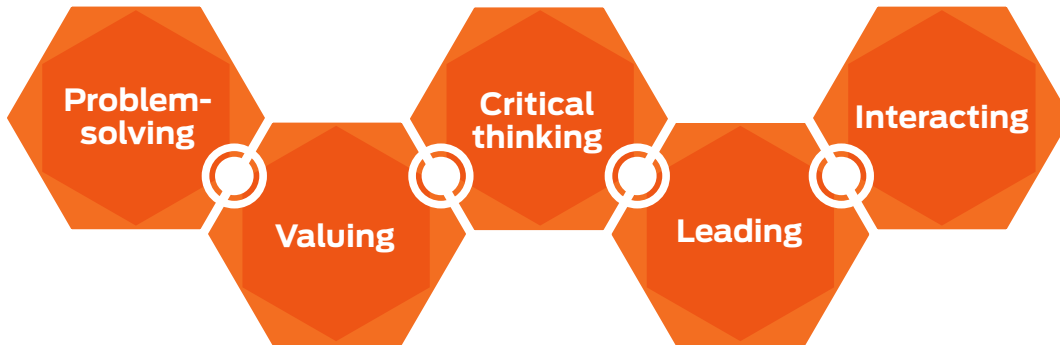
This module is part of the NCCP, a national training and certification program offered in over 65 sports in Canada. More than a million coaches and sport leaders have taken part in training, education and certification activities offered by the NCCP, since its inception in 1974. The NCCP is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Participants will receive NCCP credit. They can track their progress in The Locker, the NCCP database that supports the efforts of all coaches involved in coach education in Canada.

1.1 The NCCP 1–3–5–7 definition



1.2 NCCP core competencies



As you progress through this module, you'll work on developing 5 core competencies. Those competencies will help you become more effective and have a more meaningful impact on athletes' experiences. The competencies are problem-solving, valuing, critical thinking, leading and interacting.

At several points in the module, you'll participate in activities that involve reflecting on and assessing your learning on these 5 competencies. These are important activities, because you indicate in them how you'll apply and model the 5 core competencies in your athletes' training.

Here are just some of the ways these competencies come into play in Make Ethical Decisions:

Problem-solving

- Apply a formal, 6-step, decision-making process.
- Find a solution to a complex situation that involves a moral dilemma.

Valuing

- Differentiate between situations with legal and ethical implications.
- Understand the rationale for the NCCP Code of Ethics and the principles on which it's based.
- Refer to the NCCP Code of Ethics when making a decision.
- Appreciate the hierarchy of values in a moral dilemma.

Critical thinking

- Evaluate options for decision or action, factoring in the decision-making process followed and the possible consequences of the decision or action.
- Use the information provided in this workbook to compare current knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Appreciate how the NCCP Code of Ethics might influence future decisions.

Leading

- Make decisions that influence others.

- Assume responsibility for the decision-making process and for the resulting actions that come with being a leader.
- Implement an action plan to carry out a decision.

Interacting

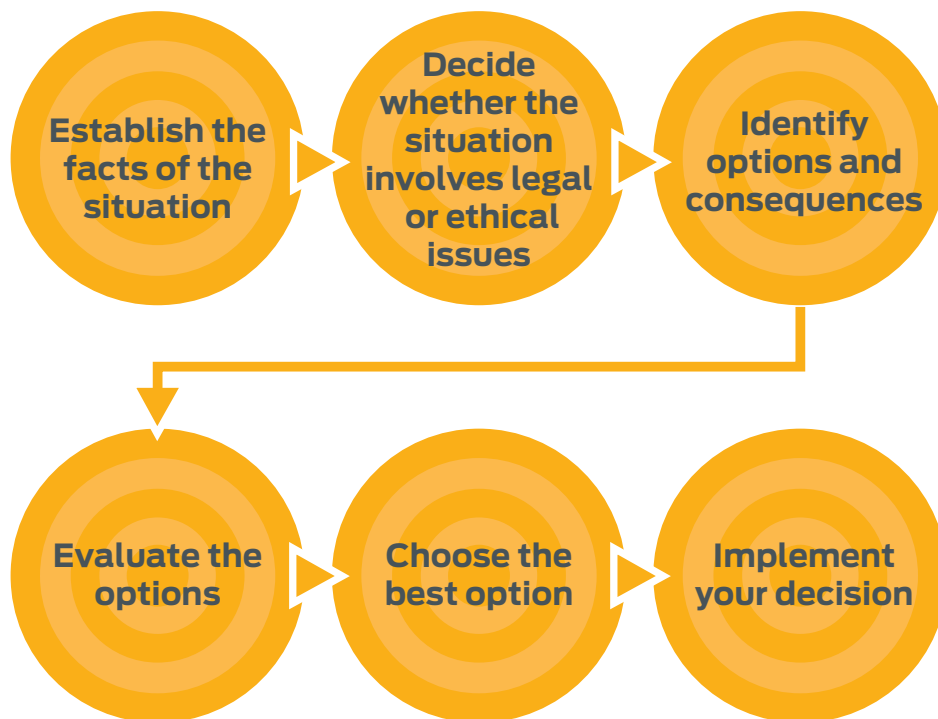
- Exchange ideas and interact with other coaches.
- Explain to other coaches the rationale for a decision.

1.3 Learning outcomes

The NCCP distinguishes between training and certification. The NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module is a cornerstone of the NCCP. To become certified in this and other coaching contexts, you must be evaluated, and you must provide evidence in the evaluation that you meet certain criteria.

The learning outcomes listed below reflect the evidence and criteria that apply to this module.

The learning activities in this module will prepare you to:



1.4 Purpose of the document

This Coach Workbook is your record of what you learned in the NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module. We recommend that you save your workbook and consult it regularly to ensure continuous improvement of your coaching skills. This workbook is supported by reference material developed to deepen your knowledge of key coaching topics.

1.5 Overall context

This module is one of many offered in the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). For more information on the NCCP and the modules it offers, visit the Coaching Association of Canada's website at www.coach.ca.

NCCP multi-sport training is delivered via on-demand eLearning through the Locker and via in-class and online formats through your Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representative (PTCR). Continue your multi-sport coach development by registering for 1 of the following:

- NCCP Coaching Athletes with a Disability ([eLearning](#))
- NCCP Creating a Positive Sport Environment ([eLearning](#))
- NCCP Leading Drug-free Sport ([eLearning](#))
- NCCP Managing Conflict ([PTCR](#))
- NCCP Making Head Way ([eLearning](#))

1.6 Module topics

There are 5 topics in this Coach Workbook:

- Ethical, legal and value-based decisions
- Our case study
- Ethical decision-making
- Make a decision
- Application

2 Ethical, legal and value-based decisions

Ethical decisions are those that live in the gray area between subjective personal morals (black) and a society's objective, shared laws (white). The important distinction here is between ethical and legal decisions. Review the concepts in this section. There are 3 specific activities found in the following sub-sections:

- 2.1.1 Brainstorm and guided reflection
- 2.2.2 Identifying an ethical dilemma
- 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 Legal vs ethical application questions

2.1 Defining ethics

2.1.1 Key ideas



Morals: A set of deeply held, personal values that are based on beliefs that guide our thoughts and actions. We refer to our values in evaluating our choices and those of other individuals. For example, all athletes should finish the race, even if that means risking your own success to help another person.

Ethics: A series of principles (written or unwritten) describing right and wrong. The principles are agreed upon either explicitly or implicitly, by members participating in a group (example: codes of conduct or a religion). For example, if there is danger up ahead (such as a fallen tree on the route), you'll warn the other athletes to prevent them from harm.

Laws: A series of written principles that must be legally followed. Breaking these laws have real consequences that may affect an individual's entire life. For example, athletes may not take illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

Based on the three concepts above, provide an example of each morals, ethics, and laws, based on your own coaching, or other, experiences.

Example of Morals	Example of Ethics	Example of Laws

Where do the rules of sports fall in this continuum?

Why do you say this?

In your sport, is it possible for breaking a rule to become breaking a law? Describe a situation where this might occur (e.g., high sticking in hockey that extends to a two-hand swing of the stick to the body or head, becoming assault).

Marker's comments only

2.2 Ethical dilemmas

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 1 value for another. When there are 2 potential “right” solutions, such situations are called **ethical dilemmas — a conflict between values we wish to maintain.**

Here are some examples of ethical dilemmas:

- Team rules versus parental rights and authority. A team has a standing policy of curfew being set at 10 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 lets his son stay up past this hour.
- Team rules versus 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 versus athlete’s will or rights to play. An athlete has been experiencing chronic knee pain because of a growth spurt. The athlete is begging you to be allowed to play in a key competition, and the parents support this athlete’s eagerness to play.

2.2.1 NCCP Code of Ethics



See [Appendix A](#) for the complete NCCP Code of Ethics.

2.2.2 Identifying an ethical dilemma

For this activity, review the full NCCP Code of Ethics as found in [Appendix A](#). For each of the three principles, describe an ethical dilemma that you have faced in the past in coaching. If you cannot think of an example from coaching, provide an example from day-to-day life. What is it that makes it an ethical dilemma?

1. Leadership and professionalism

2. Health and safety

3. Respect and integrity

Marker's comments only

From the Learning Facilitator

It isn't crucial to determine which principle or ethical standard of behaviour of the Code of Ethics is violated, but it's important to recognize that there is an ethical dilemma and to follow the decision-making process accordingly. The golden rule of the NCCP Code of Ethics is to Do No Harm. It's your duty as a coach, above all, to ensure that the decisions you make and the actions they take don't result in harm, physical or other, to athletes.

Check out [Appendix B: Other perspectives and tools](#) to explore the Coaching Association of Canada's Responsible Coaching Movement, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection's Commit to Kids, and Respect in Sport.

As an example of a tool from the Responsible Coaching Movement, there is the Rule of Two. The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. The purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.

2.3 Factors affecting the decision-making process

The decisions we make may be affected by various influences. We aren't always fully aware of those influences. They fall under 2 categories: internal and external.

Internal influences: Those that are intrinsically linked to the person making the decision.

External influences: The organizational, societal or environmental influences that impact the person making the decision.



2.4 Legal implications

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. As soon as you believe that a decision has legal implications, you should act accordingly. It is not your responsibility to investigate. Two useful questions to ask yourself at this stage are:

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

What is the issue? Is it legal or ethical?

There is no right or wrong answer, because legal and ethical issues aren't necessarily mutually exclusive. A significant number of a coach's legal responsibilities are based on societal ethics, namely doing what is right from a moral point of view. As an example, while preventing the sexual abuse of an athlete is a coach's legal duty, a coach is also expected, from an ethical perspective, to provide a safe environment to the athletes he or she coaches.

Genuine legal-ethical conflicts (where a law imposes requirements that a code of ethics doesn't) are uncommon in most contexts.

Situations that have legal implications

- **Actions that are criminal or quasi-criminal¹** (example: theft, sexual assault, possession of narcotics).
- Actions or information indicating there are **reasonable grounds to believe that a child may need protection**.
- **Actions that are discriminatory** (any action that is 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 aren't intentional, **that could constitute negligence**, as it's legally defined.

¹ Quasi-criminal: A non-criminal offence that carries a penalty similar to that of a criminal offence. Compared to criminal offences, non-criminal offences are subject to less complex court procedures. These offences aren't classified as criminal, because they're not based on breaking the Criminal Code or the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, but consist of breaches of Regulatory or Administrative Law.

Actions to take in situations that have legal implications

The NCCP Code of Ethics outlines 3 principles, with supporting standards of behaviour, to help guide ethical practice and decision-making in coaching- and program-related situations. Your legal responsibilities as a coach may be specific to a particular situation or time, or the jurisdiction where you are coaching. The NCCP Code of Ethics, including its principles and ethical standards of behaviour, guides coaches as part of their responsibilities to assume a duty to report.

Everyone has a duty to report known or suspected child abuse and neglect under Canadian child welfare laws. Persons who perform duties with respect to children and youth, including coaches, have an added responsibility to report. Known or suspected child abuse and neglect should be reported to the local children's aid society, who may involve the police and other community agencies. If you believe the child is in immediate danger, you should call the police.

In relation to adults, a crime or suspected crime should be reported directly to the police, as well as to the corresponding sport organization authorities (examples: local, provincial, or national sport organization) or sport-identified independent third party organization, where appropriate.

When a coach is confronted by a legal situation such as those described previously, the coach should respond according to the flowchart in sub-section 2.4.2.

2.4.1 Legal vs ethical application questions

Read the scenarios below and indicate if it is a legal or ethical situation. If you are unsure, indicate so under the heading "Unsure".

	Legal	Ethical	Unsure
A coach tells a group of boys that they throw like "a bunch of girls."			
You overhear your athletes on the bench making fun of another teammate's accent.			
As punishment for losing a game, a coach has her athletes perform laps until they're at the point of exhaustion.			
When you ask about bruises on an athlete's body, she says her older cousin regularly beats her up.			
The competitive team coach holds weekly weigh-ins for the athletes and emails everyone's results to the entire team.			
A 20-year-old assistant coach starts dating a 16-year-old athlete in your club.			
A coach shares another coach's personal medical information with several athletes on the team.			

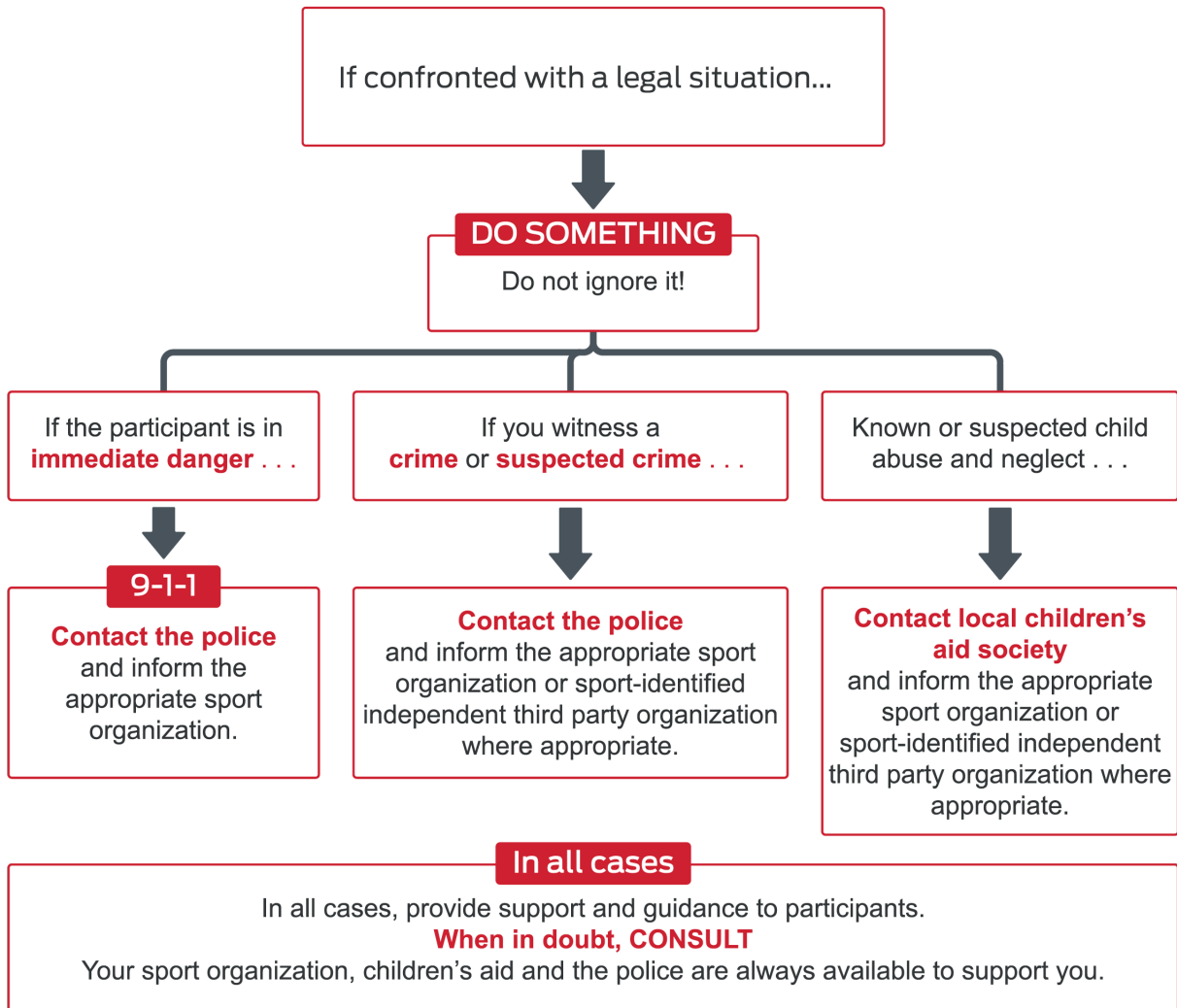
	Legal	Ethical	Unsure
A coach insists that an athlete compete, even though the athlete is recovering from injury and is reluctant to compete.			
A coach always arrives late, with coffee in hand, and spends most of the practice playing on his phone.			
One of the other coaches has obvious “favourites,” and gives them extra time and attention.			

Marker’s comments only

Note that each province may have specific legal requirements that must be followed. Familiarize yourself with any legalities in relation to coaching in your sport according to your province.

2.4.2 Steps in a legal situation

Most decisions discussed in this Coach Workbook will be ethical decisions. However, the relevant, applied focus is understanding when an ethical decision has legal implications. If you're unsure if there are legal implications, then you should treat it as though there are legal implications.



Return to the activity determining between legal or ethical decisions. For any in which you indicated “Unsure”, use the flowchart above to re-examine the dilemma and select either **legal** or **ethical** below. It is important that you do not change your responses in the table above as this will help the Marker to see your application of the flowchart and process for determining if the dilemma is legal or ethical. **You are only required to provide explanation for those dilemmas for which you indicated “unsure” in the previous table. If you did not indicate “unsure” for any dilemmas above, explain your decision for at least 2 of the scenarios below using the flowchart to support your decision.**

	Legal	Ethical	Explanation
A coach tells a group of boys that they throw like “a bunch of girls.”			
You overhear your athletes on the bench making fun of another teammate’s accent.			
As punishment for losing a game, a coach has her athletes perform laps until they’re at the point of exhaustion.			
When you ask about bruises on an athlete’s body, she says her older cousin regularly beats her up.			
The competitive team coach holds weekly weigh-ins for the athletes and emails everyone’s results to the entire team.			
A 20-year-old assistant coach starts dating a 16-year-old athlete in your club.			
A coach shares another coach’s personal medical information with several athletes on the team.			
A coach insists that an athlete compete, even though the athlete is recovering from injury and is reluctant to compete.			
A coach always arrives late, with coffee in hand, and spends most of the practice playing on his phone.			
One of the other coaches has obvious “favourites,” and gives them extra time and attention.			

Reflect on the activity and complete the following questions.

Which part of the flowchart helped you most to make the determination of legal or ethical?

Of the results of the steps in a legal situation (the bottom row of three boxes of the flowchart), which will be the most difficult to implement (should the situation arise)? Why?

Marker's comments only

2.5 Further exploration of ethics and values

The information found in **2.5: Further exploration of ethics and values** and **2.6: Liability of the coach** is intended for extended information. It is not required to complete the module, but will provide additional context and information for ethical decision making.

Ethical decision-making

As discussed previously, certain ethical situations may generate strong feelings or doubts because there seems to be more than 1 reasonable solution. Sometimes, making a decision even involves sacrificing 1 value for another. When there are 2 potential “right” solutions, such situations are referred to as **ethical dilemmas — a conflict between values we wish to maintain.**

Prioritizing principles and values

When someone is faced with an ethical dilemma and is forced to choose between 2 values, that person’s most deeply held beliefs normally dictate the course of action.

If you’re 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 do you consider the most important?
- Is there another value in which you strongly believe and that you’d seek to maintain at all costs? If so, which is it?

Do-no-harm principle

Even though it’s a sensitive issue to suggest ranking your values, the NCCP considers that it’s a coach’s duty above all to ensure that their decisions and their actions don’t harm athletes, physically or otherwise. **The challenge in ethical decision-making is to determine which value you’ll maintain in your course of action.**

Validating your decision

Setting aside the priority given to athletes’ physical safety and health, this 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 can’t apply your decision to all similar cases, what might be a reasonable and justifiable exception? And, in which circumstances? What makes you think that an exception might be justified in this case, but not in other situations?
- Is the decision consistent with decisions you’ve 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.

2.6 Liability of the coach

Negligence: actions or behaviour that fall below a reasonable standard of care.

Liability: responsibility for the consequences of negligent actions or behaviour.

More than ever before, coaches must be aware of the risks and responsibilities, particularly legal ones, which they assume when they coach. No matter their certification, experience, employment or volunteer status, sport discipline, or location of residence, all coaches are legally obligated to provide a safe environment for athletes, at all times.

To understand this obligation more fully, coaches must understand some key legal principles, including negligence and liability, as well as concepts and techniques related to risk management. With this knowledge, coaches can determine the applicable standard of care, assess their own coaching situation for risks, and establish appropriate measures to manage these risks.

Negligence

Negligence is a term with precise legal meaning. The term relates to standards of behaviour that the law expects. Understanding the law of negligence is an essential first step in learning how to provide a safe environment for athletes.

In general terms, negligence refers to a behaviour or action that falls below a “reasonable standard of care.” The law in Canada demands that we behave in a particular way so that others who might be affected by our actions aren’t exposed to an unreasonable risk of harm. Coaches are expected to meet an “objective” standard of behaviour. As adults and as coaches, we are all credited with the same general intelligence and sensibility, and as such the law expects each of us to behave in a reasonable fashion in similar situations.

The law doesn’t expect coaches to be perfect in their behaviour. Rather, the law expects coaches to be reasonable and to act as other reasonable coaches would in the same circumstances. Therefore, negligence is the failure to exercise the care that an ordinary, reasonably prudent coach would exercise in the circumstances.

It’s widely accepted that many sport activities involve a certain amount of risk. And, that such risk is knowable, foreseeable, acceptable and may even be desirable, depending on the sport. What is unacceptable in sport is behaviour that puts athletes at unreasonable risk or in danger.

A coach’s conduct is negligent when all 4 of the following occur:

- A duty of care exists (such as what exists between a coach and an athlete, where the coach is placed in a position of power and trust).
- That duty imposes a standard of care, which may be found under the common law or may be imposed under legislation, that the coach doesn’t meet.
- An athlete or some other person experiences harm.
- The failure to meet the standard of care can be shown to have caused or substantially contributed to the harm.

- A coach must go beyond duty of care when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an athlete is, or may be, an abuse victim and in need of protection. In such cases, a coach has the additional duty to report and the duty to act. This requires that the coach take immediate steps, which include reporting the situation to the proper authorities.

For the coach, the standard of care is the most important of the above elements. The standard of care is what the coach should do in each situation. It's difficult to precisely define standard of care, because the inherent risk of the surrounding circumstances influence the standard of care. Thus, the duty to act responsibly remains constant, but the specific behaviour required to fulfil that duty changes with the circumstances.

Determining what the standard of care is in any given circumstance involves looking to 4 sources:

- **Written standards** – These are government regulations, equipment standards, rules for a sport or facility, rules from a sport governing body, coaching standards and codes of conduct, and other internal risk-management policies and procedures.
- **Unwritten standards** – These are norms or conventions that might not be written down. They're nonetheless known, accepted, and followed in a sport, an organization or a facility.
- **Case law** – These are court decisions about similar situations. Where the circumstances are the same or similar, judges must apply legal principles in the same or similar ways. Earlier decisions of the court are a guide, or precedent, for future decisions where the facts are similar.
- **Common sense** – This means simply doing what feels right or avoiding doing what feels wrong. Common sense is the sum of a person's knowledge and experience. Trusting one's common sense is a good practice.

The responsible and prudent coach is familiar with written policies that govern coaches, is aware of unwritten norms and practices, knows something of the case law as it applies to coaches, and has learned to trust intuitive judgment and common sense.

Liability

A coach's negligence may be established when all 4 conditions are met of negligence's legal definition. What follows next is the question of liability. While negligence refers to conduct, liability refers to responsibility for the consequences of negligent conduct. Responsibility may lie with the coach who was negligent or with another person or entity.

For example, an insurance policy transfers the financial liability for negligence to an insurance company. A valid waiver of liability agreement might eliminate liability entirely. An injured athlete may be partially responsible for personal injuries and may share liability with the negligent coach. And a sport organization may be liable for the negligent actions of its coach who is either an employee or a volunteer. Vicarious liability is a doctrine that imposes liability on an employer for employee wrongdoings.

However, vicarious liability doesn't serve to entirely eliminate the coach's own personal liability, particularly when the wrongdoing isn't connected to the coach's duties or scope of employment. Accordingly, the organization and the coach may share liability for the coach's negligent actions. It's expected that the coach will at all times be proactive in helping manage liability.

Negligence isn't the only action or behaviour that might trigger liability. Liability can also refer to responsibility for the consequences of conduct, which fail to meet a predetermined legal standard, other than the standard of care in a situation where negligence occurs. Liability can arise when a law is broken or a contract is breached. The prudent coach avoids these types of liability by obeying laws and complying with contractual agreements.

An understanding of the legal meaning of negligence answers the coach's question: How does the law expect me to behave? The follow-up question is: How can I be sure that my behaviour will meet this expectation? The answer to this question lies in risk management.

3 Our case study

This section is the beginning of applying the ethical decision-making process to a case study. In this section, you will use the following case study to apply in **Section 5: Make a decision**.

To play or not to play

A young athlete mentions a possible knee injury to the coach.

Jaime is head coach of her sport organization. Recently, she has noticed that 1 of the athletes, 13-year-old Taylor, has been favouring his left knee during practice. Jaime asks Taylor if the knee has been causing problems. Taylor admits that it hurts a bit, but he'll be ready for the championships that are scheduled in a few days. Taylor is a talented athlete and is on the provincial coach's list of potential new recruits.

Jaime's concern led her to bring up the situation with Taylor's parents. They say that they are aware of the situation and have called their family doctor. The physician was away, but during a telephone conversation, the doctor told them not to worry as "this is normal for growing children" and "there shouldn't be any risk." However, Jaime spoke to a friend who is a sport physician who strongly suggested that Jaime proceed with caution and that the athlete consult a specialist as soon as possible.

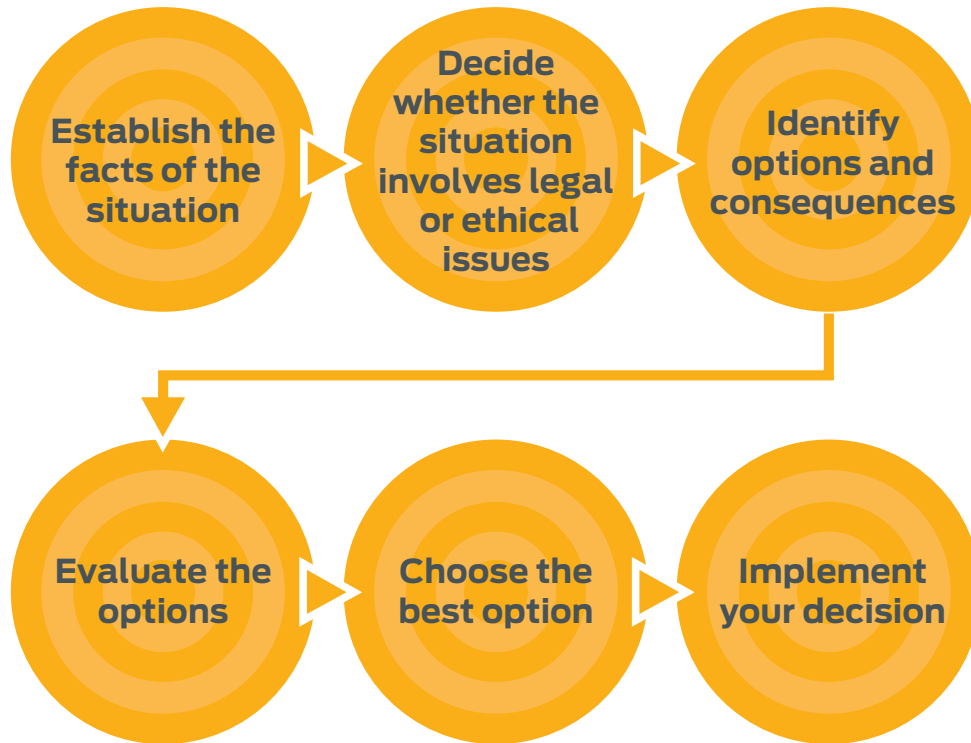
Club policy dictates that it's the coach who ultimately decides whether an athlete will take part in a competition. Another policy dictates that an injured athlete can't compete until the coach has written confirmation, from a medical doctor, declaring that the athlete is fit to return. Taylor's parents are both members of the organization's board of directors and know these policies.

One hour before the competition begins, the parents approach Jaime. They repeat what their family doctor has said, and guarantee that first thing tomorrow morning, Jaime will have the required letter confirming that Taylor is fit to compete. The parents insist that Taylor must compete, because the provincial team coach has made a 2-hour trip to see him and this opportunity may not come around again. They also tell Jaime that she needs to respect Taylor's desire to compete. The parents walk away with Taylor towards the registration table.

4 The ethical decision-making process

This section provides an overview of the ethical decision-making process. You will explore this in more detail in **Section 5: Make a decision**.

4.1 The process



The 6 steps in the process are:

1. Establish the facts in a situation.
 - Determine what has happened (or is happening) and who is involved. Be sure to investigate all sides of the story.
2. Decide whether the situation involves legal or ethical issues.
 - Illegal conduct is always unethical; yet some actions or behaviours may be unethical even though they are legal. Your course of action will depend on the situation and any legal implications.
3. Identify your options.
 - Think of several decisions to make and actions to take. Create a continuum of conservative options to liberal ones. In addition, come up with possible positive and negative consequences for each option.

4. Evaluate your options.

- Use the NCCP Code of Ethics to assess each option. Which one best meets the Code's core principles? Keep in mind that the means must be just to be used to achieve the desired outcome.

5. Choose the best option.

- When making a decision, sometimes you may have to prioritize one value over another. Whatever your course of action, be sure to follow the do-no-harm principle, which states—it's a coach's duty above all to ensure that the decision made or action taken doesn't harm athletes, physically or otherwise.

6. Implement your decision.

- This step involves a great deal of critical thinking. Consider the following questions:
 - What are the concrete steps you're going to take and who needs to be informed?
 - Can you handle the situation on your own or should you engage support?
 - How will you address the individuals involved in the unethical conduct?
 - What happens if your chosen plan doesn't work?

Note: The process applies to situations that don't require an emergency response by the coach. In crucial and urgent situations (example: an injury) your duty is to manage the situation and protect the individuals concerned.

General tips about ethical decision-making

- 1** When in doubt or faced with an ethical dilemma, think about the do-no-harm principle.
- 2** Never second-guess yourself on decisions made with integrity, intelligence, thoroughness, reflection, and based on accepted values, core principles and expected standards of behaviour.
- 3** Make sure you're clear about your coaching values and that you can talk about them in a way that is clear, simple and easily understood by everyone.
- 4** Cross-reference your coaching values and principles with the NCCP Code of Ethics.
- 5** Pay attention to what is important to kids as you establish your ethical standards.

5 Make a decision

In this section you will apply the ethical decision-making process. You may find that you are revisiting steps throughout the process in order to be thorough with your decision. While this section examines a question in a systematic way, the intent is to practise so that you become more confident and efficient when making an ethical decision.

It's important to act as objectively and rationally as possible. As a person in a position of leadership and authority, you can't refer only to your own personal values or other influences. Rather, you must act within a framework consistent with community values and expectations. In normal circumstances involving ethical situations, coaches should always gather more information to develop a picture that's as complete as possible. However, for the purpose of this exercise, you can only work with the information at hand.

5.1 Establish facts and assess issues and implications

5.1.1 The facts

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 involved parties have to say about the situation? (example: What are all sides of the story?)

Brainstorm and record the facts from the case study, "To play or not to play," below. Remember, it is important to document the facts as they will become the basis on which you ultimately make your decision.

Marker's comments only

5.1.2 The issue

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. At this stage, ask yourself the following 2 questions:

Has anyone been harmed by another individual's action or decision, and if so, in what way?

Does the action or the situation contravene an existing law?

Marker's comments only

For more information, refer to [2.4.2 Steps in a legal situation](#).

Does the situation have ethical implications?

The NCCP Code of Ethics in [Appendix A](#) is a guide you can use at various stages of the ethical decision-making process. The Code specifies the standards of behaviour that coaches are expected to demonstrate in certain areas (example: coaching responsibility or interacting with integrity).

Answer the questions, in the following table, as they relate to the case study. These questions are based on the NCCP Code of Ethics, and they'll help you identify possible ethical issues.

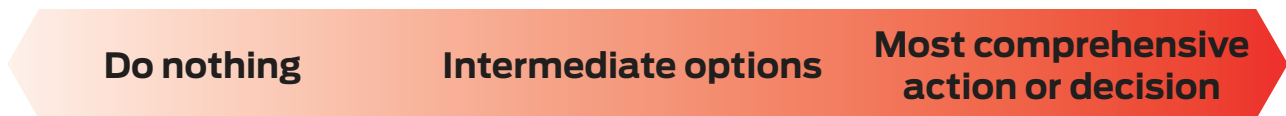
Key questions to ask when identifying ethical issues in sport

Principles of the NCCP Code of Ethics	Is there a potential issue with...	Is this question relevant in this situation? (Yes or no?)	Why is this question relevant?
Leadership and Professionalism	Abuse of authority?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Ensuring every participant's well-being is a priority?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Confidentiality or privacy?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and Safety	Vulnerability of participants?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Health and safety of participants?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Supervision of participants (including the Rule of Two)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Respect and Integrity	Equitable opportunities for all participants, including fair play?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Inclusivity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Demonstrating honesty or respect for participants, coaches, and officials?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

What is the issue? Is it legal or ethical?

Marker's comments only**5.1.3 The options**

When considering what course of action to take, start by asking yourself: **What could I do in this situation?** Think of a variety of options. Keep in mind that even if you opt to not take action, then that in itself is a decision you've made. Think of your options as a continuum with doing nothing as the least demanding option. Next, consider the other extreme of the continuum: **What is the most comprehensive or liberal action you might take?** Then, identify several intermediate options. Don't rule out anything at this stage, even if it seems an unlikely choice.

Continuum of options for decision or action

As you consider the consequences (positive or negative) for each option, ask yourself:
What might happen if?

- What might happen if I choose not to make any decision or not take action?
- What might happen if my position was favourable to the situation, question or issue at hand?
- What might happen if my position was unfavourable to the situation, question or issue at hand?

Determine a minimum of 5 possible decisions or actions to take, and identify positive and negative consequences for each option.

Options	Possible consequences
Option 1: Do nothing	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 2:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 3:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 4:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 5:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE

Marker's comments only

5.1.4 Evaluate the options

Making an ethical decision requires a final reflection on which decision is best, given the circumstances. **Coaches' decisions should reflect a fair balance between outcomes sought and the means used to achieve them.** Such a decision is:

- The “right thing to do” regarding the duties and responsibilities of the person making the decision
- Made “the right way”
- Consistent with the core principles and behaviours outlined in the NCCP Code of Ethics

In the table, record your 3 strongest options and evaluate each option against the standards of behaviours from the NCCP Code of Ethics:

Yes = my option meets this standard of behaviour

No = my option doesn't uphold this standard of behaviour

n/a = this standard doesn't apply to the situation

Table to evaluate options

Principles of the NCCP Code of Ethics	My option 1	My option 2	My option 3
Leadership and Professionalism			
Health and Safety			
Respect and Integrity			
Total number of Yes responses			

Select the 3 strongest options and evaluate them against the NCCP Code of Ethics. See [Appendix A](#).

From the Learning Facilitator

Sometimes, a coach may have trouble deciding when there seems to be more than 1 reasonable solution. Making a decision may even involve sacrificing 1 value for another. To rank the options that seem reasonable, with the intent of making the best decision possible, you must now prioritize. Consider how to prioritize principles to which we adhere, but that appear contradictory in the case study (To play or not to play).

In other words, what do you do when you are facing an ethical dilemma?

5.1.5 Choose the best option

Based on your evaluation, select the option you consider to be the best one. Record the decision below.

Was it difficult to make this decision?

What did you feel when faced with the decision?

What resources do you have available to support you through this process?

The rationale

What convinced you to select your “best” option? Write the answer in 1 sentence.

Marker's comments only

5.1.6 Implement the decision

Consider the following 6 steps as you put together your action plan.



Describe the first steps that you would take as part of your actions. Consider the six steps above and describe tangible actions you might take. For example, the first step might be to pull the athlete aside at a practice and discuss the issue.

Marker's comments only

6 Application

You now have the opportunity to apply the ethical decision-making process to another situation. Choose a scenario from [Appendix C](#) and answer the questions below.

6.1 Apply the process

6.1.1. The situation

Identify your chosen scenario from Appendix C.

6.1.2 The facts

Determine the facts of the situation.

6.1.3 The issue

Are there legal implications? If yes, what will you do?

Principles of the NCCP Code of Ethics	Is there a potential issue with ...	Is this question relevant in this situation? (Yes or no?)
Leadership and Professionalism	Abuse of authority?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensuring every participant's well-being is a priority?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Confidentiality or privacy?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Safety	Vulnerability of participants?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Health and safety of participants?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Supervision of participants (including the Rule of Two)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Respect and Integrity	Equitable opportunities for all participants, including fair play?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusivity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Demonstrating honesty or respect for participants, coaches, and officials?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

What is the issue?

Marker's comments only

6.1.4 The options

Determine a minimum of 5 possible decisions or actions to take, and identify positive and negative consequences for each option.

Options	Possible consequences
Option 1: Do nothing	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 2:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 3:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 4:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE
Option 5:	POSITIVE
	NEGATIVE

6.1.5 Evaluate the options

In the table, record your 3 strongest options and evaluate each option against the standards of behaviours from the NCCP code of ethics:

Yes = my option meets this standard of behaviour

No = my option doesn't uphold this standard of behaviour

n/a = this standard doesn't apply to the situation

Table to evaluate options

Principles of the NCCP Code of Ethics	My option 1	My option 2	My option 3
Leadership and Professionalism			
Health and Safety			
Respect and Integrity			
Total number of Yes responses			

6.1.6 Choose the best option

Based on your evaluation, what is the best option?

Does the option follow the do-no-harm principle? In other words, does it maintain athletes' physical, emotional and psychological safety?

Would you make the same decision in similar situations?

What other option did you seriously consider and why?

What's the biggest challenge you foresee in implementing your decision?

Who else might be influenced by your decision, aside from the main characters?

Who else would, could, or should you have consulted in making this decision?

Marker's comments only

7 Conclusion

Ethical decision making is a skill like any other. It requires practice to build confidence and strength executing the skill. Ethics are those that live in the gray area between subjective personal morals and a society's objective, shared laws, meaning that they require you to be balanced in how you respond to any dilemma.

An ethical dilemma as a conflict between values we wish to maintain. When someone is faced with an ethical dilemma and is forced to choose between 2 values, their most deeply held beliefs normally dictate the course of action.

It is never crucial to determine which principle or ethical standard of behaviour of the Code of Ethics is violated, but it's important to recognize that there is an ethical dilemma and to follow the decision-making process accordingly. Should there be legal implications in any situation you face, handle them with care, honouring the golden rule of the NCCP Code of Ethics: **Do No Harm**.

It's the coach's duty above all to ensure that the decisions they make and the actions they take don't result in harm, physical or other, to athletes.

7.1 Self-assessment

This self-assessment is an opportunity for you to reflect on your current coaching practices. The items listed below are the tasks that an Evaluator will be looking for you to successfully complete during assignments and observations. The assessment will help you identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

For each statement presented below, **place a check mark in the column that best represents whether you achieve the statement (never, sometimes, often, always).**

I am able to...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Establish the facts in a situation				
Decide whether the situation involves legal or ethical issues				
Identify my options and possible consequences				
Evaluate my options				
Choose the best option				
Implement my decision				

7.2 Action Card

Complete the action card below. What will you start, stop, or continue doing as a result of taking the NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module?

Action Card	
Date:	Location:
I will start...	
I will stop...	
I will continue...	

What are 2 to 3 key elements you will take away from this module? Are there new reflections that you will carry forward into your coaching career? This is not a marked question. It is for your own personal use.

Do you have any questions about the module?

Marker's comments only

If you are interested in more NCCP workshops, you may find the following ones beneficial:

- NCCP Coaching Athletes with a Disability (thelocker.coach.ca/onlinelearning)
- NCCP Sport Nutrition (thelocker.coach.ca/onlinelearning#SN-E)
- NCCP Making Head Way (thelocker.coach.ca/onlinelearning)
- NCCP Aboriginal Coaching Module (Provincial/territorial aboriginal sport body)
- NCCP Managing Conflict (Provincial/territorial coaching representative)

Thank you for participating in this NCCP Home Study. The next steps are:

1. Review your responses from the beginning of the module to ensure they are complete and you are satisfied with the responses.
2. Submit your Home Study Coach Workbook to the marker. The marker will review and provide feedback throughout, indicating if you have successfully completed the training or if further attention or details are required.
3. Once the marker returns your workbook, carefully review the comments. If you have any questions, reach out to your marker for clarification.

Stay connected within the coaching community in Canada! For coaching tips and more information about coaching modules, visit the Coaching Association of Canada website, and follow us on social media.

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 [coach.ca](https://www.youtube.com/coach.ca)


Coaching Association of Canada
Association canadienne des entraîneurs

Appendix A: NCCP Code of Ethics

Purpose of the NCCP Code of Ethics

The National Coaching Certification Program™ (NCCP) Code of Ethics provides ethical standards that reflect the core values of the coaching profession in Canada, and guides sport coaches to make balanced decisions to achieve personal, participant and team goals. The NCCP Code of Ethics applies to every coach in Canada—from the first-time coach to the head coach of a national team. The NCCP Code of Ethics is used to guide the conduct in sport that stipulate acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and associated repercussions.

Core principles and ethical standards of behaviour

Coaches value Leadership and Professionalism, Health and Safety, and Respect and Integrity. For each of these core principles, there are associated ethical standards of in-person and on-line behaviour expected of every NCCP coach and NCCP Coach Developer in Canada, whether on or off the field.



¹“Participants” include but are not limited to athletes, opponents, parents, other coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials and medical/IST irrespective of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, religion, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or physical or mental ability (Source of inclusivity statement: Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES)).



Leadership and professionalism

This principle considers the inherent power and authority that a coach holds.

Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Understand the authority that comes with your position and make decisions that are in the best interest of all participants
- ▶ Share your knowledge and experience openly
- ▶ Maintain the athlete-centered approach to coaching so that every participant's well being is a priority
- ▶ Be a positive role model
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality and privacy of participants' personal information



Health and safety

This principle considers the mental, emotional, physical health and safety of all participants.

Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Recognize and minimize vulnerable situations to ensure the safety of participants
- ▶ Prioritize a holistic approach when planning and delivering training and competition
- ▶ Advocate for, and ensure appropriate supervision of participants, including the Rule of Two
- ▶ Participate in education and training to stay current on practices to ensure the continued safety of your participants
- ▶ Understand the scope of your role and skills and call upon others with specialized skills when needed to support your participants



Respect and integrity

This principle considers respect and integrity, which are the rights of all participants.

Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Provide equitable opportunity and access for all
- ▶ Establish a respectful and inclusive sport environment where all participants can raise questions or concerns
- ▶ Obey the rules and participate honestly and respectfully
- ▶ Be open, transparent and accountable for your actions
- ▶ Maintain objectivity when interacting with all participants



Rule of two

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. The purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.



Contact

Questions related to the NCCP Code of Ethics design may be directed to the Chief Operating Officer at the Coaching Association of Canada. Send an email to coach@coach.ca or call 613-235-5000 ext. 1.

For complaints related to Registered Coaches or Chartered Professional Coaches, refer to the Coaching Association of Canada's Code of Conduct.

Appendix B: Other perspectives and tools



The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) Responsible Coaching Movement consists of 3 elements:

1. Rule of Two
 - The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present.
 - Allow training environment to be open to observation.
 - Ensure a participant rides in a coach's vehicle with another adult present.
 - Consider the gender of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches and volunteers who are present.
 - Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents.
2. Background screening
 - Screening tools include comprehensive job postings, criminal record checks, interviews and reference checks.
3. Ethics training
 - Prepares coaches to effectively handle situations that involve ethical dilemmas that concern individuals, teams and their sports organizations. The NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module is a part of this training.

Learn more by visiting the Responsible Coaching Movement website at www.coach.ca/responsiblecoaching



Canadian Centre for Child Protection

"Commit to Kids" is a program of, and is registered in Canada as a trademark of, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The trademark is reproduced with permission.

Commit to Kids, a program of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, is a step-by-step plan to mitigate the risk of sexual abuse from happening within sport and other child-serving organizations.

The program has two components:

1. eLearning module: Commit to Kids for Coaches

The Commit to Kids for Coaches online training empowers coaches with practical information to help them enhance child and youth safety in sport. It highlights the importance of understanding boundaries, sexual misconduct, and reporting inappropriate behaviour.

This eLearning module addresses:

- child sexual abuse
- the grooming process
- handling disclosures of child sexual abuse
- the impact of child sexual abuse
- creating a Child Protection Code of Conduct
- policies and procedures to use to protect children

Upon successful completion, users receive a certificate of completion and 3 NCCP PD points toward maintenance of certification.

Visit <https://protectchildren.ca/onlinetraining> for information and to register for this 2.5 hour eLearning module.

2. Commit to Kids Program Kit & Policies and Procedures Workbook:

This resource helps organizations highlight strengths and gaps in their policies, manage risks, create a child protection code of conduct, review hiring, supervising, and monitoring practices, and establish reporting procedures for misconduct and sexual abuse concerns.

It includes templates and worksheets to help apply child/youth safety policies in a pragmatic way, in an effort to reduce barriers toward implementation.

Visit <https://protectchildren.ca/en/order/products/commit-to-kids/> to order the Commit to Kids Program Kit.



The Respect in Sport Activity Leader/Coach Program educates coaches on issues of bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination. Coaches leave the training with the skills to recognize, understand the impacts of, and respond to these issues in a safe and healthy manner.

Program elements include:

- Power dynamics
- Legal responsibility and “duty of care”
- Hazing
- Physical development
- Preventing bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (BAHD)
- Mental health outcomes due to BAHD behaviours

- Concussion and injury management
- Positive emotions

Learn more by visiting the Respect in Sport web page at www.respectgroupinc.com/respect-in-sport and clicking on the activity leaders button.



NCCP Creating a Positive Sport Environment

Participant-centered coaching strategies are an effective way to establish a safe and inclusive sport culture. By placing participants at the centre of the coaching process, coaches can promote growth and athletic development, foster creativity and learning, and protect participants from harm.

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the characteristics and benefits of participant-centered coaching
- Explain the types of harm that may occur when a coach misuses their power and how to respond to suspicions or knowledge of maltreatment
- Use positive coaching strategies to create a positive sport environment, enhance safety, and improve learning and performance

Coaches who are maintaining their NCCP Certification will earn 5 NCCP PD points upon completion of this module.

This eLearning module will take approximately 40 – 50 minutes to complete. You may complete the module in multiple sittings. Once you have completed NCCP Creating a Positive Sport Environment, the module will appear in your coach transcript in the Locker.

To access the eLearning module, visit <https://thelocker.coach.ca/onlinelearning#CPSE-E>.

Kids Help Phone

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7 national service offering professional counselling, information, referrals and volunteer-led text-based support for young people. Kids Help Phone's free, anonymous services are available in both English and French. Tools and resources available through the service include a phone line, Live Chat and app, and a website with tip sheets and articles containing practical content to help young people being coached. Learn more about the services Kids Help Phone offers at <http://kidshelpphone.ca/our-services/>.

Need help now? Call a Counsellor: 1-800-668-6868

Text CONNECT to 686868

Appendix C: Case studies

A questionable relationship

A senior coach and a trainer are in a relationship. The trainer has misdiagnosed a couple of athletes and the assistant coach is concerned.

Kai has started working as a coach at a prominent club in a medium-sized town. As this is a university town, athletes at the club are of university age. The senior coach, Oliver, has worked at the club for just over 10 years. He is well liked and respected, and has a successful winning record.

One afternoon, Kai is filling out paperwork and sees 2 athletes who are visibly upset. One of them had been to specialist Dr. Chang to have the doctor check out her ankle, which she twisted 4 weeks ago. Cara-Lee, the team trainer who joined the club in the past year, had assessed the injury and said the athlete was fine to play. But, Dr. Chang didn't feel the injury was completely healed. Dr. Chang told the athlete that if she continues to play, she could do permanent damage to the ankle. This isn't the first time Kai has heard a situation like this involving Cara-Lee. A few months ago, Cara-Lee cleared an athlete who had a concussion, saying the person was fine to continue with the day's practice. This action went against the club's concussion protocol and no one said anything.

Kai approaches Oliver and raises a few concerns about Cara-Lee's inappropriate work performance, asking why it has gone unnoticed. Oliver replies that Cara-Lee has been a trainer at the club for approximately a year, and he has never noticed any incompetence and has full confidence in her ability to do her job.

A few weeks later the entire team, coaches and trainers are invited to Oliver's 50th birthday party. At the party, Kai notices Oliver and Cara-Lee kissing in the backyard. The club has a strict policy about workplace relationships and makes each employee sign a behavioural agreement before they start. Kai doesn't want Oliver to get in trouble and decides to speak to him about it the following week.

On Monday, Kai speaks to Oliver. Kai mentions what he saw and again brings up the issue of Cara-Lee's performance at work. Oliver gets upset. He tells Kai to mind his own business and that there's nothing going on. That evening, however, Kai spots Oliver and Cara-Lee leaving work together in the same car. How should Kai respond to the situation?

Travel time

A young athlete needs a ride to a game and only you (the coach) is available.

You've coached the 10-and-under team in your community for the last 5 years. This year, there's an athlete whose family recently immigrated to Canada. Both parents have jobs involving shift work; they're often unable to drive the athlete to practice. At the start of the season, this athlete was very shy. Over the last few weeks you've seen her come out of her shell and it's exciting that she has started to make friends on the team.

Knowing the family's work situation, you've asked other parents if they would help with transportation. The field is a 20-minute drive from the athlete's house, which is too far for a child of that age to walk alone. The other parents gladly agreed to help and devised a schedule.

Tonight is game night. The other parent, who is scheduled to pick up the athlete, calls to tell you there has been a family emergency. With that ride no longer available to bring the athlete to the game, you call the athlete's mother and ask if there's any way she or her husband can get their child to the game. She tells you they're both working tonight and asks if you'd be able to pick up the athlete as their house is on your way to the field. You're travelling by yourself to the game, which means it would be just you and the athlete in the car. You know how important the game is to the athlete and don't want her to miss out, but the club has a rule-of-two policy that coaches must follow. The mother feels guilty that she can't be there herself and says she is comfortable with you taking her child to the game.

What should you do?

Should she share a room?

An athlete's parents don't want her sharing a room with a particular teammate and they request the room assignments be changed.

Mona and Xander are the head and assistant coach of a young women's team. The 16 and 17 year-old athletes come from a variety of backgrounds. Mona and Xander have worked hard to create a culture of respect. They believe what matters is how you play the game.

One of the athletes, Emma, naturally embodies Mona and Xander's philosophy. Emma is friendly and always has an encouraging word for her teammates. Two years ago, Emma came out as a lesbian to the coach and players on the team. Emma leaned on the team for support, particularly Xander, who also came out as gay to his coach and teammates when he was around Emma's age.

In a couple of weeks' time, the team is going to the National Championships. The athletes are so excited and can barely contain themselves. Yesterday, Mona announced the room assignments. Emma, Ari and Blake were assigned to share a room (one person on each bed, the third on a cot). Although they go to different schools, the young women have been friends for a couple of years now. They work well together and are among the team's strongest athletes.

The next day, Blake's parents approach the coaches to request that Blake switch rooms. They are concerned with the room assignments and would prefer Blake to be in a different room. Obviously, they understand that room sharing is more economical and don't want to overstretch their budget. They are happy to pay for their daughter to have her own room. Blake's mother owns a car dealership in town and the family could easily afford to pay for the extra room. Xander says that Blake hasn't expressed any concern about sharing a room with Emma, and Xander voices concern over how this might make Emma feel. Blake's father replies, that they just think Blake would get a better night's sleep in a different room.

How should Mona and Xander handle this situation?

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