

Ethical Decision-making

A Simplified Ethical Decision-making Framework

Step 1 - Gather the facts

Prior to making any decisions, gather as many facts as possible about the situation. Here are some questions to help you do this:

- What has happened?
- Who is involved?
- Who is affected by the decision or action and in what way?
- What do all the parties involved have to say about the situation (i.e. what are all the sides of the story)?
- Has anything like this happened before and, if so, what was done and what were the consequences?

Then

Step 2 - Determine whether the situation is a legal one

Some situations may have legal implications that require specific actions on your part. Here are some questions to help you determine if this is the case:

- Is there concern for the health and safety of individuals, particularly children? Has harm occurred and, if so, under what circumstances?
- Has an existing law been broken, because the situation involves one or more of the following:
 - Child abuse – emotional or physical
 - Use of or condoning the use of illegal substances (narcotics, performance-enhancing drugs, alcohol, tobacco)
 - Harassment: sexual, verbal, or psychological
 - Sexual relations with a minor
 - Theft or malicious damage to property
 - Assault

If the situation is a legal one, contact authorities - STOP

Or If the situation is an ethical one and does not have legal implications, try to resolve it.

Then

Step 3 - Identify all the ethical issues

Here are some questions to help you clearly identify all the issues that are at play:

Outcomes

- Did the actions of an individual or group prevent an individual or group from reaching a goal?
- Did certain actions or non-actions result in harm to anyone?

Means

- Was the issue related to the way someone did something?
- Are there guidelines that indicate how a similar situation should be addressed?

Rules and laws

- Have specific rules or laws (of the game) been broken?
- Have team policies been violated?
- Have specific rules or laws been misinterpreted (accidentally or deliberately)?
- Does the rule or law need to be changed?

Responsibilities and duties

- What duties and responsibilities did the parties involved have toward each other?
- Has an individual or individuals failed to fulfill duties or responsibilities?

Then

Step 4 - Consider what might influence how you see the situation

Some factors that may influence you are:

- Experiences as a participant, experiences as a coach
- Life experiences
- Likes & dislikes
- Religious beliefs
- Family
- Friends & peer pressure
- Education & training
- Cultural factors
- Politics, economics, employment situation

Then

Step 5 - Use the NCCP Code of Ethics to guide your choice of action

Here are some questions to consider as you are choosing what you are going to do:

- Is it possible to park the situation until emotions cool?
- If appropriate, can you resolve the situation in an informal way?
- Can/should others be involved in the decision?

Use the NCCP Code of Ethics, Fair Play concepts and principles of Community Sport as a discrimination-free zone to guide your decision.

