

# PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK

SPEAK OUT! It's more than just a game  
Officials Module



An educational program on the prevention of  
conflict for Officials

**HOCKEY CANADA**  
**SPEAK OUT! It's more than just a game -**  
**Officials Conflict Prevention Module**

**PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**

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**Introduction:** It is important that all officials are safe in hockey, both on and off the ice. This module was developed in response to the fact that some officials are not safe in hockey. Officials told their stories in focus groups across the country about the hostile environment they are sometimes required to work in, the harassment from peers, abuse from adults and sometimes the violence they may be subjected to, from parents, coaches or community members, when they do their job of enforcing the rules of play. This module is written to respond to some of the concerns we heard and to help officials understand anger, conflict and how your personal power, as an official, can help you in dealing with difficult situations, both on and off the ice.

# THE POWERS OF AN OFFICIAL

## POWER:

Definition: Power is the ability to act, the capacity to choose and the ability to make decisions. Your role as an official, your job description, gives you the authority, the right and therefore the power to make certain decisions. Using this power can help you become a better official and make your job easier and safer.

Current powers of an official:

- The referee can assess penalties to any team official for disorderly conduct.
- A penalty can be assessed to any player or team official who disputes a call or displays unsportsmanlike conduct.
- A Misconduct shall be assessed to any player (a Bench Minor if a Team Official) who: uses obscene, profane or abusive language or gestures to any person, persists in disputing or shows disrespect towards an official, intentionally knocks or shoots the puck out of reach of an official who is retrieving the puck.
- If the official is unable to identify the person responsible for the use of obscene, profane or abusive language a Bench Minor shall be assessed to the offending team.
- If a player does not proceed directly to the penalty bench when penalized they shall be given a Misconduct by the official.
- A Misconduct shall be given to a player who, after a warning by the referee persists with conduct such as threatening or abusive language or gestures designed to insight an opponent into a penalty.
- Any player or Team Official who engages in:
  - Verbal taunts
  - Insults or intimidation based on discriminatory grounds (race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language)shall be assessed a penalty.

At the discretion of the referee a *Gross Misconduct* may also be assessed for a first infraction to any player or Team Official.

Officials must complete a game report for any call made under this section of the rule.

- A penalty will be assessed to any player or players who enter the Referee's crease while the referee is reporting or consulting with any game official.

If a team official is given a penalty under this rule the referee shall report the individual in full details to the president who may assess further penalties.

- A Bench Minor shall be assessed a team where any player or team official protests a call through verbal or physical gestures that may be considered disrespectful in any way or who bangs the boards or ice surface with a stick or any other object in protest of a ruling.

# PERSONAL POWER YOU HAVE AS AN OFFICIAL

- Organizational power: officials are given specific authority, rights and privileges to make decisions on the ice about the game. Senior Officials and Official Supervisors also have authority over younger, less experienced officials.
- Position power: the position of official gives you the capacity to influence others' lives through the decisions you make on the ice. The position of assignor gives one the capacity to influence official's lives.
- Expert power: officials have unique expertise, skills and knowledge about the rules and about the game.
- Information Power: officials have information not only about the game but also about the people playing hockey, and the hockey culture. Parents and coaches may not have the same information about the game.







# DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Conflict is inevitable. Anger and grudges are not. Conflict resolution does not take the place of people taking responsibility for their behavior. Our ability to respond to conflict can often determine whether a conflict escalates or is resolved.

Each one of you has personal power, which gives you the choice about who you are and what you do; access to resources and information. Recognizing personal power can often give us the tools to deal with conflict. Being aware of your personal power and how to use it effectively and appropriately can influence your life and have a direct influence on dealing with conflict.

Every conflict has two parts - how people think and how people feel. In order to resolve conflict, which is a difference of opinion, we need to consider how people feel, their emotions. Conflict can range from a disagreement of ideas or interests to a violent struggle or contest. Your role as an official is to learn to manage conflict to avoid escalation of a disagreement into a violent struggle or contest, if this is possible. Sometimes the other person is so angry that the best reaction is to skate away. The expression of anger and how each person manages their anger will determine how severe the conflict becomes.

## How to respond to conflict?

### On the ice:

- Listen to understand
- Take a few seconds to think about the comments and/or actions and determine your response
- Determine if a reply is necessary
- If a reply is necessary at that time, then reply to diffuse the situation only.
- Continue on with the game
- Remember you may only have 10-15 seconds to do this

### Off the ice:

- Acknowledge what you have heard and the other person's position
- Ask for clarification to understand their reason or rationale
- Summarize what you have heard and verify this is correct
- State your position IF the person is ready to listen
- State what points you agree on
- State points of disagreement
- When the person responds, acknowledge what they have said
- Continue until you have resolved the issue or agreed to disagree
- Bring in a neutral person if possible



# UNDERSTANDING ANGER

Definition: Anger is a completely normal, usually healthy human emotion. Out of control anger is destructive. Anger is "an emotional state that varies from mild irritation to intense fury and rage". When you get angry, your heart rate, blood pressure and hormone levels, which determine your response, go up. Anger is a response to threats and is necessary to survival. Expression of aggressive behavior towards other people when they irritate or annoy us or have a different opinion is not a healthy expression of anger.

Angry people tend to jump to conclusions and act on them. This can cause conflict.

## HOW TO DIFFUSE ANGER?

- ✓ Before you speak or do anything else, stay cool and calm
- ✓ Take several slow, deep breaths and relax for a few seconds to slow down your heart rate.
- ✓ Take a few seconds to think about how you can diffuse the situation and avoid a confrontation - this allows the other person to have a moment to cool off
- ✓ Maintain eye contact and watch your body posture - keep your hands down at your side or behind your back - not crossed in front of you which is a body posture that indicates you are not receptive to what is being said. You may however want to use your hand to indicate clearly that the harassment must STOP. By putting your hand out in this manner, it indicates clearly to everyone that you have heard enough
- ✓ It is okay to skate away from this fight
- ✓ Consider all the options for responding and their possible results

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT WHEN EITHER PERSON IS ANGRY. TAKE A BREAK AND ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT LATER, IF APPROPRIATE.









