



## Scenario: The Boss and Their Beliefs

### Group Size: 4-15

***This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).***

Sergeant (Sgt) Frankel works out of a large armoury in western Canada. They enjoy their job and have served their unit for many years. With three young children, Sgt Frankel appreciates the flexibility of serving as a reservist.

At the mess one day, Sgt Frankel overhears two soldiers talking. "So, I hear Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Coleson's child needs a liver transplant, but their partner doesn't believe in blood transfusions," says one soldier.

"Nah, you've got it backwards," says the other. "Their partner wants the kid to have the transplant, but Coleson won't allow it because of their own beliefs."

Sgt Frankel can hardly believe what they are hearing, because MWO Coleson, the subject of the gossip, is their new supervisor.

Sgt Frankel is stunned. They wonder how any parent could deny their child lifesaving medical treatment, no matter what their beliefs. They know they could never do that for any reason.

The overheard conversation echoes in Sgt Frankel's head for days. One evening, they call their long-time buddy and mentor Laurent, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) serving with another unit.

"Man, I really feel for Coleson's partner," says Sgt Frankel. "Their child is being deprived of lifesaving treatment. Yeah, it must be tough for MWO Coleson as well, but I will never understand, or respect, a parent who won't put their child's welfare first!"

"I hear you," Laurent replies, "but you must put aside your personal feelings here. MWO Coleson is still your boss, and if we all judged our bosses by every aspect of their private lives, nobody would ever be able to work for anybody. The system would collapse."

"This is different," insists Sgt Frankel. "MWO Coleson's decision about their child's health is more than a personal matter. It is ethically wrong, and it affects their professional credibility as a uniformed superior."

### Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Stewardship
Cultural Themes:	Leadership
Misconduct Types:	General Misconduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Culture, Religion, Family Status
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

---

# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the Dignity of all Persons in this scenario.
- Discuss the ethical value of stewardship in this scenario.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
  - Open group discussion.
  - The ethical dilemma is the conflict between personal beliefs and professional responsibilities.
2. Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the Dignity of all Persons in this scenario?
  - Open group discussion.
  - Discuss respecting an individuals' beliefs and individual's rights to make decisions about their own life, including medical decisions.
  - Balancing personal beliefs with professional responsibilities: Sgt. Frankel may have strong personal beliefs about the prioritization of a child's welfare, but they must also balance this with their professional obligations. There is no official reasoning behind this decision or even if this rumored information is true from MWO Coleson. Before judging, people should tentatively reach personally the individual before any action or judgement.
3. Does Sgt Frankel have an ethical responsibility to report what they overheard to the relevant authorities or seek help for the child's welfare?
  - Sgt. Frankel received the information about MWO Coleson by overhearing a conversation. They should have respected the privacy of the conversation and not engaged in gossip.
  - Sgt. Frankel may have a no legal or moral obligation to ensure the child's welfare not under his custody, but the best course of action should involve addressing the issue through appropriate channels rather than gossiping about it.
  - Note: In Canada, the legal system can, in some such situations, step in to ensure children are provided required life-saving procedures. The child's doctors would be responsible to bring this issue to the attention of the legal system.
4. What advice would you give Sgt Frankel?
  - Option 1: Respect privacy. They should understand the importance of respecting personal boundaries and confidentiality. Gossiping about this private matter is not appropriate.
  - Option 2: Maintain professionalism. Regardless of personal opinions, Sgt. Frankel should maintain professionalism in their interactions with MWO Coleson.
  - Option 3: Seek guidance. If Sgt. Frankel believes that there may be a legitimate concern about the welfare of MWO Coleson's child, they should consider seeking guidance within the military's chain of command.