



Scenario: The Ethics Kiosk

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 \(EAP\)](#).

Two captains, Michel Dujardin and Diego Villanueva, are checking out the various displays and kiosks at the open-house day on their base.

“Hey Mike,” says Villanueva, “have you seen this Defence Ethics Programme display? I think the ethics programme is really needed. They do good work. And the new display is really well done, don’t you think? Really catches your eye.”

“Yeah,” answers Dujardin. “I went there yesterday and had a pretty interesting discussion with the person behind the table. They gave me a copy of the new Statement of Defence Ethics poster. Now that’s a good-looking poster, and we could really use something to brighten up the orderly room. But I’ve got to tell you, I think they’ve got it all wrong with these three principles.”

“How do you mean?” asks Villanueva. “It sounds good to me: three principles, six values. Simple enough. And it works for everybody, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Department of National Defence (DND) employees.”

“That’s not my point, Jim,” says Dujardin. “There’s nothing wrong with the principles themselves. But get this: I was talking to the unit ethics coordinator the other day, and she told me the three principles are listed in a certain order for a reason. It’s a hierarchy. So, Respect the Dignity of all Persons takes precedence over Serve Canada before Self, which takes precedence over Obey and Support Lawful Authority. Now that doesn’t make sense to me. We’re in the Forces, right, so don’t you think Serve Canada before Self should be at the top of our list? That should come before everything else. I mean, why else do we go into harm’s way....to serve Canada, right?”

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons, Serve Canada before Self, Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Not Specific
Cultural Themes:	Service
Misconduct Types:	Not Specific
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objective:

- Discuss the ethical principles and hierarchy of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons,” “Serve Canada before Self” and “Obey and Support Lawful Authority.”

Facilitation Questions:

1. What do you think about this discussion? What are the considerations?
 - Allow open discussion from the group.
 - Ethical concerns: As Dujardin points out, it could seem odd for some that “Respecting the Dignity of all Persons” is at the top of the hierarchy for the CAF. Why do you think that is?
 - Personal factors: For some CAF members, Service before Self is core to the culture of the CAF, whereas Respect the Dignity of all Persons seems like a more general principle that applies to any Canadian, so why would it take precedence?
 - Considering its nature and mission, the CAF is part of Canadian society and should always represent its values.
 - Environmental factors: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms highlights the many ways that the principle Respect the Dignity of all Persons should be applied. This principle not only implies positive obligations but also carries with it obligations of limitation. It places limits on what the government can or cannot do to obstruct others in the legitimate exercise of their rights and freedoms. International humanitarian law, or known as law of armed conflicts, is a great example of how service and respecting the dignity of all persons go hand in hand. It is a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict and protect people who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities.
2. What does the hierarchy of the ethical principles affect our ethical decision making? Can you think of any examples where one would need to consider the hierarchy of these principles when making a decision?
 - Understanding the underlying concepts that are the basis for the hierarchy of the Department of National Defence (DND) and CAF Code of Values and Ethics is necessary to make better decisions when faced with any ethical dilemma. Because Respect the Dignity of all Persons is at the heart of what we mean by the public interest, it emphasizes a fundamental value and requirement that is present in all our laws and is a basic building block of liberal democratic culture so needs to be considered in any ethical decision making.
 - One cannot serve Canada before self and obey and support lawful authority without respecting the dignity of all persons.
 - Furthermore, the DND and CAF ethical principles should be considered as complementary and interconnected.
3. What are some potential courses of action (COA) these members could take in relation to this scenario? Which would be the better COA? Why?
 - Option 1: Consider the DND and CAF Code of Values and Ethics hierarchy of the three Ethical Principles to be flawed and continue to base their decisions on serving Canada before Self as the most important.
 - Option 2: Grasp the significance of the principle of Respect the Dignity of all Persons in Canadian culture, and as the top of the hierarchy in the CAF/DND, and how it enables better ethical decision-making when confronted with difficult ethical scenarios.