The Experience of Care in Sport: An Institutional Ethnography of Youth Competitive Volleyball

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ABSTRACT

Research on power relations between coaches and athletes, as well as the abuse of a coach's power and the consequences of this abuse for athletes, is well established in both the critical socio-cultural study of sport, broadly, as well as the critical study of sport coaching. Although not all athletes have negative sport experiences, research on athlete harm and maltreatment is well documented, and much of this work has focused on identifying the spectrum of maltreatment, programmatic and policy responses to address these concerns, and the power of coaches in their sport role. However, more foundational analyses of care and caring in competitive sport remain conspicuously absent and this absence of attention to care serves as an important point of departure for this study which aims to add to and extend vitally need conversations and actions on athlete welfare through a critical socio-philosophical examination of the conceptualizations and lived experiences of care and caring within the context of Ontario youth competitive volleyball. Specifically, this study is concerned with *how* care is understood and constructed in the context of competitive youth sport by athletes, parents and coaches and, more pointedly, how these ideas translate to the practice of care in sport coaching. Informed by the feminist philosophical framework of the Ethics of Care (EoC), and employing institutional ethnography (IE) methodology, this project examines the conceptualizations of care within the context of one youth volleyball team in Ontario. Data from document analysis and interviews with coaches, athletes, and parents highlight the ways in which care at the institutional level focused more so on the identifying and preventing uncaring practices rather than illuminating what constitutes care, while simultaneously constructing coaches as the primary (if not sole) providers of care to athletes. Overall, the findings illuminate that care/caring remains a poorly understand but highly powerful and abstract construct in a context (i.e., competitive sport) that, at times, foregrounds performance.

DEDICATION

For my loving family, whose lifetime of loving kindness has blessed me with lived experience of

being cared for.

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Abbreviations

CAAWS – Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport

CAC – Coaching Association of Canada

CASEM – Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine

CCCP – Canadian Centre for Child Protection

CCES – Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport

CCS – Caring Climate Scale

CFLRI – Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

DS – Defensive Specialist

EAP – Emergency Action Plan

EoC – Ethic of Care

EoJ – Ethic of Justice

EoN – Ethic of Need

FIVB – Fédération Internationale de Volleyball

ICCE – International Council for Coach Education

IE – Institutional Ethnography

IES – Ideal Emotional State

ISCF – International Sport Coaching Framework

JVA – Junior Volleyball Association

MED – Making Ethical Decisions

NASPE – National Association for Sport and Physical Education

NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association

NCCP – National Coach Certification Program

NSO – National Sport Organization

NYSP – National Youth Sport Program

OCs – Ontario Championships

OFSAA – Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations

OVA – Ontario Volleyball Association

PA – Physical Activity

PD – Professional Development

PIA – Person In Authority

PT/SO – Provincial Sport Organization

PYD – Positive Youth Development

VC – Volleyball Canada

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Recent statistics on organized youth sport present a worrisome trend of declining participation rates in Canada; for example, only 46% of children and youth between the ages of 5 to 17 years participated in organized sport throughout the year (CFLRI, 2011). This is especially troubling given the variety of benefits commonly associated with sport participation including: reduced stress, improved health and fitness, heightened sense of achievement and increased opportunities to expand positive social networks. This is not to suggest that all sport participation is healthful for all people at all times (Safai, 2008); however, when youth sport is done well – with consideration of the structural, cultural and individual factors that frame and impact access and participation – it can contribute to positive youth (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2005), community (Donnelly & Kidd, 2003), and moral development (Bowen et al., 2017; Duquin, 1984; 1995).

The relationships cultivated between young athletes and coaches within the sport environment are pivotal in this regard. This project is underpinned by the recognition that a coach holds a tremendous amount of power in sport (Jowett, 2003) and that the "quality of a participant's experience… is largely dependent on the environment created by the coach" (NASPE, 2008, p. 10; see also Côté, Young, North & Duffy, 2007). There is literature documenting that coaches who provide positive feedback and reduce the use of punitive actions are more likely to contribute to an athlete's positive sport experience (e.g., Becker, 2009; see also Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979), and yet this literature has not fulsomely linked such behaviours to critical conceptualizations of care and caring. In fact, there is a relative lack of research on the conceptualization of care and caring in competitive youth sport broadly, and within the athlete-coach relationship specifically. To this end, this project aimed to address this gap by exploring *the conceptualization(s) and lived*

experiences of care and caring operating under the umbrella of the Canadian sport system by examining care within the context of one particular youth competitive volleyball team in Ontario. Therefore, this study aimed to:

1) *To examine how care has been conceptualized in governing statements and documents in Ontario youth competitive volleyball;*

2) *To examine how coach education and coach development resources, specific to and framed by Ontario youth competitive volleyball, conceptualize care and caring;*

3) *To identify how coaches, athletes, and parents construct, negotiate and live care within youth competitive sport broadly and volleyball specifically; and*

4) *To explore how current conceptions of care may or may not align with the Ethics of Care (EoC), a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour.*

Context

The social structure of competitive sport is such that coaches have a tremendous amount of power and impact on the experience of the youth athletes for whom they are responsible (this study defined youth athletes as between the ages of 12 to 17 years) (Government of Canada, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2018). This impact is not just limited to sport experience but also life experience as coaches are also often considered moral educators responsible for teaching character and life skills or supporting youth athletes' development in these areas along with the teaching and refining of sport-specific skills (Duquin, 1995; NASPE, 2006; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Because of the social structure of competitive sport, athletes are socialized to respond to coaches' authority with obedience; a scenario that tends to leave athletes with relatively little legitimate power to negotiate the conditions of their experience (Duquin, 1995; Shogan, 1999). Research on power

relations between coaches and athletes, as well as the abuse of a coach's power and the consequences of this abuse for athletes, is well established and robust in both the critical socio-cultural study of sport, broadly, as well as the critical study of sport coaching more specifically. It is important to acknowledge that not all athletes have negative sport experiences; however, in terms of this dark side of sport, notable thematic areas include the experience and (mis)treatment of child and youth athletes in the high performance sport system (e.g., Donnelly, 1997; Donnelly, Kerr, Heron & DiCarlo, 2014; Kerr & Stirling, 2008; Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Ryan, 2013; Stirling & Kerr, 2013); hazing and initiation as rituals of power over athletes (e.g., Fraser, 2015; Johnson & Holman, 2004); and the sexual harassment and/or abuse of athletes by their coaches (e.g., Brackenridge, 1997; Brackenridge, 1998; Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Crosset, Benedict & McDonald, 1995; Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Kirby, Greaves & Hankivsky, 2000; Leahy, Pretty & Tenenbaum, 2002; Nielsen, 2001).

As will be addressed in Chapter Two, there has been significant research and scholarship dedicated to explicating the nuances of maltreatment in sport. In fact, many sport academics, sport coaches, sport administrators, politicians, journalists, athlete-activists, concerned parents, or others who hold themselves as sport advocates, have committed themselves to shedding light on and fighting against athletes maltreatment and abuse. In addition, it is safe to say that there is more concern than ever before for athlete welfare and well-being (Henry, 2013; Kerr & Stirling, 2017; Lang, accepted/in press; Lang & Hartill, 2015); much attention is (rightly) paid to issues of sexual harassment, physical abuse, and physical harm in sport (Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Donnelly & Sparks, 1997; Donnelly et al., 2014; Malloy & Zakus, 2004; Stirling, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2008). However, while work aimed at identifying and preventing physical harm and abuse is sport is certainly included in the broad scope of care, more foundational

conversations about care in competitive sport remain conspicuously absent in mainstream media. For those participating in the current Canadian sport system, this absence is especially concerning. Given what we already know about the harassment and harm of youth athletes in sport, it is critical that we focus our attention on care and caring.

This absence of attention to care serves as an important point of departure for this study which aims to add to and extend vitally needed conversations and actions on athlete welfare through a critical socio-philosophical examination of the conceptualizations and lived experiences of care and caring within the context of Ontario youth competitive volleyball. Specifically, this study is concerned with *how* care is understood and constructed in the context of competitive youth sport by athletes, parents and coaches and, more pointedly, how these ideas translate to the practice of care in sport coaching. The plethora of athlete maltreatment cases highlights a seminal worry about sport coaching that underpins this current study; specifically, that the performance imperative and aims of competitive sport lead to harmful and abusive behaviours that are camouflaged by powerful and equally unclear definitions of care. In other words, the current state of athlete mistreatment in sport is partly due to the absence of a clear definition of care and caring, a problematic that this current study aims to address.

The Language of Care and Caring in Sport

The language of care and caring is often employed in the context of competitive youth sport: for example, "caring" is one of the seven attributes of successful coaches according to the Janssen Peak Performance Centre (Janssen & Dale, 2002) and more recently, the role of creating a caring climate has been emphasized as a primary responsibility of youth sport coaches (Price-Mitchell, 2018). Yet, this study is supported by the concern that care has primarily been taken up

and understood in youth sport more so as a "condensation symbol" (Edelman, 1985, p. 6), rather than a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic living concept. Condensation symbols refer to words that are highly and richly connected to their audiences and contexts, and that seem to function as more than "just words" (Kaufer & Carley, 1993). More specifically, a condensation symbol refers to a "concept or maxim that evokes an emotional reaction in the audience and that is assumed to be a desirable objective without ever being properly defined" (Bundon & Clarke, 2014, p. 354). The assumptions work to silence or prevent any form of critical analysis that questions the supporting discourse and associated power relations. In relation to this study, certain coach behaviours are associated with the claim to care, as the term is used to communicate the prioritizing of athlete interests on the part of sport organizations and coaches; yet, some of the actual methods employed by coaches are questionable at best. As noted by Van Galen (1996), "there is a cost to leaving forms of care unexamined" (p. 163) and this project foregrounded *conceptualization(s) of care and caring within competitive youth sport in Canada* both institutionally (i.e., within the governing statements, texts, and coaching educational resources of the OVA) and interpersonally (i.e., as understood by coaches, athletes, and parents participating in youth competitive volleyball).

The majority of research examining the role of coaches in youth competitive sport has been concerned primarily with the development of coaching knowledge (e.g., Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Côté et al., 2007; Martens, 2012; Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007; Wright et al., 2009), the coach-athlete relationship (e.g., Gearity & Murray, 2011; Jowett, 2003; Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Cockerill, 2002) and perceived barriers to coaching development and certification (e.g., Gilbert, Côté & Mallett, 2006; Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007; Misener & Danylchuk, 2009). While such research is informative and necessary in order to improve coach

development and certification programs or initiatives broadly, it fails to address: care and caring as fundamental to the coach-athlete relationship; how care, as a condensation symbol, is used to refer to good coaching; and how a lack of care may result in negative experiences for sport participants. It is critical to go beyond 'just the words' and to better explore the lived experiences of care and caring in competitive youth sport. Drawing on the Ethics of Care (EoC), which posits care as both a virtue and a way of being in relation with one another (Held, 2006; Miller, 2012; Noddings, 2013), this study focused on multiple relations within sport that impact care and caring (i.e., coaches, youth athletes, *and* parents). Although this project is centrally interested in relations of care and caring between athlete and coach, we must collectively recognize that parents of youth athletes are also influential parts of the sport ecosystem.

The EoC (more fulsomely explored in Chapter Three) is not unheard of within the critical socio-cultural study of sport coaching. For example, Jones (2009) outlines the importance of an EoC in nurturing the full potential of others. He discusses a personal moment where he was given the opportunity to care for an athlete and asserts that: "we are to give them our attention, our engrossment, our care; both on and off the field" (p. 388). Such an approach requires a high degree of interpretation on the part of the coach in determining the needs of athletes and the appropriate ways in which to respond to their needs such that, according to Duquin (1995), "responding from an ethical ideal of care requires attention to the concrete and respect for connection, particularity, complexity, and ambiguity" (p. 120). While some have explored *how* an EoC can operate as a guiding principle necessary to ensure that the sport environment remains a space where athletes may learn moral behaviour (Duquin, 1995; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Gearity & Denison, 2012), others have examined how coaches see themselves as caring for their athletes (Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Jones, Bailey & Santos, 2013; Knust & Fisher, 2015).

These studies focused on how coaches perceived themselves as caring and how coaches often justified their methods with a claim to prioritizing their athletes' best interests (Shields, LaVoi & Power, 2005).

More recently, researchers examining sport coaching pedagogy have asserted the importance of caring and how it ought to be prioritized as a core element of sport coaching (Cronin & Armour, 2019a); in particular, scholars are concerned that the culture of sport coaching does not value care, which results in detached and performance-prioritizing behaviours by sport coaches (Cronin & Armour, 2019c). The intent of the points noted above is not to provide an exhaustive accounting of the research to date on care/caring in sport and sport coaching (see Chapter Two), but rather to acknowledge that: 1) sport scholars from various disciplinary areas have started to examine care/caring in sport from different perspectives; and that 2) such research has tended to focus on care/caring either from the position of the carer *or* from the recipient of care. This study innovates by examining, sociologically and philosophically, how both carers and care recipients contribute to an experience of care overall within an institution grounded within performance, competition, and the "relentless pursuit of performance excellence" (Lavallee & Robinson, 2007, p. 120).

There is a tension that exists between the traditional aims and structure of sport and the EoC. Caring necessarily involves prioritizing the needs of the cared-for and this presents a challenge within the context of competitive sport as coaches must balance their own (or their organization's) aspirations and goals with the particular needs of their athletes; in some cases, these wants and needs may not align. In many cases, the end goal of winning-at-all-costs may compromise the well-being of athletes (Duquin, 1995), particularly when individual teaching and learning moments (process) are rushed, bypassed or damaged for the sake of winning (outcome).

Within the competitive sporting context specifically, the EoC's attention to human flourishing requires coaches to attend to their athletes' entirety as a human beings and not just to those elements of the athletes' identity that operate on the court or in the arena. A coach who only sees their role as helping to develop the athlete's skill acquisition or performance has failed to recognize the complexity of the individual and thus has failed to commit to caring; in particular, the "winning-at-all-cost" mentality constructs athletes in a way that makes them especially vulnerable to the position and power of coaches who, in some cases, use that position as a platform to justify abusive and harmful behaviours.

Theoretical and Methodological Scope of Current Study

This study employed sociological and philosophical approaches to examine care/caring from the perspectives of coaches, athletes, and parents within the context of one Ontario youth volleyball team, operating under the umbrella of the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA), during the course of one competitive season. An institutional ethnographic (IE) approach guided the collection and analysis of data for this research project, a feminist methodology that relies fundamentally on people's experiences as the point of departure for sociological inquiry and offers a strategy for accessing contextually based beliefs and practices (Campbell, 1998; Savage, 2000; Smith, 1987; 2005). In this case, "institution" refers to the relations that constitute an organization (Rankin & Campbell, 2009) and "makes power understandable in terms of relations between people" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 61). Specifically, this form of analysis seeks to give a voice to the experience of those subject to ruling relations (Campbell, 1998), and acts as a conceptual framing tool for the experiences heard, read about, or observed. As DeVault (2006) so eloquently writes, "institutional ethnographies are built from the examination of work processes and study of

how they are coordinated, typically through texts and discourses of various sorts" (p. 294); "work activities" are taken as fundamental to the grounding of social life and are thus, an entry point into a particular experience. Overall, IE is founded on the recognition that "institutional ideologies typically acknowledge some kinds of work and not others" (p. 294). With regards to the current study, *how* care is constructed at the institutional level has implications for the caring practices of coaches in local settings and, as the results of this study will demonstrate, the OVA – through its governing and coaching educational statements and texts – constructs care as the prevention and mitigation of harms which leaves a vast and messy domain for coaches in which to define, construct, and engage in caring practices beyond the scope of the organization's governing texts.

In addition to the sociological agenda of IE, this study also drew on the EoC as a feminist philosophical theory well suited to examine the relationships that exist between coach and athlete (and parents) in competitive youth sport. The EoC, as an alternative framework for ethical behavior and decision making, was advanced initially by Carol Gilligan's (1982) work on an alternative approach to moral problems from the perspective of relation. In Held's (2006) words, "affectionate sensitivity and responsiveness to need may seem to provide better moral guidance for what should be done in these contexts than do abstract moral rules or rational calculations of individual utilities" (p. 24). This approach was further developed by Nel Noddings who agreed with Gilligan's claim that moral problems ought to be addressed by placing oneself "as nearly as possible in concrete situations" (Noddings, 2013, p. 8). Work by EoC proponents has provided a framework for constructing relationships that takes into account the experience of individuals *in situ*. The EoC theorizes care beyond minimum protections and prevention of harm and, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three, there is evidence to support the EoC as particularly apt for sport coaching given the ways in which it allows us to examine and address moral issues that arise in unequal and

interdependent relations. It prioritizes human flourishing and well-being as a motivation for action and provides a framework for the creation and maintenance of caring relations between two parties. In fact, Noddings (2013) asserts that care must underpin every form of pedagogical relation including coaching: "The primary aim of every educational institution and every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring. Parents, police, social workers, teachers, preachers, neighbours, coaches, older siblings, must all embrace this primary aim" (p. 172).

The guiding research objectives for this study followed the IE agenda which involves an analysis of organizational documents as well as interviews from participants. In addition, the EoC's emphasis on the completion of caring relations and its primary aim of enhancing and maintaining the well-being of those cared-for, provided a lens through which sport relationships may be examined in a new light. To this end, this project aimed to address this gap by exploring *the conceptualization(s) and lived experiences of care and caring operating under the umbrella of the Canadian sport system by examining care within the context of one particular youth competitive volleyball team in Ontario*. Therefore, this study aimed to:

1) *Examine how care has been conceptualized in governing statements and documents in Ontario youth competitive volleyball;*

2) *Examine how coach education and coach development resources, specific to and framed by Ontario youth competitive volleyball, conceptualize care and caring;*

3) *Identify how coaches, athletes, and parents construct and negotiate meanings of care within youth competitive sport broadly and volleyball specifically; and*

4) *Explore how current conceptions of care may or may not align with the Ethics of Care, a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour.*

The first three objectives conversed most directly with IE as they examine how care is constructed

at the institutional level (i.e., governing texts and educational resources), and by people in local settings whose lives are organized by the OVA's definition(s) of care. The fourth and final objective conversed with the EoC most directly to examine how these expressions of care relate to one another; in particular, it focused on the caring relation between coaches and athletes and how the context of the OVA specifically, and sport broadly, influences *how* care is constructed, negotiated and lived.

Structure of Dissertation

In Chapter Two, I provide an overview of current and related sport literatures. This includes research examining sexual abuse, harm and maltreatment in sport, along with policy and programmatic responses to these concerns in a Canadian context (including the notion of athlete-centred sport and sport coaching). In addition, I address the language of care in sport and how, when employed, it communicates a standard of care or relation without being critically examined or interrogated (Bundon & Clarke, 2015) before then attending to the notion of a 'duty of care' in sport (with specific reference to UK sport policy). I then outline the landscape of coaching and coach education in Canada, including an overview of the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), its efforts to educate coaches via the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP), and its programmatic strategy for delivering coach education. From here, this chapter examines existing coach education research and pedagogy, before addressing existing research examining care in coach education and sport broadly. The chapter concludes with an overview of existing care research in youth and college/university sport settings, and a summarization of the gaps in this current body of literature.

Chapter Three outlines the theoretical foundations for this study. This includes an overview

of the EoC as situated within the broader context of philosophical ethics. I make connections between the EoC and the IE agenda, which help to explicate this study's novel approach to examining care through a multidisciplinary lens. Fundamental to the EoC is the assumption that the practice of care involves responding to the fundamental needs of others; thus, I will also provide an overview of the Ethics of Need (EoN), which more robustly theorizes the needs involved in caring, and how they are linked to the agency and well-being of care recipients. It will also provide a brief overview of the Ethic of Justice (EoJ) which helps to explicate conceptualizations of care which cannot be as clearly explained by the EoC.

Chapter Four outlines the qualitative methods used in this research project; in particular, it provides an overview of IE, including its origins, scope as a method of inquiry, and theoretical underpinnings. I explain how IE and the EoC work together by outlining their ontological similarities and epistemological differences and linking them to the current study's scope. In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of the research design for this study including a description of the research setting, the ways in which I recruited participants, and data collection and analysis strategies.

In Chapter Five, I attend to the first sub-objective of the study (i.e., examining how care has been conceptualized in governing statements and documents in Ontario youth competitive volleyball). Data from the OVA's governing documents and statements was collected and analyzed as the starting point for explicating *how* care and caring are conceptualized at the institutional level. To employ the EoC, I imagined the OVA's governing documents as moral agents capable of engaging in caring relations (which are reserved for relations between persons according to the EoC) and examined how the OVA responded to the needs of members broadly and athletes specifically.

Chapter Six focuses on the second sub-objective of the study: examining how coach education and coach development resources, specific to and framed by Ontario youth competitive volleyball, conceptualize care and caring. In this chapter, I discussed findings from a detailed analysis of the CAC's open-source educational resources. The primary focus of these resources is to help coaches care for their athletes across a wide range of sport-related scenarios and challenges. As the formal governing body for sport coach education in Canada, the CAC operationalizes its training through the NCCP, and this is the primary source of formalized education for youth volleyball coaches in Ontario.

The project's third sub-objective was to identify how coaches, athletes, and parents construct and negotiate meanings of care within youth competitive sport broadly and volleyball specifically. Chapter Seven attends to this research objective most concretely as I share interview data collected from coaches, athletes, and parents. I employed the EoC to illuminate how the participants framed care with regards to needs and how this changed according to the participant group. Overall, this chapter most clearly illustrates the tensions between care and sport which is based on participants' ideas about care within a competitive sport environment that prioritizes performance outcomes.

Chapter Eight serves as both the concluding chapter for this study as well as chapter that attends to the fourth sub-objective of the project (exploring how current conceptions of care may or may not align with the Ethics of Care, a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour). In this chapter, I attempt to pull together the threads that flowed through this project to address how conceptualizations of care and caring in youth competitive volleyball align (or not) with the EoC. I begin with a brief narrative of the sport experience that was the motivation for this dissertation and connect it to the current, and troubling, state of affairs

in sport with regards to athlete harm and mistreatment. I explicitly discuss the fourth sub-objective of this project, and then turn to concluding thoughts. I reiterate the value of blending sociological and philosophical approaches to examine care in sport, as well as readdress the research questions that guided this dissertation. Finally, I address this study's strengths and limitations before outlining potential future directions for care research in sport.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review related literatures on care and caring in sport, sport coaching and coach education in Canada. As Chapter Three will explain, notions of care are embedded within the context in which they are experienced and *how* sport shapes and defines care and caring is a fundamental question underlying the current study. It will begin with an overview of athlete harm and mistreatment, experiences representing a definitive lack of care, as well as a catalyst for research examining care in sport and the motivation for the current study. It will review the programmatic and policy responses to athlete mistreatment, which focus on preventing harm and abuse, before addressing athlete-centred sport and athlete-centred coaching. Athlete-centred approaches to sport and sport coaching developed in response to athlete mistreatment and are seminal to the current study focusing on care. As the language of care and empowerment is used frequently in athlete-centred philosophy, the discussion will then shift to its use in sport and potential concerns, when used by coaches, with regards to its power to disguise uncaring and harmful behaviours. This section will include an example of care language used at the policy and programmatic level; specifically, the United Kingdom's (UK) 'duty of care' response to athlete harm and mistreatment (Grey-Thompson, 2017). Given this study's focus on sport coaching, the remaining sections will provide an overview of the Canadian coaching and coach education system, with specific attention paid to the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP), to provide an overview of the context in which Canadian sport coaches are embedded. It will then review more recent literature examining care in sport coaching education and pedagogy, as well as research exploring care and caring from the perspectives of athletes and coaches across particular youth sport and college/university settings. This chapter will conclude with a brief summary and re-identification of the gaps in literature that this current study will address.

It is important to note that scholarship on athlete harm and maltreatment refer more specifically to the protection of children, while athlete-centred coaching and other areas of care in sport research use the language of youth. In Canada, the definition of 'child' ranges depending on the province and in Ontario, a 'minor child' refers to persons under the age of 18 years, while for the purposes of protection a 'minor child' is under the age of 16 years (Government of Canada, 2013). Across Canada, the age range for youth is 15-34 years (Statistics Canada, 2018). For the purpose of this study, the overall concern is for the safety and well-being of young athletes whose ages fall under 18 years of age which is a particularly vulnerable position due to the already existing power imbalance inherent in the coach-athlete relationship.

From Sexual Abuse and Harassment to Athlete Harm and Mistreatment

There is a robust body of literature examining athlete harm and mistreatment in sport, and an exhaustive review of the literature falls beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that there has been, over the past thirty to forty years, quite a great deal done in the socio-cultural study of sport on harm and mistreatment in sport nationally and internationally. Researchers in this area have sought to develop a more clear understanding of the nature and scope of inappropriate coaching conduct for the purpose of ensuring the safety, and decreasing the vulnerability, of youth sport participants to abuse and other negative outcomes associated with sport (Raakman, Dorsch, & Rhind, 2010). This body of literature is underpinned by a concern for the appropriate standards of care (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Goldberg, 2020), and is aimed at preventing and reducing harm by clearly identifying the actions and behaviours that ought to be outlawed and avoided in order to ensure the safety of athletes in sport. This research, and reactions to it from the public sector, has laid the groundwork for the creation of a range of policies, frameworks and program responses

designed to protect athletes as well as the shift towards an athlete-centred sport system and athlete-centred coaching strategies.

Early research and advocacy work on the issue of athlete harm and mistreatment in sport centred predominantly on sexual harassment and abuse in sport specifically (Brackenridge, 1994; Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2002; Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997), prompted by a range of factors including an increase in reporting of high-profile cases of sexual abuse and child abuse in sport (Donnelly & Sparks, 1997; Donnelly et al., 2014). By the 1990s, child sexual abuse (encompassing physical, psychological and emotional forms) had been recognized as a major concern in sport at both the amateur and professional levels (Brackenridge, 2008; Burke, 2001; Fasting, 2013; Raakman et al., 2010) due to its severity and moral concern. In Canada, a pivotal moment in amateur sport was the arrest and imprisonment of ice hockey coach Graham James (Robinson, 1998). In four separate trials, between 1997 and 2015, James was convicted of abusing six of his players hundreds of times (Ward & Strashin, 2019). This is but one example of the increase in reports of child abuse reporting in sport which sparked wide-scale public attention and 'moral panic' (Brackenridge, 2002; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2002; Donnelly & Sparks, 1997; Malloy & Zakus, 2004) that lead not only to the broadening of the definitional scope of athlete mistreatment (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014), but also to an increase in child and athlete protection policies and research.

Research aimed at clearly defining different forms of athlete abuse and maltreatment by coaches in sport (e.g., Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Malloy & Zakus, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2008; Stirling, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2013; Stirling et al., 2011), particularly among children and youth, has widened to include other forms of abuse such as emotional (e.g., Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2008; 2013), physical (e.g., Raakman et al., 2010), and psychological (e.g., Gearity &

Murray, 2011; Stirling & Kerr, 2009). This body of work also includes neglect which, as a form of maltreatment, is defined by a lack of care (Glaser, 2002; Iwaniec, 2003), and institutional maltreatment which refers to the failure of an organization to meet appropriate standards of care (Kerr & Stirling, 2008). On one hand, the broadening of the definitional scope afforded the inclusion of previously normalized abusive coach behaviours into an overall category of unacceptable behaviours that could be dealt with through the development and implementation of policy initiatives aimed at child and youth athlete protection (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014). However, on the other hand, advocates have also recognized that the homogenization of athletes' experiences of abuse under the broadest label of harassment or abuse (i.e., rather than the specific labels of, for example, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, etc.) runs the risk of contributing to overly broad and potentially ineffective athlete protection policies that are too blunt for the specific conditions that give rise to particular forms of harassment and abuse (Lang, Hartill, & Rulofs, 2016). Despite these valid and ongoing concerns, it is reasonable to suggest that this body of research has positively contributed to the creation of policies and organizations designed to protect athletes from abuse in sport through the identification and demarcation of what constitutes abusive and uncaring behaviours in the realm of sport.

As noted above, the increase in reported athlete harm and mistreatment lead to programmatic and organizational responses. In Canada, for example, organizations such as the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS) and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) were created, in part, to focus on identifying and preventing athlete abuse. For example, CAAWS published one of the first reports on harassment in sport titled "Harassment in Sport" (1994). The report defined harassment, situated within the law, and highlighted the need for sport organizations to have a harassment policy, including what this policy

ought to include. Twenty years later, the CCES published a discussion paper to review how far the sport sector has come and where Canada ought to be headed with regards to handling issues of athlete abuse and mistreatment (2015). The CCES also released the *Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport*, which included a *Policy Framework* (2002) and *Action Plan* (2004). Other reports, and this is by no means an exhaustive list, include "Speak Out!...Act Now! A Guide to Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Abuse for Clubs and Organizations" (Hockey Canada, 1997), "Harassment and Abuse in Sport: Situation Analysis & Needs Assessment" (Kinsman, 2004), and "Discussion Paper: Abuse, Harassment and Bullying in Sport" (Stirling et al., 2011) funded by the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM). The underlying objectives of these reports and initiatives, and others, are to identify and prevent athlete abuse and mistreatment, or framed differently, attend to a minimum level of athlete welfare by outlawing abusive and uncaring behaviours.

Most recently, the Government of Canada announced that they would be funding a study proposed by AthletesCAN, an athlete-centred sport organization, in collaboration with researchers at the University of Toronto, to investigate all forms of athlete abuse, discrimination and harassment (2019). The parameters of the study, framed by the Canadian government, asserts that "Canadian athletes have the right to participate in an environment free from abuse, discrimination and harassment" (para. 1), and acknowledges the necessity of a systematic culture shift in order to prevent abuse, discrimination, and harassment in sport. The study aims to examine all forms of maltreatment, including sexual, emotional and physical abuse, neglect, harassment, bullying, exploitation and discrimination in Canadian sport. The study also "aims to identify opportunities to further support athlete wellness, gauge the comfort levels of athletes when it comes to reporting incidences of maltreatment, and provide recommendations on new initiatives to address abuse,

discrimination and harassment from an athlete's perspective" (para. 4). This is one example of research efforts aimed at defining forms harassment and abuse specific to sport, as well as mechanisms of support for athlete wellness and care, an objective that aligns more so with athlete-centred coaching and the scope the current study.

In addition to these advancements at the policy level, Canadian sport researchers and practitioners dedicated to tackling abuse and maltreatment have made more recent strides with regards to addressing athlete maltreatment including the *Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in sport (UCCMS)* (Safe Sport, 2020), which more clearly addresses the spectrum of overt and nuanced forms of maltreatment while also providing detailed prescriptions for reporting such behaviour. Documents such as the UCCMS are in indicative of a growing national concern for the safety of athletes in sport and also contributed to the development of a specialized task force. In February 2019 the CAC and National Sport Organization (NSO) Safe Sport Task Force developed the at the National Safe Sport Summit held in May 2019 to discuss the logistics of an independent complaints process (Jamdanovic, 2020). At the crux of these deliberations was the "extent to which the complaint and investigative processes should be independent from sport organizations" (para. 6), a debate which begins to tackle the problematic power hierarchies within sport organizations that underpin the current state of affairs in Canadian sport while keeping the well-being of athletes at the forefront.

Athlete-Centred Sport and Athlete-Centred Coaching

As noted above, wide-scale public attention to, and research on, abuse and mistreatment in sport laid some of the groundwork for the development of an athlete-centred approach to sport and sport coaching beginning in the 1990s. Ideologically, an athlete-centred approach aims beyond the

scope of minimum protections and athlete welfare, to include an examination of what constitutes athlete well-being (Lang & Hartill, 2015; Rhind & Brackenridge, 2014). It also prioritizes the agency and autonomy of athletes with regards to their trajectory and development in the sport system. In relation to coaching specifically, in athlete-centred coaching, "the athlete's needs and rights determine the nature, content, and delivery of the sport program and inform the decisions made by involved adults" (Kerr & Stirling, 2008, p. 316); such an approach is underpinned by the assumption that there is a correlation between sport performance and the holistic health, development, and growth of athletes (Miller & Kerr, 2002). In an athlete-centred system, the health of athletes, as well as their education and moral development, are considered essential requirements in the pursuit of sporting excellence (Clarke, Smith, & Thibault, 1994). In its ideal form, this approach expands on traditional performance-based approaches and recognizes the importance of supporting and facilitating athletes' psychological, physical and social well-being in the pursuit of excellence. This is accomplished through the recognition and meeting of athletes' needs (Kidman, 2005), which is fundamental to a caring relation (Miller, 2012; Noddings, 2013), a seminal concept underpinning the theoretical foundations for the current study addressed in Chapter Three.

The field of athlete-centred coaching, fueled by increases in athlete harm and maltreatment, is rooted in the earlier developments of athlete-centred sport broadly, which links optimal sport performance to the holistic development and growth of the athletes (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Initial concerns centred around the use of performance enhancing drugs and the pressures experienced by athletes in the high-performance sport system. For example, at the policy level, this approach was advanced by the concern for athlete safety with regards to ethical issues around drug and substance abuse for performance and the role of coaches in encouraging unethical behaviour

(Dubin, 1990; Thibault & Babiak, 2005). In particular, the events involving Canadian athlete Ben Johnson during the 1988 Seoul Olympics sparked a concern for blood doping policies in sport and a discussion of athlete rights which culminated in the Dubin Inquiry. The result was the *Dubin Commission Report* (Dubin, 1990), which addressed the role of government in sport, the rights of athletes, and represented a shift in focus from the administrative and bureaucratic side of sport to the development of high performance athletes (Thibault & Babiak, 2005); this shift was coined an "athlete-centred" approach (Kidd, 1996).

The wake of the *Dubin Commission Report* and the identification/adoption of an athlete-centred approach to sport provided the groundwork for the creation of athlete-centred organizations and initiatives. For example, AthletesCAN is an organization that represents the collective voice of Canadian national team athletes and is underpinned by athlete-centred philosophy aimed at developing athlete-leaders as role models and sport policy influencers (AthletesCAN, 2019). They offer the following definition for athlete-centred sport:

> The term athlete-centred refers to both a concept and a process, rather than a single action or event. In an athlete-centred sport system, the values, programs, policies, resources allocation and priorities of sport organizations and agencies place primary emphasis on consideration of athletes' needs in a holistic sense and performance goals within that context (1994, p. 3).

They stress the important responsibilities of leaders and decision-makers to include the athlete in defining needs and goals, as well as strategies for meeting those goals; this emphasizes the agency and autonomy of athletes. Characteristics of an athlete-centred sport system also include respecting and valuing athletes by providing equitable and fair training and competition opportunities, ensuring that the overall health and well-being of athletes is safeguarded, and including athletes in

their choices while being kept aware of potential consequences and trade-offs (1994). The overall goal is to provide a positive experience for Canadian athletes. More recent Canadian sport initiatives, such as the *Sport Canada Strategy on Ethical Sport 2010* (Government of Canada, 2011), advance the ethical sport agenda through the promotion and maintenance of an athlete/participant-centred development system. Overall, the athlete-centred agenda prioritizes the rights of athletes and adopts a holistic view that encourages their flourishing within and outside of sport (AthletesCAN, 1994). Prioritizing athletes' rights is a fundamental tenant of athlete-centred coaching, which also includes athletes' experiences and views on care and caring.

An athlete-centred approach has also been woven into Canadian sport coaching in recognition that such an approach is beneficial for athlete performance and life skills development, but also to prevent athlete harm and maltreatment (Kerr & Stirling, 2008; Kidman, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011). This orientation towards athlete-centred sport coaching foregrounds the coach-athlete relationship as one of the most important interpersonal relationships in sport (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Jowett, 2005; Jowett, 2017; Lyle, 2002), and positions the coach's role as one that ought to prioritize the particular needs of athletes by encouraging and empowering athletes to take ownership over their performance and development. Kidman (2005) explains empowerment as cultivating athletes' feelings of importance, value, and that all their needs are being taken care of, while Kidd (1996) states, "the idea is to enhance the athletes' health, education, and social capacities, as well as their sporting skills, and to provide them with an environment free from sexual harassment and discrimination" (p. 269). These examples link the cultivation of athlete autonomy and agency to the prevention of maltreatment and abuse as well as their overall health and education.

Whereas the professed aims of an athlete-centred approach are clear, less is known empirically with regards to its implementation by coaches and how it is received by athletes. As an approach, it orients the structure of sport and actions of coaches towards supporting and responding to the needs, values, and objectives of athletes (Kihl, Kikulis, & Thibault, 2007). However, *how* this is accomplished is less clear. Penny and Kidman (2014) acknowledge the complexities of athlete-centred coaching as it involves 'knowing' the athlete in a way that goes beyond learning preferences and responses in a sport environment. Athlete-centred coaching is intended to adapt to suit specific coaching environments and, more specifically, "it is about embracing a social constructivist approach, knowing that the athlete has a history – psychologically, cognitively and physically, and being committed to not only to trying to find out what that is but also come to understand it and with that understanding, explore with the athlete how to best enable them to become self-aware and independent, responsible for their own learning and performance" (p. 2). The overall aim to empower athletes in sporting and non-sporting environments involves a level of self-awareness on the part of the coach with regards to the particularities of athletes and their responses to athlete-centred coaching approaches (Lombardo, 2001; Penny & Kidman, 2014). The goal is to adapt coaching methods and approaches according to athletes' responses and feedback.

Researchers investigating athlete-centred coaching have sought to understand how these theoretical underpinnings are operationalized at the level of practice by examining the experiences and perspectives of coaches and athletes. While some researchers focused on experiences of athlete-centred coaching broadly (e.g., Headley-Cooper, 2010; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010), others narrowed their scope to examine elements of athlete-centred coaching from particular coach and athlete positions. For example, Alder (2016) focused on the complexities faced by coaches

with regards to "sensemaking," a process of coming to understand the context that shapes the needs of athletes. In addition, Graham and Fleming (2016) examined how novice coaches developed an athlete-centred coaching philosophy and the subsequent challenges. These studies share an underlying concern for the role of coaches, and the challenges they face, in the application of athlete-centred coaching practices.

Applying a broader scope, Headley-Cooper (2010) examined Canadian national team coaches' perspectives and interpretations of athlete-centred coaching practices and, while participants provided a range of nuanced meanings, the overall results showed that an athlete-centred approach is one where the athlete is cared for as a whole person, not just as an athlete. Headley-Cooper's participants also discussed barriers to athlete-centred coaching which included concerns about performance and funding, the coach's level of confidence and experience, and the structure of the national team program. Kidman and Lombardo (2010) investigated the experiences of athlete-centred coaching within scope of one team and the results showed that athlete-centred coaching was linked to increased player engagement, communication, competence and motivation. Overall, these studies aimed at a broader view of athlete-centred coaching within the contexts of particular teams and from both athlete and coach perspectives.

Additional studies have examined athlete-centred coaching from the perspectives of particular coach and athlete groups, thus providing the groundwork for a spectrum of athlete-centred coaching. For example, Preston, Kerr, and Stirling (2016) conducted research investigating the experiences of athlete-centred coaching among retired elite athletes. Due to the study's varying results, the researchers proposed a continuum of athlete-centred coaching to account for barriers when implementing athlete-centred coaching approaches, as well as the variety in coaching behaviours corresponding to different athlete groups and contexts. These results support a central

tenant of athlete-centred coaching; specifically, its aim to adapt approaches according to the particularities of the context.

Finally, researchers have also attended to the difficulties experienced by coaches in applying athlete-centred coaching approaches. For example, McMahon and Zehntner (2016) explored the challenges in shifting from coach-centred to athlete-centred methods, highlighting the strength of the dominant sport culture ideologies which maintains power in the hands of coaches and an unquestioned acceptance by athletes with regards to the coaches' approach and views. These results are consistent with challenges identified in previous research (e.g., Graham & Fleming, 2016; Headley-Cooper, 2010; Preston, et al., 2016), highlighting the difficulties experienced by coaches in employing and operationalizing the philosophical underpinnings of an athlete-centred approach. Overall, the danger is that the "significance of underpinning values may become lost amidst somewhat functional ways of thinking about athlete-centred coaching" (Penney & Kidman, 2014, p. 2). These concerns and challenges with regards to the practice of athlete-centred coaching reaffirm the need for more research in this area including, as will be discussed in the proceeding section, the challenges that arise from the use of care language in sport.

Language of Care in Sport

The language of care and caring have become more prominent in sport policy and coaching pedagogy, aligning with the shift towards athlete-centered sport and sport coaching. As a concept, the language of care is rooted in an ethic of non-malevolence which is inherent in child protection pedagogies and policies (Cronin & Armour, 2019a). Garratt, Piper, and Taylor (2013) assert that 'a duty of care' is often accepted by governing bodies, coach educators and coaches themselves as an uncontroversial concept that assumes an ethic of non-malevolence and non-harm towards

participants; in other words, it is associated with minimum protections and safeguarding of athletes and this is widely understood and accepted as an expectation of all those involved in sport. However, Cronin and Armour (2017) suggest that, in practice, a duty of care has been 'taken for granted' in coaching and that the taken-for-granted nature of the quality of care and interaction between athletes and coaches risks masking uncaring and harmful behaviours.

Cronin and Armour's (2017) concerns underpin the motivation for the current study which explores how care as a concept can (and, at times, has been) taken up and understood in youth sport more so as a "condensation symbol" (Edelman, 1985, p. 6), rather than a complex, multi-dimensional, dynamic and at times contradictory concept, a tension that will be more thoroughly addressed in Chapter Three. Condensation symbols refer to words that are highly and richly connected to their audiences and contexts, and that seem to function as more than "just words" (Kaufer & Carley, 1993). More specifically, a condensation symbol refers to a "concept or maxim that evokes an emotional reaction in the audience and that is assumed to be a desirable objective without ever being properly defined" (Bundon & Clarke, 2015, p. 354). The assumptions work to silence or prevent any form of critical analysis that questions the supporting discourse and associated power relations. This is especially worrisome when used in combination with abusive or harmful coach behaviours, such as those noted above, and emphasizes our need to define and examine what care *is*, from the perspectives of athletes and coaches. An example of such efforts to define the scope of care and caring have been taken up in the UK's 'duty of care' approach to sport, as discussed in the following section.

The UK's 'duty of care' philosophy, agenda, and initiatives (e.g., Grey-Thompson, 2017) provides an example of the power and prevalence of care language in sport. In response to the plethora of uncaring and abusive behaviours in sport (e.g., Brackenridge, Bringer & Bishop, 2005;

Brackenridge et al., 2004; Carlson, 2019; Cribb, 2015; Doyle, 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2008), care quickly became a buzzword used to encompass all counter-action to mistreatment as well as a feature of sport for practicing coaches, coach educators and employers and national governing bodies (Rhind et al., 2015); specifically, care was construed as a duty aimed at protecting athletes and youth participants. In 2017, as part of the UK's *Sporting Future Strategy* (UK Government, 2015), Sports Minister Tracey Crouch commissioned Baroness Grey-Thompson to report on a wide range of duty of care issues in sport. Grey-Thompson's *Duty of Care Report* (2017) focused on the overall well-being of the people involved in sport and adopts a broad definition of 'duty of care' which includes personal safety from injury, to mental health issues, to the support given to people at the elite level. However, while the 2017 report offers a more clear definition of what constitutes care and caring, it primarily relies on a definitional scope that outlaws uncaring behaviour (i.e., safety from injury) and, while it does emphasize the importance of maintaining athlete well-being, it does not provide a clear definition of what care is, nor does it address the subjective complexities of the care experience and how it is dependent on the particularities of athletes and the sport context. The 2017 report limited its scope to elite level sport which promoted the release of a follow-up report that addressed the implications for duty of care practices at grassroots and club levels sports (UK Sports Think Tank, 2018). In particular, they wanted to ensure that "the wider definition of duty of care at grassroots level was not lost as sports bodies responded to the report's recommendations" (p. 1), a sentiment echoed in athlete-centred philosophies which emphasize the role of the context in guiding local applications as well as its operationalization across varied sport environments. The report summarizes the efforts of local sport organizations with regards to implementing the recommendations outlined in the previous *Duty of Care Report* (Grey-Thompson, 2017) aimed at high performance sport and, unlike the

previous report, focuses on the prevalence of 'Duty of Care' personal at the grassroots level. However, while it does broaden the duty of care scope, it reinforces the notion that the provision of care is achievable through mechanisms that prohibit abuse and mistreatment.

Canadian policy responses to the mistreatment of elite athletes with regards to performance enhancing drugs and the unethical use of coach power, as well as the UK's 'duty of care' initiatives in response to athlete harm and mistreatment broadly, are examples of broad-based efforts to support athletes' well-being and flourishing. They aim to ensure the safety and protection of athletes through the development of policies and top-down initiatives. However, the roles and responsibilities of coaches and leaders in the implementation and operationalization of these efforts, as well as the overall safety, development and well-being of athletes is pivotal (Côté et al., 2010; Cronin & Armour, 2019a; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007). The position of power held by coaches, emphasized by their proximity and influence with regards to athletes and their development, focuses the current study's examination of care and caring towards the landscape of sport coaching and coach education in Canada. The following sections provide an overview of the Canadian coaching system and coach pedagogy with a particular focus on Canada's National Coach Education Program (NCCP). The purpose of the latter half of this review of literature is to provide context for how coaches frame and operationalize care and caring with regards to their athletes.

Coaching and Coach Education in Canada

Given this study's focus on care and sport coaching, the literature reviewed in the following section pertains specifically to the structure of sport coaching in Canada and relevant governing bodies. The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) is the country's leading organization

responsible for sport coaching and coach education. The CAC was created in response to the recommendations made in the *Monroe Report* (1970), a federal initiative outlining a Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians, signifying the first major involvement of the federal government into the pursuit of excellence in elite sport (Macintosh, Bedecki & Franks, 1987). In its early years, as sport became a more prominent item on the federal government's agenda, the CAC's mission was aimed at providing sport coaches with more knowledge and effective training in order to better serve Canadian athletes (Morrow et al., 1989). Its current mission is "to enhance the experiences of all athletes and participants in Canada through quality coaching" (CAC, 2019iv, para. 2), through the provisions of programs that are designed to empower coaches with knowledge and skills, promote ethics, foster positive attitudes, build competence and increase coaches' credibility and recognition (2019v). The CAC recognizes the primary role of the coach in the quality of participants' sport experiences and in the provision of a safe and positive sport environment. However, while the CAC is the overseeing body for coach education in Canada, it does not have legislative power, nor the resources, to standardize and enforce coach credentials country-wide. The CAC provides the tools and standards for coach education via the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP), but it is the responsibility of NSOs and PSOs to continue these efforts within each of their sport realms. As such, the necessary levels of NCCP qualification for each level of sport is determined by the individual sport organization(s), which leads to an unstandardized level of coaching certification and education.

With regards to coach education, the CAC considers sport coaching a process of lifelong learning and believes that coach education requires a collective effort. A hallmark of the CAC's mission is the NCCP, introduced in 1973, and designed to develop responsible and trained coaches (Stirling, Kerr & Cruz, 2012). The NCCP originally had five coaching certification levels that

focused on both theory and technical components and involved active coaching experience to implement the knowledge gained in courses (Gowan, 1992). However, it has recently switched from this content-based model to a competency-based education model that is divided into three categories: community sport, competition, and instructor (CAC, 2019vi).

The NCCP's *Policy and Implementation Standards* provide a framework for the delivery of coach education through six policy categories: program development, coach developers, program delivery, program sustainability, quality control and impact assessment and database (CAC, 2016b). The NCCP's principles for program development "reinforce the competency-based curriculum approach that begins by identifying the needs of athletes and then determines what coaches must be able to do to meet these needs and effectively lead athletes" (p. 3). This is reflective of an athlete-centred philosophy in its recognition of the pivotal role of coaches in the meeting of athletes' needs. Thus, the aim is to achieve comparable levels of competence across all certified coaches, which upholds the NCCP's *Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) for coaches. Overall, the priority of the CAC is to educate coaches on the NCCP's coaching code of ethics, ethical decision making and safety in sport (CAC, 2019iii). In particular, the CAC recognizes the importance of ethical decision making in coach development and created the *Make Ethical Decisions* (MED) module to enhance a coach's knowledge and experience with regards to ethical dilemmas in sport.

Despite the valuable knowledge and training offered through the NCCP, and as stated above, the CAC does not have governing power over NSOs, PT/SOs or local clubs, other than through the safety requirements of police record checks for adults working with youth broadly. The NCCP, even in earlier examinations (e.g., Gowan, 1992), recognizes that the majority of coaches in Canada will be volunteers working with predominantly developmental athletes between

the ages of 6 and 14 years. As such, certification requirements for coaches are left to the decision of the particular NSO or PT/SO and are often minimal for the purpose of reducing barriers for volunteer coaches (Misener & Danylchuk, 2009; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Thus, there have been criticisms with regards to the efficacy of the NCCP, particularly concerning the availability of programming and incurred cost for volunteers (Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Côté, 2008; Nelson & Cushion, 2006), as well as a lack in consistency of delivery method and inefficacy of classroom-based learning for coach education (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Nelson and Cushion (2006) argue that the inefficacy is based on a lack of understanding with regards to the learning processes and sources of knowledge for coaches. This concern is echoed by other scholars in the field concerned with the efficacy of coach education programs (e.g., Abraham & Collins, 1998; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), and has led to a plethora of research and initiatives examining coach education and pedagogy.

Overall, these concerns contribute to the complexities of the coach's role in sport with regards to athlete interaction in sport, broadly, and in youth Canadian volleyball, specifically. The lack of mandatory coaching requirements for coaches, and the variability across sport-types in Canada results in an equally diverse body of literature examining coach education. As the next section will address, scholars working in this field assert that there are multiple models and coaching approaches that reflect the diversity of sporting environments and athletes. This aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of athlete-centred coaching which prioritizes this diversity and aims to empower and include athletes in their sport development journeys. Similarly, care and caring, when operationalized, are capable navigating these complexities through prioritizing the particularities of the athletes and context. However, as noted above, the language of care when used by coaches, declares a meeting of athlete needs which, in practice, may be assumed and not

properly defined and/or fulfilled. As this study will show, notions of sport-oriented care are often linked to performance outcomes and success which can be problematic. Thus, the following section will provide an overview of coach education, a field of study which examines the complex terrain of sport with regards to coach learning and pedagogy. The variation in coaching methodologies across sport settings aligns with central tenants of athlete-centred coaching and care, prioritizing the particularities of athletes.

Coach education research and pedagogy.

Sport coaching has become a robust field of study with many scholars attending to the complexities of coach education and learning (e.g., Avner et al., 2017; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Gould, Carson & Blanton, 2013; Nash, 2015; Potrac, Denison & Gilbert, 2013). While there are many theoretical/substantive and methodological approaches employed in this body of research, and a resounding agreement regarding the need for this research, there is no consensus on a 'single' model of coach development (Potrac, Denison, et al., 2013). However, in studying the sources of knowledge and learning for coaches, research has shown that coaches predominantly learn from observation and experience (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Douglas & Carless, 2008; Erickson et al., 2008; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005; Lemyre, Trudel, & Durand-Bush, 2007; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Thus, a prominent approach in the study of sport coaching pedagogy has been to acknowledge particularities of individuals and what they bring to the complexity of the sport coaching setting; specifically, researchers have argued for a need to bring the person back into the study of coaching (Jones, 2009; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Nash, 2015; Potrac, Gilbert, Denison, 2013). With this in mind, there have been coordinated efforts

among coaching scholars and practitioners to develop flexible frameworks and standards of practice designed to develop coaches, while keeping the needs of athletes at the forefront.

An example of coordinated international efforts is the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE). In 2011, members of the ICCE developed the *International Sport Coaching Framework* (ISCF) which provides a 'robust model of coach development' that was then used as a consultation document at the 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in London (ICCE, 2013). The framework offered key considerations for the support, design and refinement of coach education and development programs for sport federations, coaching organizations and educational institutions. The ISCF is athlete-centred and emphasizes the responsibility of coaches "to improve and expand their capabilities on an ongoing basis to fully meet the needs of athletes they serve" (p. 7). The ISCF also sees organizations as responsible for ensuring that coaches have sufficient education, philosophical orientation as well as the resources required to fulfil their duties.

As stated above, a prominent approach to coach education and coach education research has been the inclusion and recognition of the particularities of coaches and how they influence coaching philosophies and strategies in sport settings (e.g., Jones, 2009; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Nash, 2015; Potrac, Gilbert, et al., 2013). The theoretical underpinnings of this approach align with those of the Ethics of Care (EoC), as will be discussed in Chapter Three. The following section will provide an overview of research examining care in coach education.

Care in coach education and research.

As will be explained in Chapter Three, care is a relation that prioritizes the particularities of coaches and athletes, and brings their experiences to the forefront of coaching knowledge and

pedagogy. In particular, Cronin and Armour (2019b) contend that sport coaching ought to be "repositioned as an activity with caring at its very core" (p.1) and call for coach resources and education to illustrate how coaches care for athletes in sport contexts. The authors contribute to answering this call through an examination of pedagogical case studies of care in youth sport settings. Armour and Cronin (2019) claim that pedagogical case studies (e.g., Armour, 2014; Casey, Goodyear & Armour, 2017) are an ideal method for examining 'caring' due to its inherently holistic and relational nature. They recognize that, while coaches engage in, and acknowledge, the pedagogical care practices presented in theoretical care frameworks (Noddings, 2005), the culture of coaching does not value care, with its emphasis on competitiveness and "detached leaders" (Cronin & Armour, 2019c, p. 58). This is a challenge that all caring and athlete-centred coaches face as they devote themselves to caring for and meeting the needs of athletes in an environment that presents challenges for this orientation, and also supports the aims of the current study to examine how care is operationalized by coaches and experienced by athletes in sport settings. The following section will review existing literature examining care in youth and college/university sport settings.

Care Research in Youth and College/University Sport Settings

As the previous section explains, the examination of care and caring in coach education and pedagogy is a relatively new research avenue. However, earlier studies have examined experiences of care and perceptions of caring environments in youth and college/university sport settings. For example, scholars working in the field of Positive Youth Development (PYD) have examined participants' perceptions of care and caring in sport-based programs (e.g., Fry et al., 2012; Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010; Newton, Watson, et al., 2007), while scholars examining care

and caring in university/college settings focus mainly on coaches' understandings and notions of care with their athletes (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Knust & Fisher, 2015). Consistent across these studies is a need for further examination of what constitutes care and caring in sport, as well as an acknowledgment of the important role of coaches and leaders in athletes'/participants' experiences of care and perceptions of caring environments (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Côté et al., 2010; Larson, 2006). In comparing the two bodies of literature, research in youth sport settings has focused primarily on participants' perceptions and experiences of caring environments and leaders (e.g., Aarresola, Itkonen & Laine, 2017; Figgins et al., 2016; Messner & Musto, 2014; Newton, Fry, et al., 2007), and one result has been the development of a standardized measure of care, known as the Caring Climate Scale (CCS), while research conducted in college/university sport settings has focused more on coaches' experiences and perceptions with regards to their caring methods, behaviours and responding to the holistic needs of athletes (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Knust & Fisher, 2015).

Positive Youth Development.

In the field of PYD, care and caring have been used as measures associated with effective programming. PYD views all young people as potential contributors to the broader society and its goal is to support the holistic development of youth through intentional programming (Benson, 1997; Holt, 2016; Lerner et al., 2005; Petitpas et al., 2005). However, researchers recognized the limits of participation as the sole measure of success (Eccles et al., 2003; Newton, Fry, et al., 2007), and began to focus on the perceptions of participants (Aarresola et al., 2017; Figgins et al., 2016; Messner & Musto, 2014), as well as the role of adult leaders in the provision of caring environments. In drawing upon a PYD approach, the role of leaders and coaches is to encourage

participants' learning of life skills that are intended to aid in their lives beyond the sport program, and as such, programs aim to prioritize "both emotional safety and the need for a relationship with a caring adult" (Hellison, 2000, p. 35), while at the same time treating youth as whole people with emotional, social and physical needs and interests. Thus, PYD researchers have used care, or rather the presence of a caring environment, as a measure for successful programming. Overall, "the ability to assess caring and explore its links with positive development would provide researchers, theorists, and practitioners with a more complete understanding of the optimal environment to create in physical activity settings" (Newton, Fry, et al., 2007, p. 68). One such measurement tool is the Caring Climate Scale (CCS).

Caring Climate Scale.

The CCS is a standardized measure that developed as a result of research examining care and caring in PYD and sport settings. Designed by Newton, Fry, and colleagues (2007), the CCS measures youth participants' experiences of care and caring in PYD contexts. Consistent with care research broadly, the quality of the relationship between youth and adults had been identified as critical in fostering social, academic and psychological outcomes (Rhodes, 2004; Newton, Fry, et al., 2007), which are measures of program success and integral to a caring climate. Thus, effective programs are supported by social interactions and relationships characterized by caring as well as warmth, closeness, support, guidance, good communication, secure attachment and responsiveness (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

Specific items in the CCS questionnaire reflect a concern for respect, kindness, fairness, helping, listening, accepting, safety, comfort, welcoming and success (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Newton, Fry, et al., 2007). Broadly, Newton, Fry, and colleagues (2007) define a caring climate

as "the extent to which individuals perceive a particular setting to be interpersonally inviting, safe, supportive, and able to provide the experience of being valued and respected" (p. 70). While these categories are diverse, Newton, Fry, and colleagues claim that "they capture the psychological climate fundamental to positive development" (p. 68) and that 'caring' is an umbrella term that encapsulates their total essence and qualities.

The CCS measurement tool has been employed by researchers in different settings (e.g., Fry et al., 2012; Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010; Gano-Overway et al., 2009; Newton, Watson, et al., 2007), as the items in the CCS allowed for varying constructs and descriptions of caring climates, while simultaneously emphasizing the influential role of leaders and coaches in fostering such an environment. For example, a study conducted by Newton, Watson, and colleagues (2007) with youth participants in the National Youth Sport Program (NYSP) in the United States showed that caring was associated with less ego-involving and more empathetic actions and behaviours on the part of leaders. Also within the context of NYSP programming, Fry and colleagues (2012) measured youth perceptions of a caring climate and found a link to participants' self-reported well-being. As a result of their study, the authors offer the following description of a caring climate:

> In a caring climate, everyone is treated with kindness and respect and an effort is made to make them feel like valued members of the group. It may be that a caring climate helps eradicate youngsters' fears that they will be put down, made fun of, and chided for their mistakes and/or weaknesses. If so, it is possible that this type of climate helps youngsters feel more confident 'putting themselves out there,' allowing others to get to know them better, and setting them up to feel safe and comfortable about expressing their positive emotions and monitoring and dealing appropriately with their negative emotions (p. 51).

Alternatively, in a less caring climate, Fry and colleagues assert that negative interactions are more likely and that relations of trust between youth and leaders are tougher to cultivate, once again, emphasizing the pivotal role of leaders in participants' experiences of care and caring.

Overall, researchers acknowledge that "further evidence is needed to determine more specifically, how a caring climate can provide youth with an enjoyable youth sport experience" (Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010, p. 296) and assert a need to elaborate on CCS research to explore the perception of athletes with regards to coach behaviour in sport settings. Also, while the developed and use of the CCS confirms the importance of care research in these settings and prioritizes the experiences of participants, it offers broad descriptions of care and does not link the individual experiences of participants to the specific leaders and coaches responsible for the setting. Without these links, care is construed as a set of characteristics and descriptors that, like a 'condensation symbol' (cf., Bundon & Clarke, 2015; Eledman, 1985; Kaufer & Carley, 1993), communicates a standard of experiences without ever being specifically defined by care recipients in context. While the CCS is not employed in the current study, it is a notable avenue of research which prioritizes care as a primary measure of positive youth experiences. In addition, and as noted above, the concerns associated with the broad definitional scope of care characteristic of the CCS is an example of the concerns associated with the use of care language in sport, a notion at the crux of the current study's rationale.

University and college sport.

Research examining care at the collegiate level recognizes the pivotal role that coaches play in athletes' experiences of care and caring in sport. However, while youth sport and PA studies employing the CCS focused on generalizing participants' perceptions of care, studies examining

collegiate settings have focused primarily on the experiences and conceptualizations of care from the perspectives of coaches (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Gearity, 2012a; Knust & Fisher, 2015), with the exception of Gearity's (2012b) study of poor coaching where participants were collegiate and adult athletes. The results provide a broad and general idea of what constitutes care and caring, as well as context-specific examples that were further divided into sub-topics addressing factors that facilitated and/or constrained care in these settings. These studies were informed by the EoC theory, which will be addressed in Chapter Three, and recognize the value of individualized and particular coaching approaches when responding to student-athletes. Results are also consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of athlete-centred coaching where the aim is to develop the whole person and not just the athlete (Kidman, 2005; Kidman & Penny, 2014). However, a consistent theme across these studies is the link between care and responding to athletes' needs, as well as the challenges faced by coaches in with regards to individualizing athlete care in the context of a high-performance sport system (i.e., NCAA Division I).

As addressed in previous sections, the role of coaches in responding to the particular needs of athletes is fundamental to care and caring in sport, and this is reflected in the results of several studies conducted across college/university sport settings. For example, participants from Knust and Fisher's (2015) study, conducted with 12 NCAA Division I female head coaches, expressed the importance of individualizing care and the importance of reciprocity and trust in caring, as well as understanding the life of the student-athlete; specifically, participants described care as "spending a lot of time listening and communicating with student athletes about a variety of topics, trying to understand their perspectives, caring for them as individuals, and working through conflict with them" (p. 100). This is consistent across other studies (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017;

Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017), which found that participants associated care with actions and behaviours that developed the holistic/whole person for life, gave athletes what they needed to be successful, and built lasting relationships. Participants in these studies (Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Gearity, 2012a; Knust & Fisher, 2015) also reported on barriers to care. Specifically, coaches expressed how challenging it was to care for particular athletes in the NCAA, a sport system that focused on "winning at all costs" (Knust & Fisher, 2015, p. 100), and that prioritized revenue and rules. Gearity (2012a) attends to these concerns as well in his study examining athletes' perceptions of poor coaching. Specifically, he addresses the performance expectations of coaches and how research has focused studies on coaches with high winning percentages.

Overall, caring coaches were able to balance the goals of winning with development, which kept the needs of athlete at the forefront of concern and coaching efforts. This is consistent with literature examining athlete mistreatment, athlete-centred sport, care in sport and sport coaching, as well as PYD, which emphasize the pivotal role of coaches and leaders. However, in these studies, the focus has been either on the provider (coach), or recipient (athlete) of care, and does not examine care from the perspectives of both parties in the caring relation.

Gaps in the Literature

The current study examines care from the perspectives of athletes, coaching and parents of one youth volleyball team, moving beyond merely identifying and outlawing uncaring and abusive behaviours. This is not to diminish the extensive and robust body of literature addressing harm and abuse, neither does it devalue the work of policy makers and organizations in designing and implementing frameworks and procedures with these protections in mind. On the contrary, these

existing bodies of literature, along with the efforts of scholars, practitioners and policy makers, have provided the groundwork for research and scholarship to move beyond the examination of minimum protections and towards a better understanding of what constitutes athlete care, well-being, and flourishing. From the lens of care, preventing and outlawing uncaring behaviour does not tell us what care is, and the current study addresses this gap.

Existing research examining care in youth and collegiate sport settings sought to measure and define care as a set of desirable characteristics and behaviours that would contribute to successful youth programming. However, standardizing descriptions and experiences of care do not fully attend to the particularities of participants with regards to their experiences of care and caring. Alternatively, care research conducted in competitive and high performance environments focused their efforts solely on the experiences and perceptions of coaches (Knust & Fisher, 2015; Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017), and have not examined care from the perspectives of athletes, albeit with a few exceptions (e.g., Gearity, 2012a). This is consistent in the field of sport coaching where researchers have focused their efforts on the experiences of coaches (Cronin & Armour, 2019a).

While care researchers have incorporated the EoC (Noddings, 2005; 2013) into their theoretical frameworks (e.g., Armour & Cronin, 2019; Gearity, 2012a; Jones, 2009; Knust & Fisher, 2015; Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017), there has not yet been a study that operationalizes Noddings' (2013) caring relation in the collection of data; specifically, examining experiences of care from the perspectives of both athletes and coaches, as well as parents, from a single team. Parents have been notably absent in the current body of literature examining care and recent studies have shown their importance in youth athletes' sport journeys (e.g., Elliott et al., 2018; Neely et al., 2017). The current study addresses this gap. Descriptions

and accounts from both views are valuable, but if they are taken in isolation of one another then a caring relation has not been examined. Care as a relation between coach and athlete must take into account how the athlete receives and responds to caring coach behaviour. Without this step, regardless of the work done by coaches to ensure authentic dialogue and communication (Armour & Cronin, 2019; Noddings, 2005), there is a risk of care becoming a 'condensation symbol' (Bundon & Clarke, 2015; Edelman, 1985; Kaufer & Carley, 1993) that assumes the needs of athletes.

The final gap that the current study addresses is with regards to the particular youth sport setting of competitive volleyball in Ontario, Canada. While volleyball has been addressed in studies investigating care in the college sport setting (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017), as well as abusive coaching in volleyball settings (e.g., O'Keeffe & Red, 2016), research conducted in youth volleyball settings in Canada and the United States has focused on coaching behaviours that were not specific to care and caring (Isabel et al., 2008; Erikson & Côté, 2016). Furthermore, there has been no research examining care and caring conducted in the Canadian youth sport context. This study addresses these gaps by examining the experience of care in youth competitive volleyball in Ontario, from the perspectives of athletes, coaches, and parents within a single team over one competitive season. The following chapter will present a detailed account of the theoretical underpinnings for the current study; specifically, it will outline the EoC, its origins and critics, as well as supporting theories such as the Ethics of Need (EoN) and elements from Rawls' (1971; 2009) Ethic of Justice (EoJ).

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The theoretical foundation for this study is the *Ethic of Care* (EoC), a normative ethical theory which construes *care* as a relation between persons and orients moral agents "to focus on the needs of those one cares for in relational contexts" (Norlock, 2019, para. 28). In other words, *care* does not simply refer to the outcome or result of a particular set of behaviours and actions; nor is it a standalone declaration of a persons' status, intentions and/or attitude towards others, although that is certainly part of it. More specifically *care*, as a relation, requires that both the carer and recipient of care contribute to the relationship in particular ways. The carer is responsible for attending to and meeting the needs of the carer and, most importantly, in order for an experience or relation to be identified as caring, it must be received and affirmed as such by the recipient (Noddings, 2013). For example, in regard to the current study and sport broadly, coaches may claim that their methods and strategies are *caring* but, according to the EoC, this cannot be confirmed without an affirmative response from the athlete.[1] Given the power imbalance that exists in coach-athlete relationships (e.g., Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009; 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2011), and the performance pressures characteristic of competitive sport (e.g., Bowen et al., 2017; Hardman & Jones, 2011; Malloy, Ross, & Zakus, 2003; Shogan, 1999; Simon, 2013), athletes' perceptions of what counts as care in sport broadly, and caring coach behaviour specifically, risks being constructed in such a way that disguises uncaring, and potentially harmful, coaching practices. Thus, to effectively employ the EoC as a tool to evaluate care and caring in the youth sport context, it must account for the institutional setting and how the norms and aims of sport influence conceptualizations and practices of care.

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[1] This necessary criteria for caring contributed to the design of this current study; specifically, coaches, athletes, and parents were interviewed.

To account for the influence of the institutional setting, this study examines care using the methodology of *Institutional Ethnography* (IE), which is designed to illuminate the links between an institution's norms and rules with the everyday practices and experiences of people in local contexts (Smith, 1987; 2005). As will be explained more thoroughly in Chapter Four, an IE study involves examining an institution's governing texts and organizational documents, as well as observational and interview data from participants. Given the EoC's focus on relationships between persons,[2] applying this framework to examine care within the context of an IE study requires a more robust unpacking of the EoC and how it can be employed to evaluate care and caring within an institutional context that often prioritizes aims of performance and competition success at the expense of athlete care (e.g., Burke, 2001; Gearity, 2012a). In particular, understanding *how* potential carers perceive, evaluate and respond to the *needs* of others is foundational to the utility of the EoC as a framework to examine caring relations broadly, and in sport specifically. Thus, the following chapter will provide an overview of the EoC and how it attends to needs. It will also include an overview of the *Ethics of Need* (EoN), which more robustly theorizes needs involved in caring (Miller, 2012), before attending to features of Rawls' (1971; 2009) *Ethics of Justice* (EoJ). As will be addressed later on in this chapter, in practice, a moral agent's response to needs does not always align with the EoC, but this is not necessarily cause for worry. Alternatively, institutional settings imbued with asymmetrical balances of power between members require a more justice-oriented approach. Therefore, the EoJ has been included to elicit a more fulsome understanding of the power of institutional norms and their effect on notions and practices of care.

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[2] It is important to note that Noddings (2013) attends to human relations with animals, plants, things, and ideas (pp. 148-169) but does not apply this theory to an institutional setting until her theorizing of caring organizations (2015).

Care, Needs and Agency

The EoC's central focus "is on the compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular others for whom we take responsibility" (Held, 2006, p. 10) and, as noted above, for a caring relation to be completed the care recipient must affirm and/or confirm that they feel cared for by evaluating *how* the carer met or responded to their needs.[3] To describe this, Noddings (2013) refers to the attitude of the carer and how it ought to evoke certain feelings in the recipient in order to be considered caring. She explains: "When the attitude of the one-caring bespeaks caring, the cared-for glows, grows stronger, and feels not so much that he has been given something as that something has been added to him" (p. 20). Noddings identifies the positive impact that caring has on recipients of care; however, this description does not quite capture the experience of the care recipient in such way that is useful for evaluating caring practices in sport.

Alternatively Miller's EoN, which more robustly theorizes the needs involved in caring, offers a more useful lens through which to examine and identify the effects of caring on the care recipient. In particular, Miller (2012) links caring to the care recipients' experience of *agency*, which she defines as: "The ability to achieve some manner of results in the world, to affect change in accordance with one's volition, and to maintain the ability to carry out projects (often self-determined) in a surrounding environment" (p. 24). This definition encapsulates how practices of care, ideally, empower the care recipient and support them in such a way that they feel as if they can act freely and meaningfully contribute to the world around them. In other words, to be cared for means that one's fundamental need(s) are being met in such a way that contributes to their agency. In the context of sport and this current study, *how* coaches respond to the needs of athletes

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[3] To be clear, as an ethical theory, the EoC approaches the question of care primarily from the position of a moral agent who is responding to the needs of another. Thus, to account for the pivotal role of the care recipient and their contributions to the relation, the EoC focuses on the *needs* of the care recipient and *how* a carer (or moral agent) ought to respond.

will impact how athletes feel about their abilities to perform and contribute overall, which has implications for their lives outside of sport as well.

Miller's link between care and agency is grounded in her account of the fundamental needs involved in caring. In particular, Miller (2012) asserts that "fundamental needs are those that must be met and cared for in order to establish, sustain or restore agency" (p. 11), and she supports this assertion by theorizing the moral relevance of fundament needs. She claims that one's agency is compromised when their fundamental needs are not met and states, "it is the relationship between needs and harm, however, that most clearly demonstrates the moral significance of fundamental needs" (p. 23). In other words, if fundamental needs are not met then the resulting harm is that of compromised agency, where one feels as though they are unable to contribute, affect change and/or act in accordance to their own volition. In the context of sport, for example, if athletes' fundamental needs are not met, responded to, or fulfilled, the result is an experience of compromised agency whereby the athlete is either physically or psychologically harmed. As noted in Chapter Two a current crisis in sport, and one of the underlying motivations for this current study, is the increasing amount of athlete abuse and maltreatment (e.g., Donnelly et al., 2014; Lang, Hartill, & Rulofs, 2016; Raakman, Dorsch, & Rhind, 2010; Stirling et al., 2011). Thus, an account of caring which prioritizes athletes' agency will meaningfully contribute to efforts working to minimize athlete harm and ensure their safety and flourishing in sport.

Overall, Miller's (2012) link between fundamental needs, harm, and agency posits that humans' experience of agency is the culminating effect of care and caring. However, the EoN builds from Noddings' EoC which attends more so to *how* carers ought to engage with care recipients in order to fulfill their needs in caring ways. In particular, to care is "to attend, listen, observe and to maintain relations of care and trust" (Noddings, 2015, p. 74). Thus, in the context

of the current study, the EoC's evaluation would judge a moral agent's response to needs based on

their attention, sensitivity and responsiveness to the particularities of the relation and context, with

a focus on how such a response is received and affirmed by the care recipient expressing such

needs (Noddings, 2005; 2013). However, as noted above, examining care in the context of an IE

study involves an analysis of documents and texts (Smith, 1987; 2005) which has implications for

how needs are met, thus requiring features of a justice-oriented ethic. In addition, the utility of the

EoJ is further illustrated by Miller (2012) in her account of fundamental needs as inescapable,

immutable, and unsusceptible to change, features which will be more thoroughly discussed in the

latter section(s) of this chapter. The following section will provide a more thorough account of the

EoC and the EoN, and how they will be utilized to examine care and caring in Ontario youth

volleyball, before addressing the EoJ and its contributions to this study's theoretical framework.

Care and Caring

The experience of care that underpins practices of care in the EoC is based on a universal

human experience of being cared for; specifically, "every human being has been cared for as a

child or would not be alive" (Held, 2006, p. 3). Thus, the efforts of the carer, and their role in

responding to the needs of care recipients, is rooted "in the long history of responsibility for the

welfare of children and the maintenance of caring relations" (Noddings, 2015, p. 73). In particular,

the EoC was inspired by Carol Gilligan's pivotal work in moral psychology that empowered these

caring positions of women as a point of view that prioritized relational approaches to moral

decision making. Relational approaches to ethics "conceives of moral status, right action, or good

character as constituted by beneficent ties or other bonds of sharing" (Metz & Miller, 2016, p. 1),

and therefore prioritize the particularities of context as well as the persons who are the subject of

moral action or concern. Gilligan's *In A Different Voice* (1982) was ground-breaking as an alternative moral framework which was initially received in opposition to mainstream moral psychology. In particular, Gilligan's work was inspired by the experiments by Lawrence Kohlberg in the 1970s who found that, according to his moral scale which prioritized rationality, universality and abstract rules, girls seemed to score lower than boys (1971; 1972). In response, Gilligan (1982) conducted her own experiment(s) with girls and developed an alternative moral scale. She concluded that, it is not that girls are morally deficient, but that they see the same moral situation in a different way with answers to moral questions beginning with the relation and particularities of the context, instead of abstract moral rules.

Gilligan's claims, however, were not free from controversy. For example, Tronto (1993a) asserted that Gilligan's results perpetuated sexist stereotypes, while Walker (1993) claimed that the same results were inaccurate due to the insignificance of the differences in the moral reasoning of males and females throughout various life stages. Critics also claimed that differences in moral reasoning were less dependent on gender and were instead correlated more so with education and cognitive development (Greeno & Maccoby, 1993); however, both factors identify the salient impact of context and structure on practices of care. In addition, Gilligan was criticized for her inadequate sample size and for drawing such drastic conclusions about gendered reasoning (Luria, 1993). Despite criticisms from various scholars, Gilligan's work is foundational to the EoC theory. In particular, the EoC's critics are mostly concerned with the absence of contextual factors in the abstract account of the theory. However, this highlight its strengths and efficacy as a fundamentally relational approach which requires context particularities to be accounted for in order to meaningfully tackle moral questions.

It is important to note that Gilligan did not seek to discredit Kohlberg's results, but instead

aimed to expand the framework for moral decision making to include this alternative approach. In a complex world of social relations, both approaches to moral decision making are valuable; specifically, a negotiation between the contexts' particularities and any abstract moral rules which are thought to apply more accurately represents *how* moral questions are answered in practice. In reference to the relational moral view, Benhabib (1985) writes, "once these cognitive characteristics are seen not as deficiencies, but as essential components of adult moral reasoning at the post-conventional stage, then women's apparent moral confusion of judgment becomes a sign of their strength" (p. 403). Including both approaches into a broader framework of moral decision making has implications for the current study. In particular, the caring capacities of institutions and *how* they respond to the needs of athletes are characterized by a reliance on rules and norms of care that do not, and cannot, account for the particularities of relation that Gilligan emphasizes, much like universal and abstract moral frameworks. However, the caring efforts of institutions, according to the EoC, can be "instrumental in establishing the conditions under which in-person caring can flourish" (Noddings, 2002, p. 23), requiring a process of negotiation and translation which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

As noted above, Gilligan laid the groundwork for the EoC which theorized an approach to moral decision making that prioritizes the relation and begins from a point of human connectedness. However, Noddings (2002) notes that, despite its importance, over-emphasizing this history at times causes confusion between *caring* and *caregiving*. As an activity, caregiving "can be engaged in with or without the care described in care ethics" (p. 73), and Noddings asserts the importance of distinguishing these activities from the overall ethical approach. This sentiment is echoed by Miller (2012) as she states that not all care is dignifying; she writes, "caretaking activities, when performed negligently or malevolently, demonstrate the power of care to diminish

dignity" (p. 83). She continues, "to be clear, while care performed negligently or malevolently cannot remove a person's inherent moral worth, it can diminish the moral regard that others' have for the needy individual, as well as the moral regard that the needy individual has for herself" (p. 83). This is affirmed by Kittay (2001) who writes, "the labour unaccompanied by the attitude of care cannot be good care" (p. 560), which affirms the utility of the EoC. In other words, while one may engage in practices and systems of activities and processes labeled as caring, if this is done without true concern for the agency of the recipient, a caring relation does not exist. For example, and as noted above, in the context of sport if a coach declares their actions or behaviours as caring, this does not guarantee that caring relation exists. Therefore, the EoC prioritizes the attitude of the carer as well as the response of the recipient when evaluating caring practices, which exemplifies its utility in the context of the current study.

The Ethic of Care (EoC)

Whereas Gilligan's work is instrumental in the field of moral psychology, the EoC was developed by Nel Noddings, a philosopher and mathematician, whose work operationalized the value of relational decision making and was inspired by her work in the context of educational environments, particularly with regards to student learning. Broadly, she positioned care as a guiding principle and value for all of our moral decision making and action which is derived from our universal experience of being cared for. She writes, "as human beings we want to care and be cared for" (2013, p. 7), which she claims is a universal and accessible attitude predicated on our interdependence and relationships with others.[4] It also proposes that, from this universal experience, ethical decisions be made in response to the specific concrete situations and relations

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[4] Miller's (2012) fundamental needs are also predicated on the universality of human experience of interdependence and interconnectedness.

in which moral dilemmas arise. As noted above, this approach contrasts traditional ethical frameworks which arrive at moral decisions from a place of abstraction by prioritizing a set of rules over the particular experiences of persons in local settings. Noddings (2005) claims that a caring relation, in its most basic form, is an encounter between two human beings – a carer and a recipient of care; it is a way of "being in relation, not a specific set of behaviours" (p. 17), and is characterized by "attention, dialogue, recognition of expressed needs, and immediate response moved by the feeling aroused when people are in direct context with those in need" (2015, p. 76). Noddings uses the language of *one-caring* (carer) and *cared-for* (recipient of care) in her discussion of caring relations.

Both the one-caring and the cared-for contribute to the relation in particular and different (asymmetrical) ways. A person occupying an institutionally-defined position of one-caring, such as a teacher or sport coach, is ideally in a constant state of caring and responding to needs of particular students or athletes; as one-caring, "we recognize that the other is an *other*, not necessarily exactly like us, and we must enter a receptive mode in order to find out what the other is going through, what he or she needs. We listen to expressed needs and do not assume what the other needs by reference to our own experience" (Noddings, 2015, p. 78). In turn, the cared-for must receive and affirm the actions and efforts of the one-caring *as* care. Noddings addresses this requirement by stating:

> In our examination of caring and ethical caring, we noted a quest for response; success in establishing caring is marked by completion in the form of affective response in the cared-for. In the intellectual domain, our caring represents a quest for understanding. When we understand, we feel that that this object-other has responded to us. The quest for understanding establishes a direction in the intuitive mode, and this direction is both sure-

and-clear and continually subject to minor changes. We know where we are headed but

must tack constantly to stay on a course we cannot chart beforehand (2013, p. 169).

Overall, caring is an ongoing process that requires conscious and continuous attention (Eaker-Rich

& Galen, 1996; Hawk & Lyons, 2008). Thus, the carer responds to the needs of the care recipient,

and to complete the caring relation, the care recipient responds and affirms their experience of care

in some way. This manifests as an acknowledgement that the carer's efforts have been received,

and may be expressed as gratitude, affirmation or appreciation (Noddings, 2002; 2013), although

not always. In cases where care recipients resist the carer's efforts, more work is required on the

part of the carer to reframe how they are responding to needs. Therefore, from the position of one-

caring, how they come to *know* the needs of the cared-for has implications for their response to

needs, as well as the completion of a caring relation. The remainder of this section will focus

primarily on the position of carer, or one-caring, as a moral agent.

To ensure that needs are met and that care is received, Noddings claims that the carer

operates in an intuitive, or receptive, mode characterized by *engrossment* and *motivational*

displacement. In other words, the carer is truly dedicated to establishing, maintaining or restoring

the agency of the cared-for by attending to their fundamental needs. Engrossment refers to "an

open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for" (Noddings, 2002, p. 16), while motivational

displacement is the intentional shift in concern towards the well-being and projects of the cared-

for (Noddings, 2013). It involves paying close attention to the feelings, needs, and desires of the

cared-for while understanding a situation from their point of view (Held, 2006). As Held states:

Those who conscientiously care for others are not seeking primarily to further their own

individual interests; their interests are intertwined with the persons they care for. Neither

are they acting for the sake of *all others* or *humanity in general*; they seek instead to

preserve or promote an actional human relation between themselves and *particular others*.

Persons in caring relations are acting for self-and-other together (p. 12).

Blum (1994) also recognizes the importance of a shift in motivation towards the other, which requires an awareness of one's own desires and projects. This is required of the one-caring to ensure that there is no confusion regarding one's own needs with those of the cared-for. This shift is not at the expense of the one-caring, for according to Noddings (2013), to care about others is to care for one's own ethical ideal (see also Blum, 1994).

For Noddings, "a failure on the part of either carer or cared-for blocks completion of caring and, although there may still be a relation – that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something towards the other – it is not a *caring* relation" (Noddings, 2005, p. 15). Noddings (2013) acknowledges that, in some instances, it may be the case that the relation needs to end, based on the position and experiences of the parties involved. However, conceptually, this is still a move towards Noddings' ideal caring relation where the position of each party is received, acknowledged and confirmed. Thus, caring relations are ongoing whereby the carer and care recipient engage in continuous dialogue characterized by an expression and response to needs.

Critics of the EoC.

An examination of the critiques of the EoC requires an acknowledgment of the historical context in which the framework was developed. Noddings' first formulation of the EoC was released in 1984, soon after Gilligan's *In A Different Voice* (1982) which empowered the moral standpoint of women in caring positions. In contrast to the dominant ethical frameworks of the time, which prioritized rationality and abstract rules, care ethics have been criticized for being "nothing more than an overly emotional, relativist, anti-justice, context-bound, 'merely personal'

form of moral engagement" (Miller, 2012, p. 50) derived from the contextual experiences of women in mothering roles. However, EoC proponents (e.g., Held, 2006; Metz & Miller, 2016; Miller, 2012; Noddings, 2010) respond by noting that the role of nurturing is not mother-bound. The initial claims that care and justice ethics are divided along gendered lines is a demarcation of moral responsibility that is indicative of the time of writing, emphasized by care ethics' origins in moral psychology. Proponents suggest that if we refrain from overemphasizing the relationship between care and gender, in particular its seemingly inextricable link to the motherhood model, we are left with two approaches to moral reasoning and two ways to respond to the needs of ourselves and others (Benhabib, 1985; Noddings, 2010). To be clear, they are not suggesting that gender is morally irrelevant when considering ethical questions, but that the socio-historical context in which the EoC was crafted is not grounds for its inefficacy as a moral theory.

Other critics claimed that the EoC oversimplifies caring relations, and therefore is incapable of addressing social, political, and economic particularities (Houston, 1990) bound to race, class and gender. Hoagland (1990) also argues, rightfully, that care cannot ignore political reality, material conditions, or the social structure of the world. However, Noddings (2013) is not suggesting that, to uphold the ethical ideal of the one-caring, socio-political details ought to be disregarded. Alternatively, she asserts that the one-caring must be perceptually aware of their own initial judgments regarding the cared-for, which includes how they are shaped by the socio-political context, as well as how that may impact how they interpret and respond to the needs of the cared-for. It is not that there is no evaluation or assessment by the one-caring, but the EoC would see that the ethically ideal one-caring recognizes those assumptions and judgments and how they could possibly impact their caring. The required motivational shift takes care of the lack of evaluation/judgment because the one-caring must evaluate their own and the cared-for's position

in order to respond appropriately. When employed in a context such as sport, the one-caring coach would be aware of how the aims and pressures of sport influence their conceptualizations of care and how this impacts their perception of, and response to, the cared-for athletes' needs.

The EoC has also been accused of paying scant attention to the conditions that exploit carers, particularly women. For example, Diller (1988) raises the concern that there is a "lack of critical consciousness or a kind of naïveté about the costs and consequences for the women who must do these caring labours" (p. 333). In some cases, caring may not be a response to the perceived needs of others, but instead a coping strategy "to handle crises of hurt, domination, and rejection" (Puka, 1990, p. 60). Furthermore, Card (1990) worries that the EoC's emphasis on in-person relations "threatens to exclude as ethically insignificant our relationships with most people in the world, because we do not know them and never will" (p. 102). Both of these concerns are valid. However, since Noddings first published the theory, it has been applied to a diverse set of contexts, personal and global (e.g., Barnes et al., 2015; Cronin & Armour, 2019a; Duquin, 1995; Groot et al., 2018; Hamington & Engster, 2015; Hankivsky, 2004; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2002; Tronto, 2013), and recognizes that not all ones-caring are women or are subject to exploitation. For example, Groot and colleagues (2018) apply Tronto's (2013) EoC formulation to relationships in participatory health research (PHR), claiming that "it can help to sensitize researchers for the complex moral responsibilities of their work in a highly hierarchic context, and strengthen their reflexivity" (p. 12). While worry of exploitation exists in any relationship with an unequal power dynamic, the EoC framework brings an awareness of this dynamic to the forefront and requires that it be included in the crafting of any caring response.

Later work by Noddings (2006; 2012a; 2012b) is cognizant of the difficulties in accurately perceiving another's needs.[5] This concern is echoed by Eaker-Rich and Van Galen (1996) who acknowledge, "the difficulties in knowing another's nature, needs, and desires when one party holds power over the other or is a member of a group that has historically dominated another" (p. 3); a very relevant concern in the coach-athlete relationship. Admittedly, recognizing multiple particularities and needs among diverse groups is no easy task; however, this is where we must begin any effort in caring properly for others and, in the context of this dissertation, responding to the needs of athletes. Thus, while the EoC has received many criticisms since Noddings' first release in 1984, its utility for the current study relies on a more robust theorizing of needs; specifically, Millers' (2012) EoN examines a spectrum of fundamental needs involved in caring which account for the contexts in which care is practice more so than the EoC alone.

Needs in the EoC.

It has been established that care and caring are operationalized as responses to need and as Miller (2012) writes, care ethics begins from "the moral story of our embeddedness in relationships involving response to need" (p. 51). Overall, the EoC prioritizes the innate human need to "be understood, received, respected and recognized" by others (Noddings, 2002, p. 20), aligning with Miller's description of, and emphasis on, agency. Framed in this way, agency is a universal need which anchors all subsequent fundamental needs involved in caring. Noddings does not extensively theorize the needs relevant to caring (Miller's more fulsome work in explicating needs will be addressed in the following section); however, Noddings attends to *how* a carer perceives

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[5] Miller attends to this tension in her differentiation between needs and desires which will be addressed later on in this chapter.

and evaluates the needs of care recipients and, in particular, she differentiates between *expressed* and *assumed* needs.

The difference between expressed and assumed needs can be traced to the epistemological assumptions of the EoC. While both expressions see care recipients as the source of care knowledge, *how* these needs are perceived, determined, and acted upon, can result in complete or incomplete caring relations. Assuming needs assumes knowledge of the cared-for's situation from a few salient facts (Noddings, 2015), and often the assumption of needs and corresponding responses, are linked to the norms of care and needs that are specific to the roles and environment. As the EoJ will illustrate, this is not always an incorrect move. While Noddings (2015) directly links expressed needs to caring, in the context of asymmetrical institutional relationships, there may be cases where needs are either not expressed and thus carers respond to the assumed needs characteristic of the particular context.[6] In addition, *how* one evaluates their experience(s) of need may be so warped and laden with contextual particularities such that their expression, and underlying fundamental needs, are particularly difficult for a carer to discern.[7] In the context of sport and sport coaching, the needs of athletes broadly have been assumed prior to the individual players' entry into sport which has implications for *how* athletes express their needs and how they are perceived by coaches. Thus, according to the EoC, coaches are responsible for deciphering the particular needs of athletes amidst the context of institutional norms.

Alternatively, expressed needs reflect a more accurate state of need as experienced by the cared-for. Expressed needs "are those arising internally from the person experiencing the need; they are needs that a person in some way conveys to those caring for her" (Miller, 2012, p. 20).

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[6] This has implications for how this study's participants constructed, negotiated, and lived care which will be examined in Chapter Seven.

[7] Miller attends to this difficulty in her differentiation between needs and desires.

Thus, responding to expressed needs requires attention that starts with the individual cared-for and, through a process of engrossment and motivational displacement, Noddings claims that: "we may move away from assumed needs towards expressed needs" (2015, p. 77). In relations between persons, Noddings emphasizes that the one-caring is capable of responding to needs in either way. More importantly, when needs are assumed, this does not necessarily guarantee that caring is absent. It may be that the expressed needs of the cared-for align with the assumed needs characteristic of the environment which results in a response that affirms a caring relation. However, this is especially worrisome in the context of sport where coaches and athletes strive towards a common goal of performance success. In particular, the underlying assumption is that athletes' needs will align with any efforts to achieve performance-oriented goals risks camouflaging or disguising athletes' responses that conflict with these overall goals (Bundon & Clarke, 2015).

In the case of sport coaching, there are needs of athletes that are assumed to be consistent in all sport settings, such as needs for physical and psychological safety. However, if a coach consistently responds to athletes' needs from this point of assumption, according to Noddings (2005), this leads to the likelihood of making serious mistakes and evoking "distrust and resentment rather than gratitude" (p. 75). In sport, problems may arise if a coach assumes that all of their athletes understand, accept, and are content with their roles on the team. In the event that an athlete expresses discontent with regards to playing time, for example, if a coach's response remains grounded in this assumption, then there is risk of the athlete being labeled as difficult or unappreciative which inadvertently halts any efforts to discern which fundamental need is in jeopardy. In this case, the true needs of the athlete are disregarded which exemplifies Noddings'

worries; here, the one-caring is not operating in the intuitive mode required by the EoC which may result in a lack of care.

Noddings' (2015) discussion of assumed and expressed needs underlies her more recent theoretical work of applying the EoC to the caring capacities of organizations. If we posit that organizations emerge in response to the collective needs of multiple individuals (Scott, 2008), then it follows that they would be best suited to address the needs of many at a larger and more abstract scale. Thus, organizations are best suited to assume needs of groups because they are not capable of engaging in the in-person caring required in the EoC. However, this has implications for the care recipient which, through this process of assuming needs, is seen only as part of a collective group instead of an individual with their own unique particularities that occupy a role.[8] Noddings (2015) asserts that, within an organization, the on-site care work of responding to the expressed needs of individual care recipients flows from the meeting of assumed needs at the institutional level and must be translated by persons in local settings. In other words, in order for in-person caring relations to occur (EoC), institutional care (EoJ) must first be in place to support, sustain, and/or cultivate those relations. This formulation of the EoC provides the tools for examining the caring capacities of organizations which will addressed in the concluding section of this chapter.

The Ethic of Need (EoN)

The Ethic of Need (EoN) was developed by Sarah Clark Miller whose work is underpinned by a concern for an inadequately theorized account of needs in the EoC. The EoN focuses on the ethical power of the one-caring (or carer) and tackles, in greater detail, the plethora of needs involved in caring. Miller (2012) offers a definition of caring in the EoN, "by *caring*, I mean the

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[8] Benhabib's (1985; 1987) differentiation between the general and concrete other is useful in distinguishing between the collective needs of a group and the particular needs of individuals.

process of responding to another's needs by understanding their self-determined ends, adopting those ends as one's own, and advancing them in an effort to cultivate, maintain or restore their agency" (p. 79). This echoes Noddings' notion of care as a collection of actions and efforts that are aimed at responding to needs, as well as an ongoing multifaceted process that requires an adequate account of needs (Tronto, 1993b). In other words, a carer learns how to care by engaging with the care recipient and establishing which needs must be met.

Miller's (2012) EoN more robustly theorizes the needs involved in caring and labels these needs as fundamental. Her concern with the lack of attention to needs is that "vital aspects of our shared humanity have remained inadequately theorized and, as a result, have been misconstrued" (p. 2). Miller emphasizes the relationality of needs by stating, "during the span of a finite human life, many different fundamental needs will arise, and agents will require the assistance of other to respond to these needs" (p. 17). She asserts that this concern ought to matter to those who wish to understand humans as they actually are, rather than how they have been idealized and argues for a response to needs grounded in our mutual interdependence.

Fundamental needs.

To recall, the overarching fundamental need prioritized by the EoC is to "be understood, received, respected and recognized" by others (Noddings, 2002, p. 20), a description which bears a remarkable resemblance to Miller's (2012) definition of agency.[9] As *others* engaging in such relations discerning which fundamental needs are being expressed, and acknowledging those needs as such, is the first step towards caring. This is a process of understanding and validating the care

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[9] To recall, Miller defines agency as: "the ability to achieve some manner of results in the world, to affect change in accordance with one's own volition, and to maintain the ability to carry out projects (often self-determined) in a surrounding environment" (p. 24).

recipient's experience of need. The subsequent action(s) may not directly respond to the fundamental need underlying the context-specific expression, as there are many expressed needs that are out of our range of direct response, either due to the particularities and structure of the context or the availability of resources. However, a caring relation is possible if this first overarching need is met.

As noted above, according to Miller fundamental needs underlie the universality of care and caring. Miller (2012) writes, "all humans experience fundamental needs, and therefore require another person's attention and response in order to meet these needs (establishing, maintaining, or restoring their agency in the process)" (pp. 52-53). For Miller, the needs involved in caring have particular moral significance, which highlights them "as deserving some measure of human care, concern and response" (p. 15). She explains their moral significance through a discussion of the specific harms that accompany the denial of fundamental needs. In particular, "fundamental needs are needs that threaten agency in the sense that if they are not met, then serious harm of compromised agency will result" (p. 17). As mentioned above, Noddings' EoC is underpinned by the universal experience of being cared for. This experience involves the meeting of several fundamental needs which unite humanity in our finitude and interdependence (Miller, 2012).

For Miller (2012), fundamental needs include: nutrition and water; rest; shelter; healthy environment; bodily integrity; healing; education; attachments; social inclusion, participation and recognition; play; and security (pp. 41-42). In an examination of care and caring in sport and sport coaching, it is possible to explicate caring efforts and practices through an analysis of fundamental needs' response (this will be addressed more thoroughly in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight). Some needs such as nutrition and water, rest and shelter can be assumed as they apply to all athletes. Others, such as social inclusion and attachments, are more subjective and require the in-

person care work to discern how particular athletes would experience a fulfillment of these needs. Carers may also be required to navigate through the layers of complex social relations to determine which fundamental need is of concern, when the expression of the need may appear superfluous and/or non-essential. For example, Miller (2012) draws on the work of several other philosophers to show the different dimensions of fundamental and non-fundamental needs (e.g., Braybrook, 1987; Thomson, 1987; Wiggins, 1985). In particular, Miller differentiates between authentic and inauthentic needs, which focuses on the interaction between needs and the social environment. She clarifies, "the distinction concerns the difference between that which a human originally, actually needs and that which is cultivated in her or him as a result of participation in a particular social context or historico-cultural period" (2012, p. 19). In other words, *how* needs are experienced and expressed are shaped by the social context in which they emerge.

Miller further contextualizes this argument by differentiating between needs and desires, a task she asserts as essential because "the seemingly close relation of concepts such as desires, wants, and preferences muddy the conceptual waters, making it difficult to discern exactly what a need might be" (2012, p. 20). This distinction is of particular importance to the current study because desires more accurately reflect the context in which fundamental needs arise; specifically, "desires are subjectively determined and non-universalizable," unlike fundamental needs which, to recall, "are both objectively determinable and universally applicable" (p. 22).[10] This supports Miller's overall claim that the moral significance of needs takes precedent over desires.

To illustrate this distinction, Miller draws attention to the malleability of desires; specifically, "a person's desires change in accordance with multiple varying factors, whereas a person's fundamental needs are more static in nature" (p. 21), which is consistent with the

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[10] These features align with the EoJ and will be addressed later on in this chapter.

universality of fundamental needs. In addition to the plasticity of desires, Miller draws parallels between desires and beliefs and provides the following example: "I desire something because I believe that it will benefit me in some sense, nevertheless I can be mistaken about this supposed benefit. Our desires often follow our beliefs about what is desirable" (p. 21). This distinction is pivotal; in particular, desires more accurately encapsulate *how* one experiences and evaluates their experience of need within a particular context or setting. The conviction underpinning declarations of belief illustrates how desires are linked to more deeply rooted and universal fundamental needs. However, depending on the context our desires may, at times, be at odds with our fundamental needs. Miller addresses this paradox by explaining: "desires fluctuate with cultural and societal development" while, "fundamental needs remain the same, although the range of options for meeting such needs may broaden or narrow in accordance with social and historical specificity" (p. 22). In regard to the current study, the context of sport will undoubtedly influence how fundamental needs manifest in the daily lives and experiences of coaches, athletes, and parents. In particular, given care's link to needs, Chapter Seven will examine how participants' needs are reflective more so of context-influenced desires, or deeply rooted fundamental needs. In the case of expressed desires, participants' responses will be analyzed to determine which fundamental needs is in question, a task that will be attended to in Chapter Eight.

Miller's theorizing responds to one of the more common critiques of the EoC; specifically, its neglect of the contextual circumstances in which caring relations are cultivated. By asserting the moral salience of needs and accounting for the contexts in which they arise, Miller draws focus to how care recipients conceptualize and receive efforts aimed at meeting their needs which, Miller claims, are influenced by their own social experiences of care and the social norms with regards to the meeting of needs. For example, Miller addresses needs that are cultivated amidst social

forces of oppression and domination, and asks whether we are morally responsible to meet such needs, when, as a moral agent, we are aware that the need is inauthentic. However, the ability to identify which underlying fundamental need(s) are being expressed is a perceptual power that the EoC aims to harness for all moral agents. It requires a process of sifting through the social needs and desires being expressed and linking them to the fundamental need(s) driving their expression.

It is important to note that Noddings' (2015) more recent theorizing of the EoC references Abraham Maslow's (1943; 2012) hierarchy of needs and echoes some of the conceptual worries addressed by Miller (2012). In particular, Maslow's hierarchical and linear progression of need satisfaction leads to the assumption that needs can only be fulfilled in this way and leaves little room for needs to be met simultaneously (cf., Braybrook, 1987). Both Miller and Noddings assert that the human experience of need is more complex; specifically, that "people may feel or express simultaneous needs for food, safety, respect, even self-actualization" (Noddings, 2015, p. 74). This holds true for the account of needs presented thus far which sees the need to be understood, received, respected, and recognized as universal and underlying all subsequent needs. However, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not entirely incorrect. In his theorizing of a linear progression of needs, fundamentally, physical needs must be met in some way, shape or form, in order for psychological needs to be experienced or even considered. This is why physical needs are less debatable (Miller, 2012) and, as will be demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six, are addressed in the OVA's governing texts and coach education resources more frequently and clearly than psychological needs.

Needs and justice.

As noted above, the EoC emerged in opposition to dominant ethical theories which prioritize universality and abstract rules when making moral decisions. The tensions between the two approaches have underpinned the body of philosophical literature examining the EoC in theory and in practice (e.g., Clement, 1998; Held, 2006; Larrabbee, 1993; Noddings, 2010; 2015; Nunner-Winkler, 1994), and are also addressed in the EoN. In particular, Miller's (2012) differentiation between assumed and expressed needs exemplify this tension and its impact on perceptions and practices of care; specifically, and in the context of the current study, coaches responding to the needs of athletes are charged with the task of identifying expressed needs as they emerge while embedded in a setting that prioritizes a specific set of assumed needs characteristic of sport and performance-oriented goals. Thus, an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of traditional ethical frameworks will more clearly explicate the negotiation between assumed and expressed needs which underpin the challenges faced by coaches in navigating the needs of athletes.

While there are a several traditional ethical frameworks that prioritize universal and abstract rules (i.e., virtue ethics; deontology; consequentialism), this chapter will focus on the concept of justice and its relevance to sport (e.g., Bowen et al., 2017; Hardman & Jones, 2011; Keenan, 1975; Malloy, Ross & Zakus, 2003; Simon, 2013); specifically, it will review Rawls' (1971) theory of social justice and its utility for examining needs in sport. Broadly, the meaning of justice "is tied to rules and laws, as well as to fairness in ways that the meaning of care is not" (Held, 2006, p. 41). However, Clement (1998) asserts that, "they are not always different in the ways indicated by their ideal types" (p. 11). Specifically, it is useful to consider the seemingly opposing features of each ethical approach as components of a broader system of moral negotiation

characteristic not only of sport, but of human relationships in social contexts broadly.[11] This notion

is supported by Miller (2012) in her account of objective and universal fundamental needs which

she links to subjective and context-specific expressions (i.e., desires).

Before providing an overview of Rawls' EoJ and its contributions to this study it is

important to acknowledge that the EoJ has traditionally been referred to as a rights-based ethic,

while the EoC has been understood as needs-based. However, the overarching theory for this study

is the EoC which, to review, accommodates features of the EoJ in the way Miller (2012) theorizes

fundamental needs as universal and rooted in our human interconnectedness and finitude. The

concept of rights is inherently abstract and universal and, as Donnelly (1989) states, "universal

rights – entitlements – are the mechanism for implementing such values as non-discrimination and

an adequate standard of living" (p. 23). Rawls' (1971) claims that a shared conception of justice,

and subsequent principles, are able to address fundamental social problems of coordination,

efficiency and stability.

The Ethic of Justice (EoJ)

Like the EoC and EoN, Rawls' (1971; 2009) EoJ is concerned with relationships;

specifically, the relationship between individuals and the broader society in which they live

through the adhered to, and acceptance of, abstract rules and laws. For Noddings (2013) and Miller

(2012), relationships between persons are asymmetrical and require attention, sensitivity, and

response to accomplish the work of meeting the needs of others for whom we care. However, as

noted above, the moral relevance of Miller's fundamental needs is rooted in a universality of

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[11] It is important to note that the language used in Rawls' account of justice is reflective of the dominant power relations operating during his time of writing. Thus, his descriptions and accounts of individuals use male pronouns exclusively, a feature which is acknowledged but not reproduced in the context of this current study.

human finitude, features similar to a justice-oriented ethic. In particular, Rawls' conceptualization of the EoJ is underpinned by an assumption of symmetry with regards to everyone's relations to each other, a position from which the principles of justice can be agreed upon fairly. He refers to individuals as "rational and mutually disinterested" (1971, p. 12); thus, his aim "is to present a conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract as found, say, in Locke, Rousseau, and Kant" (p. 10), a theory which explicates the strengths and limits of assumed needs.

As will be explained below, Rawls' conception of justice is founded upon an initial situation of equality, a position that he asserts is purely hypothetical. Thus, Rawls attends to the obvious question of why we ought to take any interest in these principles, moral or otherwise, if this agreement is never actually entered into. His response to this provocation highlights the seminal contribution that an EoJ lens brings to the current study. Rawls writes:

> The answer is that the conditions embodied in the description of the original position are ones that we do in fact accept. Or if we do not, then perhaps we can be persuaded to do so by philosophical reflection. Each aspect of the contractual situation can be given supporting grounds. Thus, what we shall do is to collect together into one conception a number of conditions on principles that we are ready upon due consideration to recognize as reasonable. These constraints express what we are prepared to regard as limits on fair terms of social cooperation (p. 19).

Therefore, Rawls' original position is a valuable tool or "expository device" (p. 19), useful for examining responses to need which are justified by abstract conceptions of fairness and equality, and rightly so, fall short of caring according to Noddings (2013; 2015).

Context for justice.

Another way in which Rawls attends to the concept of relationship is in his description of the context of justice, or in other words, the setting in which his concept of justice is operationalized. For Rawls, the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society or, more precisely, "the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (1971, p. 6). Furthermore, he describes the circumstances of justice as "the normal conditions under which human cooperation is both possible and necessary" (p. 109). Cooperation, in Rawls' case, refers to a balance between individuals' similar and conflicting interests. He writes:

> There is an identity of interests since social cooperation makes possible a better life for all than any would have if each were to try to live solely by his own efforts. There is a conflict of interests since men are not indifferent as to how the greater benefits produced by their collaboration are distributed, for in order to pursue their ends they each prefer a larger to a lesser share (p. 109).

Thus, Rawls asserts that certain principles are required in order for individuals to successfully negotiate the various social arrangements (i.e., needs and interests) which determine the distribution of advantages in society. This highlights the relationship between the 'role of justice' and the "constellation of conditions" (p. 110) which Rawls refers to as the 'circumstances of justice.' Furthermore, the conditions illustrated in the above passage bare a remarkable resemblance to the context of sport where it is assumed that coaches, athletes and parents share an identity of interests (i.e., performance success) and yet, challenges often arise due the range of athlete particularities and conflicting perceptions with regards to coaches' performance-oriented decisions.

Justice as fairness.

Sport is underpinned by the values of procedural justice (i.e., Keenan, 1975) which prioritize equality and fairness in competition in order to achieve a meaningful result (Bowen et al., 2017). For Rawls, the overarching principle of justice is 'justice as fairness,' which is built from the theoretical conception of the original position whereby all individuals are considered free and rational persons and occupy an initial position of equality. Rawls (1971) clarifies:

> In justice as fairness the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in
> the traditional theory of the social contract. The original position is not, of course, thought
> of as an actual historical state of affairs, much less a primitive condition of culture. It is
> understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead a certain
> conception of justice (p. 11).

When applying this concept to the needs involved in caring, the assumption that all athletes are equally aware of, and devoted to, the overall aims of competitive sport leaves little room for athletes to express their discontent with coaches' decisions or methods, resulting in potentially incomplete caring relations.

Rawls' original position of equality relies on an additional dimension of abstraction with regards to the social location and particular contexts of individuals in society. Rawls refers to this feature as the "veil of ignorance" which describes an ideal situation where "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like" (1971, p. 11). It is from this position that justice can be achieved because it ensures that all members of society are considered equal by, and amongst, each other. In sport, the differences in athletes' natural assets and abilities,

intelligence and strengths are not only prioritized, they are showcased in such a way that makes these differences undeniable. Furthermore, the values of performance success underlying sport normalizes participants' motivations to differentiate themselves in this way. Thus, the priority of fairness either remains at the procedural level of sport or shifts to the subjective experiences of individual athletes and how their needs are met and responded to by coaches (this will be more thoroughly addressed in Chapter Seven and Eight).

Justice response to need.

To recall, this study explores conceptualizations and practices of care. As Noddings (2015) articulates, care-oriented responses to need begin in relation and account for the context and particularities and, as Beane (1990) astutely reminds us, "people come to particular situations, behaviours, and decisions with feelings, concerns, aspirations, and a history of personally lived experiences, as well as a deeply human need for a sense of well-being" (p. 62). Alternatively, justice-oriented responses to need are formulated in abstraction and aim to fulfill needs based on the rule or norm of the context/institution. Thus, employing features of the EoJ, the meeting of needs is underpinned by values of fair and equal treatment, in which the relevancy of the need and associated response are determined prior to the particularities of the situation at hand. For example, the norm that all athletes ought to be content with their role on a team, starting or otherwise, and thus, are not justified in expressing their discontent. Instead, there is a focus on the rights of collective groups and individuals which are aimed at performance-oriented goals as well as protecting and ensuring the safety of individuals.

Justice and care.

Keeping in mind the rich descriptions of the EoJ and EoC provided above, we can now distinguish between the two ethics in three primary ways. By acknowledging these differences it will then be possible to see more clearly how the current study will employ features from both ethics to evaluate care and caring within the institution of youth sport. Clement (1998) provides a summary of three ways in which the ethics are distinct. First, the EoJ approaches moral questions from an abstract position, while the EoC takes a contextual approach; second, "the ethic of justice begins with an assumption of human separateness, while the ethic of care begins with an assumption of human connectedness" (p. 11); and third, the EoJ prioritizes equality, while the EoC prioritizes the maintenance of relationships.

Benhabib's (1985; 1987) conceptualization of the generalized and concrete other are once again helpful in articulating the differences between the EoJ and EoC as summarized by Clement (1998). In evaluating responses to need, acting in accordance with justice principles means taking the "standpoint of the generalized other," in which we "abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other" because, "moral dignity is based on what we have in common, not what differentiates us" (Benhabib, 1987, pp. 163-164). Thus, the justice approach does not account for the particularities of the relation because those details are unnecessary according to Rawls. In contrast, the EoC prioritizes the unique and particular features of a situation, "rather than abstracting from a person's individuating features" (Clement, 1998, p. 12). According to Benhabib (1987), this involves taking the "standpoint of the concrete other," which accounts for their "concrete history, identity, and affective emotional constitution" (pp. 163-164). In addition, Tronto (1993b) writes: "What is definitive about care… seems to be a perspective of taking the other's

needs as the starting point for what must be done" (p. 105), a feature that is not consistent with the EoJ.

Rawls' original position and fundamental needs.

The utility of incorporating Rawls' justice-oriented principles into Noddings' theory of care is most clearly illustrated by Miller's (2012) theorizing of fundamental needs. As previously noted, fundamental needs are inescapable, immutable, unsusceptible to change and, most importantly, universal. In essence, Miller is proposing a version of Rawls' (1971) original position that is rooted in a set of universal needs linked to our human finitude. While Rawls identifies a tension between the theoretical construct of his original position and realities of the social world(s) in which we are embedded, Miller resolves this tension by differentiating between needs and desires: "although the exact goods required to fulfill my needs may differ from the exact good required to fulfill the needs of my neighbour, we share the same fundamental needs" (p. 22). In addition, Miller writes "we do not choose to require the things we do to function as the agents we are. In short, we do not choose and cannot alter our fundamental needs" (p. 22). Thus, the universal experience of care and need that underpins Noddings' EoC is rooted in justice's emphasis on a universal and abstract starting point applicable to all humans, which illustrates its compatibility and utility in the context of the current study.

Caring Organizations

As noted above, this study employs IE as the methodology for examining care in youth sport; specifically, it examines care in the context of Ontario youth volleyball which includes an analysis of the OVA's governing documents and statements, coach education resources, and how

they are oriented towards care, or not. Noddings' (2015) more recent formulation of the EoC, examining the caring capacities of organizations, provides the foundation for this theoretical framework employing both care- and justice-oriented responses to need. In particular, Noddings questions whether large organizations are capable of caring and claims that they can, at best, contribute to in-person caring relations prioritized by the EoC. However, she is cautious in applying labels of care to organizations such as large employers, nations, or schools and states: "…organizations can certainly address some particular needs, but they cannot *care* in the sense required by care ethics" and, in addition, "assuming that they can do so may lead to a corruption of the concept of care" (p. 72). Thus, the potential contributions to care and caring by organizations are made possible only through a process of translation by coaches and other persons in authority (PIAs), a process which will be discussed more thoroughly in the following sections.

Noddings employs the language of expressed and assumed needs to differentiate between caring-*for* and caring-*about*, which are fundamental distinctions in the process of care translation. Caring-for aligns more closely with the relational care work described in the inaugural editions of the EoC (Noddings, 1984; 2003). It takes place between persons in local settings and is characterized by a carer's response to the expressed needs of care recipients. For Noddings (2013; 2015), it is not possible to care for everyone in the world in this way because caring-for "requires the attention and response cultivated in relation" (2015, p. 74). The attention and response mentioned here is reserved for individual persons as recipients of care. Caring-about, on the other hand, is a way of caring that aligns with assumed needs and does not require the in-person attention to particularities. For Noddings, caring-about is "to be concerned for – multitudes at a distance" (p. 74), which extends care outward. However, for a caring relation to be complete, the caring-about communicated as assumed needs must be translated in-person in local contexts.

Noddings (2015) claims that organizations are not capable of caring-for directly, and thus their strengths reside in caring-about. She affirms that the organizations' efforts, and the actions they support, are evaluated with regards to its influence on the relevant web of care but, "there is no caring relation – no matter how hard the carer works – if there is no acknowledging response from the cared-for" (p. 74). Broadly, "they must concentrate on establishing conditions under which caring-for can take place, under which relations of care and trust are established and maintained" (Noddings, 2015, p. 75); specifically, these conditions would be conducive to the meeting of expressed needs. With regards to the current study, governing documents, statements and coach educational material can, at best, provide rules and recommendations that would contribute to an environment that would support coaches in cultivating caring relations with athletes by responding to their expressed needs.

Negotiating Institutional Norms of Care

As noted earlier, in order to translate the care passed down from institutions, intermediary roles must fill the gap by creating and maintaining the caring that Noddings has reserved for relations between persons. Institutions may offer policies, rules, and procedures that are designed to meet needs of its members, but to actualize this care requires the work of human beings acting in local settings. This intermediary position, such as a coach or teacher, is occupied by a particular person who brings with them their own humanity and is responsible for negotiating the needs of learners with the needs assumed by the institution, often communicated in organizational goals or objectives. Within the context of IE, these positions are referred to as "frontline professionals" (Devault & McCoy, 2006, p. 27). With regards to sport specifically, "the pressures to gain competitive advantage, to 'unlevel' the playing field, often puts sport at odds with what is

frequently seen as its most beneficial social function: teaching and appreciating fair play"
(Wenner, 2016, p. 40). These social pressures also shape needs and what counts as care for athletes.

At times, Noddings (2002; 2010) asserts that it will be necessary for the carer to make
decisions and act according to the policies of the institution, which would align more so with a
justice-oriented response to need. For example, in cases where the one-caring is responsible for
meeting the needs of a group, Noddings (2010) proposes the move towards a justice response to
needs and suggests a care-driven concept of justice. To recall, the rules and norms of an
organization instill a sense of equality and fairness among members. However, acts that allow
freedom to attend to particular expressed needs, that many of us deem unwise, may also be
necessary. It is left to carers, caregivers, care workers, to negotiate – it is their responsibility.

Perfect and imperfect duties.

In addition to the analytical tools presented thus far, this study will employ features of
Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy to explicate *how* fundamental needs are fulfilled; specifically,
it will utilize a formulation of his decision procedure for moral reasoning which differentiates
between two types of moral action: *perfect* and *imperfect duties* (Johnson & Cureton, 2019).[12]
Kant's theorizing is predicated on a universal law of nature and how a moral agent would act in
accordance, which also provides the theoretical grounding for Rawls' EoJ. While Kant's theory
aimed to encapsulate the full spectrum of moral life, in the context of this study his theorizing of
perfect and *imperfect duties* are employed to focus on specific actions with regards to care. *Perfect
duties* describe acts of omission; specifically, fulfilling or performing these duties involves
refraining from particular actions or behaviours. For example, refraining from harmful or abusive

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[12] The division between perfect and imperfect duties are first articulated by Kant in his foundational text
Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals first published in 1785 (Kant, 2005).

behaviours towards others can fulfill a fundamental need for *security*, which Miller (2012) defines as: "freedom from coercive, threatening environments – physical, psychological, and emotional – is required. Agency cannot fully develop or be sustained in environments of extreme anxiety and feat" (p. 42). Fulfilling a fundamental need via inaction is more simple and decisive because those actions and behaviours that are outlawed are determined prior to the particularities of the context in which they are practiced. Thus, *perfect* refers to the simplicity of practice, as will be explained more thoroughly in Chapter Four.

Imperfect duties are more complex as they refer to acts of commission. In regard to fulfilling fundamental needs, *how* to perform this duty will depend more so on the contextual particularities than perfect duties. For example, Miller's (2012) describes the fundamental need for *education*: "This category includes various means and modes of learning. Agents require some means of gaining knowledge about the world and leaning skills designed to help them function in the world" (p. 41). However, there is a broad spectrum of learning needs and styles (e.g., Noddings, 2005; 2012a; 2012b), which require time and negotiation in order to perform and fulfill. As the results of this study will show, the complex task of fulfilling fundamental needs in caring align more so with Kant's *imperfect duties*, while the minimal standards of harm prevention and mitigation are simpler to uphold.

Moral Evaluation

Thus far, this chapter has presented a theoretical framework combining the EoC, EoN and features of Rawls' EoJ to examine care and caring within the institution of youth competitive volleyball. To employ this framework, this study will analyze the OVA's governing document and statements, the CAC's open-source coach educational resources, and the responses from

participant interviews by positioning them as moral agents potentially capable of engaging in caring relations theorized by Noddings and Miller.

Moral agents (or entities) begin by identifying needs that are either assumed or expressed, and then craft a response that lands either in the realm of the EoC or EoJ. To recall, a pivotal distinction between the two is the contribution of the recipient's response and Noddings (2015) writes, "the response of the cared-for need not be gratitude; it is merely (and significantly) an expression acknowledging that the caring has been received" (p. 73). Alternatively, from the justice perspective, the response stops once the appropriate rule or abstract response has been determined and applied. Thus, in order to move from justice-oriented caring-about, to care-oriented caring-for, a process of translation is required. Noddings writes:

> As we explore the ways in which to translate caring-about into caring-for, we will again encounter a complex of problems involving the concept of needs. Needs, whether assumed or expressed, must be interpreted, and that task must be undertaken at both the level of caring-about and caring-for (2015, p. 75).

Overall, this study employs features from both the EoC, the EoN and Rawls' (1971) EoJ to evaluate care and caring in the institutional setting of youth competitive volleyball in Ontario. This theoretical framework will be used to examine the complexities of how care is conceptualized in documents and texts, and how care is constructed, negotiated and lived by coaches, athletes and parents with the goal of furthering our understanding of care and caring in youth competitive sport broadly. The following chapter will more clearly outline the IE methodology employed for this study, including data collection and analytical strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The aim of this study was to explicate experiences of care and caring in competitive youth volleyball and it employed institutional ethnography (IE) as its methodological framework in which to explore how care was experienced and conceptualized within the setting of youth sport. As a method of inquiry, IE prioritizes the experiences of people and how their lives are organized by the power relations of institutions as well as the broader web of "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1987) that exist outside the local context including, but not limited to, the texts and documents that coordinate and mediate activities and behaviour. This study focuses on the experiences of care from the perspectives of athletes, coaches and parents as the entry point into the broader conceptualization(s) of care, including relevant policies and practices, within the institution of competitive sport, broadly, and one Ontario youth volleyball team specifically, which operates under the umbrella of the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA), the governing body for youth volleyball in Ontario. To recall, the overarching question that guided this study was: *how is care and caring conceptualized and lived in Canadian youth sport?* However, to begin answering this question this study's scope focused on one youth volleyball team in Ontario, operating under the umbrella of Canadian sport system. Additional questions that drove this study included:

1. How do athletes, coaches and parents construct, negotiate and experience care within youth competitive sport broadly and volleyball specifically;

2. How has care been conceptualized in governing statements and documents in Ontario youth competitive volleyball;

3. How does coach education and coach development resources, specific to and framed by Ontario youth competitive volleyball, conceptualize care and caring?

Following the objectives outlined above, this project's fourth aim explores how conceptualization of care in competitive youth sport articulates, or not, with the EoC, a lens that frames care as a moral issue.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of IE including its origins, strengths as a method of inquiry, and a discussion of how it differs from more traditional ethnographic methods employed in sociology. Next, I will highlight the connections between IE and the EoC as the theoretical framework that grounds this study. Following this, I outline the research design and data collection methods and procedures I used for this research project. IE is an analytical project where analysis starts with the identification of a problematic and continues throughout the project design and data collection process. Thus, this section will provide a brief overview of the process of data analysis in IE as well as outline the details of analysis and coding procedures I employed for this study.

A Brief Overview of IE

IE was founded by Canadian social theorist and feminist Dorothy Smith (1987) as an approach to social inquiry aimed at, generally speaking, better understanding the relationship between people and social institutions. IE attempts to explicate the links between "how people are putting our world together in the local places of our everyday lives" (Smith, 2005, p. 2) and, at the same time, are constructing, reproducing and potentially resisting a complex web of relations that extends beyond local settings. Broadly, the goals of IE researchers are to reveal the social and ideological processes that produce experiences of subordination (DeVault & McCoy, 2006). Thus, IE prioritizes the subjective standpoint of people in the context of their daily lives as organized by

the structures, rules and power relations characteristic of the very social institutions in which they are embedded (Smith, 1987).

Given IE's focus on illuminating the ruling relations that organize our daily lives, Smith defines ruling relations as "a complex of practices and discourses providing direction and regulation" (1987, p. 3). She identifies these practices as "extra-local relations that provide in contemporary societies a specialization of organization, control and initiative" (Smith, 1990, p. 6). In the context of sport, these would include the performance-based norms that guide coach and athlete behaviour as well as the procedural parametres of the particular sport (i.e., rules and conduct for competition). For the purposes of IE, they exist outside the local settings while maintaining an invisible power over the organization of work and activities.

To illuminate how these relations operate in local settings, IE prioritizes the experiences of people whose lives are embedded in, and organized by, these extra-local relations of ruling. Smith (1987) identifies characteristics of ruling relations that maintain their power: they are objectified, abstract, impersonal and claim universality. The organizational capacity of ruling relations is evident in the massive coordination of people's work (Smith, 2005) and such coordination includes an organization of people's intentions, desires and opportunities. It also relies on structures (e.g., legislation, policy, organizational hierarchy) that distribute power unevenly. The concentration of power, sanctioned in text and language such as policy or legislation (e.g., Smith, 2005), is in the hands of those who occupy particular roles and this disguises the power of ruling relations by reframing powerlessness as agency within institutions and organizations; IE recognizes that subjects, whose lives are organized by these relations of ruling, are often unaware of how power is operating. An additional concern that IE addresses is the power of ruling relations that reproduce and reinforce the social structures responsible for the domination and oppression of subjects,

specifically women. In particular, they "display a specific interrelation between patriarchal forms of our contemporary experience and the distinctive forms of organizing and ruling contemporary capitalist society" (1987, p. 3). Thus, IE aims at illuminating these relations so that those subject to them can see how their own lives are organized and potentially resist.

In order to illuminate the organizational power of ruling relations in local settings, Smith identifies particular forms of social structures, which take the form of social institutions and organizations, that are embedded in the broader web of relations of ruling; these include bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization and the media (1990). For Smith, institutions are "functional complexes" within ruling relations (2005, p. 68). They are the conduits through which power flows and through which social life is organized. Smith (1990) particularly highlights texts and language as conceptual and regulatory anchors that provide a tangible formulation of institutional relations of ruling. IE views texts and language as 'crystalized' social relations through which power operates to discursively organize our daily lives (Smith, 2005; 2006). Defining the parameters of ruling relations in this way allows for IE researchers to clearly link local settings to extra-local relations of ruling.

Smith (2005) contends that IE is an "inclusive sociology" – a sociology for the people – whereby our own knowledge and work as researchers centre on, and are woven into, everyday experience as the phenomenon through which social relations and social institutions live, change and are illuminated. Smith contends that it is an alternative method of inquiry to the "objectified subject of knowledge of established science discourse" (p. 9) in its privileging of the research participant's daily experiences and personal voice in and throughout the research process and views this is as relevant knowledge. Smith (2006) asserts that IE is not focused on the study of institutions per se, but rather proposes a sociology that begins not in theory, but in people's

experiences. Specifically, "in avoiding theories that command interpretive allegiance it avoids commitment to the institutions of sociology and deploy the political effect of theory to master other voices" (p. 2). Writing a sociology for *people*, as Smith articulates, is about more than investigating topics of public concern. In other words, she is making a case for an epistemological reorganizing in sociology that begins where the people are, and proceeds from those experiences to discoveries of the workings of social forces that extend beyond them, while coordinating local activities with others.

The subject's standpoint grounds the search for data in the institution's organizational power structures that exist extra-locally and are out of the subject's immediate view, but still have power over their experience. Smith (2005) is wary of traditional ethnographic methodologies that reproduce the ruling relations she seeks to illuminate and resist, particularly between researcher and participant. The production of knowledge through research processes is integral to relations of ruling and in the exercising of power in both official and unofficial ways (Campbell & Gregor, 2008). Instead, IE resists the objectified, impersonal and universalistic power characteristic of ruling relations by insisting that institutional categories and roles are not treated as "already given" (Smith, 1990, p. 159). To do so would be to reproduce the ruling relations that IE aims at explicating. Thus, IE researchers acknowledge the imbalance of power that permeates the research setting and are dedicated to maintaining the voices of participants. IE's focus on ruling relations gives scholarly research "its potential for being a resource for activism and for transformation of the conditions of people's lives" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 61). The results of an IE study are intended to be accessible to the participants whose lives are organized by the ruling relations that their contributions helped to illuminate.

Historical overview of IE.

IE's orientation as an inclusive sociology draws from Smith's own experiences and observations from the women's movement; specifically, women's standpoint in the everyday worlds of traditional work in the home and with children (2006). She was motivated to develop a method of inquiry that examined *how* power could operate in such a way that social relations were organized to support the oppression of women. Smith's (1987) conceptualization of IE as a feminist methodology began with the premise that the everyday world is dominated and shaped by patriarchal social forces whereby "women have been and continue to be excluded from the ruling apparatus of society, a society that is manufactured by those dominant positions – positions of ruling" (2005, p. xi). Beginning with women's standpoint meant prioritizing the actualities of women's lives and exploring the complex web of ruling relations that organizes, shapes and determines those actualities (2006). Thus, Smith's work attends to the limits of social norms and institutional policies in their ability to support all those subject to relations of ruling. By prioritizing women's standpoint, she addresses their position as historically excluded from such norms and policies despite their contributions to society, as well as their particular lived experiences which she sees as a worthy entry point for the illumination of the limits and shortcomings of ruling relations.

While Smith's (2005) IE methodology emerged out of a concern for the lived experiences of women and their exclusion under particular ruling relations, she positions her method as a "sociology for people" (p. 1), that is intended to illuminate and empower the lived experiences of all those whose lives have been negatively impacted by institutional norms and oppressive ruling relations. IE aims at uncovering these invisible relations of ruling so that people may understand how their everyday lives are organized. As Campbell and Gregor (2008) articulate, "learning how

people's lives are organized outside their own knowledge and control makes it possible to understand domination and subordination" (p. 61). For Smith, this lays the groundwork for potential change.

It is important to once again emphasize that IE is a methodology that prioritizes a person's standpoint (Smith, 2005), which includes their social positioning within a particular institution as well as their lived experience in the local setting. Within IE, different actors constitute a setting as it is experienced by them, each offering a unique perspective of the social relations of the setting. Specifically, "each person will know the setting from participating differently in its social relations and will therefore each have their own organized standpoint" (Campbell & Gregor, 2008, p. 65). How each person experiences the ruling relations of the local setting may not necessarily coincide with the experiences of others in the same setting and, depending on their position in the organization, their view on the research may also differ. IE does not assume a hierarchy of value based on the subject's organizational positioning within the institution; to do so would reproduce the very power relations that Smith identifies as 'ruling' and problematic. Rather, the knowledge gained from the experiences of individuals at all organizational levels are seen as equally valuable as they contribute to explicating the broad web of ruling relations of an institution. This becomes especially important in the data collection phase.

IE and the EoC

It is important to acknowledge that the EoC, as the theoretical framework for this study, articulates in a number of ways with IE including, most concretely, the fact that the EoC focuses on how caring works in the relationships between people and IE provides a set of tools to examine links between people, organizations and social institutions. As such, IE and EoC are underpinned

by similar ontological assumptions. Both approaches prioritize peoples' knowledge and perceptions of their own experience and see this as fundamental in furthering our understanding of the social world. This is partly due to their shared historical origins. In particular, IE and the EoC are both feminist frameworks that developed in response to the relations of ruling that worked to exclude women from institutional and moral life. IE seeks to illuminate these relations as a way of provoking institutional change and a move towards inclusion (Smith, 2005), while the EoC developed in response to ethical relations of ruling that had already been illuminated (i.e. justice-oriented moral frameworks).

While IE and EoC are joined by ontological underpinnings, they differ in their epistemological approach. IE's agenda for inquiry is aimed at linking people's experiences to power relations outside of the local settings in which they occur. Knowledge about those experiences is learned through this process of tracing, beginning with particular lived experiences. The EoC, however, sees the experiences and perceptions people as the location of knowledge with regards to care and caring, and the work required to determine the *how* of care involves a process of attention, listening, and authentic dialogue (Noddings, 2005) with the recipient of care. Interestingly, Noddings' (2015) more recent work applies the EoC framework to the relationships between organizations and their members. This model offers tools to imagine how ruling relations, institutions, and organizations are capable of organizing environments that support caring relations in local settings. It will be used during data analysis to link local experiences of care to the ruling relations of sport in which they are embedded.

While IE links the organization of people's experiences to the web of extra-local ruling relations, the EoC links experiences of care to the actions and behaviours of other individuals within the local setting. Framed in this way, care is organized by the ethical decisions made by

potential carers as they engage in relations with recipients of care. According to the EoC, for a caring relation to exist, the particularities of the context and recipient of care must be taken into account by the carer and used to guide their caring action and behaviours (Noddings, 2013). However, the actions and behaviours of carers within institutions do not always adhere to the criteria set out in the EoC. Instead, they often operate from a moral orientation that values objectivity, abstraction, and universality, characteristic of Smith's (1987) ruling relations. Thus, both the EoC and IE are concerned with the experiences of people in local settings and how their lives are organized by social and institutional power relations.

Like those who adopt EoC as their theoretical framework, IE researchers prioritize the particular experiences of people in local contexts and do not seek to generalize these accounts. The individual experiences of people, as well as people's perceptions of their own experiences, are pivotal. Both frameworks recognize the organizational power of ruling relations and resist their claim to objectivity by focusing on the subjective standpoint. For the EoC, a caring relation cannot exist unless the particularities of the context and the care recipient are taken into account. In particular, the recipient of care must confirm that they feel cared for and this requires the carer to know *how* to care for particular recipients. The carer must listen and respond to the expressed needs (Noddings, 2013). Similarly, IE researchers listen to participants' experiences of their daily lives in local settings. Accounting for how everyday lives are experienced by people is how the organizational power of ruling relations is explicated.

Research Design

According to Smith (2006), IE is committed to discovering patterns that extend "beyond any one individual's experience including the researcher's own and putting into words

supplemented in some instances by diagrams or maps what she or he discovers about how people's activities are coordinated" (p. 1). As an agenda for inquiry grounded by a social ontology, IE moves away from methodological orthodoxy and towards effective research practices that reflect the particular area of study (Smith, 2006). The IE research process begins with the identification of an experience, or problematic, and then follows with an identification of some of the institutional processes that influence and shape that experience. Those processes are then investigated in order to analytically describe "how they operate as the grounds of the experience" (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 20). Thus, IE methodology encourages a wide range of data collection methods including, as relevant to this study, participant observation, interviews and documents/texts to link activities in local settings to "a larger generalized complex of social relations" (Smith, 1987, p. 156). Smith (2006) claims that while there are some definite principle procedures required in IE, there are many ways to realize them in practice. All data collection techniques prioritize participants' lived experiences, including the researcher's reflection on their own experience, as the entry point for inquiry and serve to generate descriptions of peoples' daily lives and work in local settings.

IE research looks up from the standpoints of these people and through the complex to discover how it works and how lives are organized. The problematic identified for this study is the experience and processes of care and caring in competitive youth sport which was identified by "looking up" from local settings where these take place, to the complex web of relations that are linked to their organization. IE provides an agenda to map care in sport that starts with the standpoint of those participating in sport.

Research setting and participant recruitment.

This study was conducted with the members of one girl's youth volleyball team during the 2016-2017 indoor volleyball competitive season that ran from September 2016 to May 2017. The team is part of a Toronto volleyball club which itself is a member of the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA), the sport governing body responsible for youth volleyball in Ontario. The OVA offers year-round programs for both beach and indoor volleyball, both grassroots and high-performance sport programming, as well as developmental and educational opportunities for volleyball coaches and referees/officials. OVA members include clubs, athletes, parents, coaches and club directors/administrators. The OVA is divided into six regions throughout the province. Toronto-based clubs are a part of the Central West Ontario division (also referred to as Region 5). For this study, data was collected from semi-structured in-depth interviews, as well as from observational fieldwork conducted with the team during club tryouts, team training sessions, and competitions (see Appendix A for the team's tryout, training, and competition schedule).

Participant recruitment.

I had proposed to collect data from one volleyball team throughout one competitive season, and my participant recruitment strategy involved contacting club directors first (see Appendix B for initial recruitment letter), given their roles as club gatekeepers, and then coaches and teams within their club once I received permission from a club director. I had anticipated having to contact and potentially negotiate with a number of club directors. However, the first club director I contacted agreed to not only meet with me in person to discuss my proposed project and research objectives but quickly gave permission for me to conduct this study with a team in their club and, in fact, suggested a particular team and set of coaches to contact. Furthermore, the director

facilitated an introduction for me with the coaches, suggested that I meet them at an open pre-season training session the club offered and, in their gatekeeper capacity, informed the coaches of the scope and intention of my project so they were prepared for my in-person discussion with them. I attended this session and assisted the coaches in supervising and running the drills and activities. The coaches and I met afterwards to discuss my project specifically, and they agreed to allow me to conduct my study with their team. They agreed to participate as key informants and to be interviewed at the beginning and end of the season. They also permitted me to engage in observational fieldwork with the team and invited me to present my proposed study to their team and request interview participants during the first team meeting.

My introduction to the team occurred at the first team meeting in September 2016 once the team was selected. I presented my project and outlined my data collection methods to athletes and parents. I first explained the observational component of my study and how I would be present for all practices and competitions. As the practice and competition spaces are considered public domain, I did not require signed consent forms to be completed. However, I did inform athletes and parents that, if they did not want any specific observational data recorded about them, then they could inform me privately via e-mail. I did not receive any e-mails regarding this matter. I then invited athletes and parents to participate in interviews, noting that those who were interested in participating could inform me via e-mail or tell me in person. All interested interview participants received an electronic copy of the consent form prior to the interview (see Appendix C), as well as a hard copy which they signed at the start of the face-to-face interview.

Data collection.

Data collection took place over the course of the 2016-2017 competitive season, from September 2016 to May 2017. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at York University, and data collection (including participant recruitment) did not commence until I had received ethics approval.

Participant observation.

Observational data was collected during tryouts, team meetings, training sessions and competitions. I recorded field notes electronically using my personal computer. In IE, observational data provides details about the local setting and how activities are organized and the data collected in these settings supplemented my semi-structured interviews with participants. Observations were collected and recorded from the periphery or sidelines of these spaces. I collected observational data centred on coach-athlete interactions, which included one-on-one and coach-team interactions, as well as procedures and activities. During training sessions, consistent patterns of interactions were centred on technical feedback and training cues as well as group feedback and strategies. At times one coach would be with an athlete separately while the other coach managed the group. The group would always meet before and after each drill at which point the coaches would ask the athletes' feedback on the execution of the drill and any related thoughts. During competitions, I would sit with spectators and observed the team's conduct and behaviour. This included the procedural flow of the matches (e.g., warm-up routines and substitutions) as well as athlete and coach behaviours. I recorded the outcomes of matches and was present for their post-game meetings. At their request, I was not present for their pre-game meetings. I was also not within range of team huddles or conversations that occurred alongside the court. Thus,

recorded observations consisted primarily of procedural activities specific to individual players or the team as a whole.

Interviews.

Seventeen participants (17) volunteered to participate in interviews. I conducted interviews with athletes (n=6), coaches (n=2), and parents (n=9). All interviews (n=28) were recorded using a digital recording device, and the data files were securely stored on a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. Interviews were scheduled throughout the season, and the time/locations of interviews varied according to the convenience of the participant. In terms of duration, interviews ranged from 15 to 70-mins. Interviews were conducted in-person or via telephone. Interviews were semi-structured and informed by observational data I had recorded during training sessions and competitions. Devault and McCoy (2002) refer to IE interviews as "taking to people" (p. 756) because they take the form of conversations and dialogue rather than a one-directional inquiry. Semi-structured interview design allows for flexibility in the flow of each interview and this form of guided conversation complements IE's attempt to "build up an understanding of the coordination of activity in multiple sites" (p. 757). Where possible, I attempted to allow the interviewee to range freely about their experiences of care (or not) in sport broadly and in volleyball specifically and, where necessary, I would follow up with probing questions or asking for further explanation of an experience and in some cases I asked about moments I witnessed while observing. Participants referenced past sport experiences as well as current, depending on when the interview took place in the season. Near the end of the season I asked participants if they would consent to follow-up interviews. Follow-up interviews were conducted either in-person or via telephone. Athletes (n=2), parents (n=4) and coaches (n=2)

participated in one or more follow-up interviews. All participants were sent a copy of the transcript of their interview(s) and had the option to edit their responses, including the option of deleting or adding to their responses. None of the participants opted for this.

Participant categories.

Three categories of participants were interviewed for this study; athletes, coaches and parents. While experiences of care occur between athlete and coach, in youth sport, parents impact athletes' overall participation and perceptions of care and caring broadly and within the sport environment. Generally speaking, athletes' experiential accounts of uncaring and abusive coach behaviour underpin the primary problematic for this IE study. The characteristics of athletes participating in this study varied depending on position played and whether they were starting or non-starting. Both coaches were interviewed at the beginning of the season soon after the team was selected. In IE, coaches are considered 'frontline professionals' who are positioned between athletes and the ruling discourses of sport. DeVault and McCoy (2006) assert that these positions are especially important due to their role in negotiating the complexities of everyday circumstances to ensure they "fit the categories and protocols of a professional regime" (p. 27). It was important to include parents in this study as, in youth sport, parents and guardians are highly influential in whether and how athletes participate. For example, parents in this study were responsible for paying club fees, providing athletes with proper equipment, and ensuring that athletes made it to and attended practices and competitions. Parents also spend time with athletes while they are not training or competing and may influence their athletes' perceptions and experiences of care and caring.

Texts, governing documents and educational resources.

OVA governing documents and coach education materials are publicly available and accessible online. This IE study collected data from a range of documents/texts including those relevant to: coaching and coaching education in the OVA, including those that touched on managing athlete safety, health and technical strategies; the mission, structure, governance and goals of the OVA; guidelines for members' relations and behaviour; and operational policies relevant to particular scenarios. They include: *Screening Policy and Disclosure Form* (2014); *Code of Conduct* (2015); *NCCP's Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a); *Constitution and By-laws* (2016b); *Parent Information Template – 16U Girls* (2016c); *Pre-tryout Information* (2016d); *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (2016d); *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017); *Membership Policy* (2018a); *Person In Authority (PIA) Code of Conduct* (2018b); *Tryout Window Policy* (2018c); Volleyball Canada's *Official Volleyball Rules* (2018); and *Concussion Policy* (2019b). The *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017) provides a complete overview of the rules and regulations that govern OVA events and competitions. These are the guidelines for the procedural organization of the sport setting. The OVA's *Tryout Window Policy* (2018c) provides specific guidelines for the team selection process, while the *Concussion Policy* (2019b) attends to the physical safety of athletes and lists a set of guidelines for returning to play. The *Code of Conduct* (2018b) governs behaviour and conduct of all OVA members and also outlines specific expectations for athletes, coaches and parents/guardians, while the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) pertains specifically to the behaviour and expectations of coaches and their interaction with athletes. In particular, the section pertaining to coaches acknowledges their position of power in sport broadly and the coach-athlete relationship specifically. Finally, the OVA's *Mission and Vision* (2016b, p. 1) outline their goals and values, and the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (2016d) communicates to members how, in

accordance with their values and mission, their plan for implementing changes in their programs and for achieving their goals.

As noted in Chapter Two, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) is the governing body for coach education in Canada and, therefore, is the primary source of formal and informal education for OVA coaches (other than experience gained from practice and observing other coaches). The scope of CAC coach education is illustrated in their forty-five informal online *Coaching Tips* (2019m), which are designed to help coaches care for athletes across a variety of sport-specific scenarios and each reference one of the CAC's formal NCCP *Multi-sport Modules* (2019z). Thus, the analytical scope of this study included an examination of the CAC's forty-five online *Coaching Tips* to explicate how care was constructed in the educational resources available to OVA coaches.

Analysis of Data

Data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2012) approach for thematic analysis (TA). In this section, I explain why I chose TA to analyze the data, while also reconciling the epistemological tensions between this analytical procedure and IE's agenda and motivation for inquiry. I will address this tension by providing a brief overview of IE data analysis strategies offered by Smith (2006) and employed in previous IE studies. Finally, I describe how I used TA procedures to analyze data from interview transcripts, observations and texts.

Data analysis in IE.

Formal analytic strategies are not commonly used in IE studies. This choice is grounded by Smith's (2006) concerns with traditional methods of sociological inquiry that "deploy the

political effect of theory to master other voices" (p. 2). Smith's case for an epistemological reorganization of sociological inquiry underpins the analysis conducted for this current IE study which prioritizes the 'standpoint' or experiences of informants as the guide from which to trace the ruling relations that extend beyond their local setting to the translocal.

The purpose of analysis in IE is not to produce generalizable results about the informants' experiences, but instead to "find and describe social processes that have generalizing effects" (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 18). Participants are considered key informants who are knowledgeable about, in this case, how a generalizing set of relations in sport organizes care and caring in local settings. Thus, in IE, the analytic focus is on process and coordination, where data can be used to "map out complex institutional chains of action" (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 39). It aims to highlight interchanges and chains of action that link the experiences of participants to the organizational capacities of settings and procedures. For this current study, the order in which data was reviewed and coded reflects the prioritization of the participants' voices followed by an examination of observational data before linking experiences to particular texts and documents.

Thematic Tracing.

To reconcile the epistemological differences between IE and TA, I followed a process of thematic tracing that employed the rigorous steps involved in TA to identify emerging patterns across the data sets in such a way that participant's experiences not only remained the priority, but guided the process of thematic mapping. I employed Braun and Clarke's (2012) steps for TA to trace the social organization of care across interview, observation and textual data. I positioned care as an institutional process to be mapped, starting with informants' descriptions of care and then tracing them to translocal relations of ruling that are characteristic to the volleyball/the OVA

specifically, and competitive sport broadly. While this analytical strategy aligns with traditional sociological methods that Smith is wary of, DeVault and McCoy (2006) claim that TA works well with IE when the groupings are simple and reflect broad topics of talk, institutional sites and procedures. They assert that this form of coding is useful for IE researchers examining "chains of action" (e.g., McCoy, 1998) or process interchanges where patterns can be drawn between informants' comments around particular sites, texts or moments in the process.

Thematic Analysis.

The order in which I reviewed and analyzed data was informed by the epistemological underpinnings of IE that prioritize the experiences of informants. Broadly, IE is an analytic project, where analysis begins and is conducted throughout the data collection process (Smith, 2005). TA is a flexible and accessible approach to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), which allowed me to focus on the data in numerous different ways and at various stages of the research process through a procedure of systematically identifying and organizing patterns across interview transcripts, observations and texts, during and after data collection. As interview and observational data were collected throughout the season, I began to see patterns according to the setting (i.e. training, competition) and procedures (i.e. coach feedback, player substitutions) that framed and informed informants' experiences and perceptions of care and caring. My preliminary analysis during data collection traced these physical and procedural patterns of ruling relations that were recurring. I recorded notes electronically about these observations to guide my review of OVA texts and documents.

Once data collection was complete, I reviewed the OVA's governing texts and the CAC's online educational resources. This review process was informed by the first two phases of Braun

and Clarke's (2012) approach to TA. I began by familiarizing myself with these documents, noting instances of the use of care language within them, but primarily noting the settings and procedures to which the documents pertained. This initial coding process at this stage was primarily deductive as I noted particular documents relevant to the organization and procedures of the settings that I had observed prior to the review and that informants had used to frame their experiences of care and caring.

I then began to re/familiarize myself with the interview data. This involved reading and re-reading interview transcripts and listening and re-listening to the audio recordings. I recorded notes electronically which followed the patterns that had emerged during data collection, as well as new observations that emerged from activity and critically thinking about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). At this stage I also reviewed my observational data and noted links between them and the contexts through which informants framed care and caring. I noted the patterns in setting and procedure that emerged during data collection and began to focus on the experiences of care as they pertained to the coach-athlete relationship. I more rigorously reviewed the relevant texts and documents that related to the setting, procedures and coach-athlete relationship that framed informants' descriptions of care and caring. Then, through a back-and-fourth method of inductive exploration (e.g., Townsend, 1998), I traced the connections between the experiences of care, occurring between athlete and coach and in these settings, to the documentation and other processes that govern the local setting.

Next, I began to engage in a systematic analysis of the data through semantic and latent coding procedures. As I explained, this process began during data collection as I noted patterns in the framing of care according to sport setting and procedure, and that were relevant to my research question. Semantic coding was conducted to record and identify the patterns in setting and

procedure through which care was described across interview data. It was also used to trace patterns of care starting with athlete, and then to coach and parent descriptions. Semantic codes identified patterns in informants' language and descriptions of care and were informed by notes I made during the collection of observational data; the same notes were used to guide interviews throughout the season. The notes I recorded focused on athlete, coach and parents' behaviour or mannerisms which were in relation to a specific procedure or action in the setting. These codes traced care across the settings and procedures that framed informants' experiences to the texts and documents relevant to the organization of those settings.

Once data had been semantically coded, I began to code for latent themes beyond the physical and procedural patterns that I had already traced. Interview transcripts and observational data were reviewed again with an interpretive lens informed by the theoretical framework of EoC. This lens is aimed at identifying meanings that lie beneath the semantic surface of the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In particular, this round of coding focused on the experiences of care between coach and athlete and how the coach, as provider of care, attended to the needs of care recipients (i.e., athletes). These codes were linked to the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) and the NCCP *Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) to show the underlying relations of ruling that influence a caring relation, according to the EoC.

Next, I reviewed the coded data and began to identify areas of similarity and overlap between codes. These themes captured the complexity of relationship between athletes and coaches and traced them to text and documents that outline standards for athlete, coach and parent behaviour, as well as specific guidelines for coaches' interactions with athletes. Braun and Clarke (2012) insist that searching for themes is an *active* process whereby researchers generate or construct themes rather than discovering them. In the case of IE thematic tracing, the patterns of

institutional organization I indeed *discovered* by starting with the standpoints of people and then linking them to the settings, procedures and texts that organize people's lives across multiple sites. The linkages existed prior to my investigation. My search for themes, as Braun and Clarke (2012) emphasize, was a process of crafting and shaping the raw data that was oriented by my research question(s). It involved identifying those linkages that shaped and organized care and caring across informants' experiences. Themes were reviewed and patterns across physical and procedural settings were then categorized into subthemes that shared unifying features across participant types. The themes fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw (Braun & Clarke, 2012), tracing the patterns of social relations and anchored by the experiences of care provided by informants.

Braun and Clarke's (2012) fifth step in the TA process is to define and name themes that emerged from both sematic and latent coding procedures. This is a reductionist process whereby patterns from the data are further essentialized with a brief and concise description of the theme. IE seeks to generalize at the level of ruling relations, to show patterns across peoples' experiences but that, at the same time, do not reduce the experience thematically. DeVault and McCoy (2006) assert that rigor does not come from analysis for reductionist purposes, but from the "corrigibility of the developing map of social relations" (p. 33). Indeed, the data does tell a story, which is a goal of the writing up of data using a TA approach. However, in IE, people's experiences must remain intact as they are the guide through which to navigate the map of generalized and ruling social relations illuminated by TA.

The themes I identified using Braun and Clarke's (2012) TA procedures show how care is conceptualized by athletes, coaches and parents and how they are organized by the ruling relations of sport. In the following chapters, organized by study objective, the thematic results will be shared.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS & DISCUSSION I: CARE IN GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

This chapter will address the first objective of this study which is to examine how care is conceptualized in the OVA's governing documents. As explained in Chapter Three, the EoC construes care as a relation between a carer and a recipient of care in which one responds to the needs of an *other*. Employing this framework to examine conceptualizations of care in governing texts brings focus not only to the relationships between the OVA and its members, but to the relations among members in local settings. In particular, *how* care is framed in the OVA's governing documents and statements (hereafter referred to as texts for ease of reading) will, in subsequent chapters, be linked to conceptualizations and practices of care in a specific youth sport context. However, the purpose of this current chapter is to examine how the OVA's governing documents frame care and caring with regards to its members broadly, and athletes specifically. To accomplish this, Miller's (2012) theorizing of fundamental needs involved in caring will be used to evaluate care and caring throughout a range of policy documents and governing statements.

Overall, this analysis will show that the OVA's governing texts attend to needs in justice-oriented ways; specifically, they address fundamental needs of *all* members, a universality which requires abstract conceptions of how needs ought to be fulfilled. Noddings (2015) identifies this process as caring-*about* which is "to be concerned for – multitudes at a distance" (p. 74). Furthermore, the texts focus more so on preventing harms and ensuring that the conduct of members adheres to this standard by describing in great detail actions that are considered harmful. To recall, caring involves more than preventing and mitigating harms; it involves the attention and sensitivity cultivated in relation in order to contribute to the care recipient's flourishing (Noddings, 2013), and overall agency (Miller, 2012). Thus, conceptualizations of care in the OVA's governing texts require in-person translation work to be meaningfully practiced in particular contexts. The

OVA documents reviewed for this chapter include: *Code of Conduct* (2015); *NCCP's Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a); *Constitution and By-laws* (2016a); *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (2016d); *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017); *Membership Policy* (2018a); *Person In Authority (PIA) Code of Conduct* (2018b); Volleyball Canada's *Official Volleyball Rules* (2018); and *Concussion Policy* (2019b).

Moral Evaluation

Employing the EoC to evaluate the relations between an organization's governing texts and its members requires imagining texts (i.e., statements, policies, and other guiding documents) as persons, or moral agents, that are potentially capable of engaging in in-person relations of care. This involves some reconciliation with regards to the parameters of 'documents as moral agents' and how they are capable of responding to, and fulfilling, needs. For example, as a collection of words and phrases, documents cannot *respond* to needs in the manner required by care ethics because they exist in abstraction relative to the local contexts where in-person relations occur. This abstract location limits documents' capabilities when it comes to addressing the needs of persons. At best, they can *assume* the needs of members broadly. Thus, while this EoC analysis will proceed with employing the language of *responding to* and *fulling* needs, governing texts' capacities to *respond*, in the way demanded by care ethics, is limited. This follows Noddings' (2015) argument regarding the caring capacities of organizations: "organizations can certainly address some particular needs, but they cannot *care* in the sense required by care ethics" (p. 72). Instead, it may be more appropriate to examine how the OVA *addresses* the needs of members in their governing texts.

Justice and care.

As noted in Chapter Three, needs can be responded to in care- or justice-oriented ways. In particular, Noddings' (2015) distinction between *expressed* and *assumed* needs exemplifies a pivotal difference between the two approaches. In caring, one responds to the expressed needs of an other; this requires the attention cultivated in relation as the needs of care recipients arise in context. Assumed needs, or rather constructing a response to needs based on a few salient facts (Noddings, 2015), aligns more so with a justice-oriented response, which approaches moral questions of need from a place of abstraction, emphasizes our human separateness, and prioritizes equality (Clement, 1988).

As a collection of policies and guidelines created in abstraction and designed to govern behaviour, the OVA's governing texts can only assume the needs of its members, aligning with a justice-oriented approach. An example of the OVA's justice orientation can be found in their *Constitution and By-laws* (2016a) and *Membership Policy* (2018a) where members and member groups are defined as individuals who are not only responsible for their own conduct, but are expected to follow a universal set of guidelines for governing OVA members' relations (i.e., *Code of Conduct*). These documents provide a definition of three key member groups relevant for the current study: Regional Members, Club Members, and Individual Members. OVA's *Membership Policy* (2018a) defines a Regional Member as: "A geographical area defined by the Board of Directors which is composed of Club Members, Individual Members and Associate Members residing in the designated geographical area who have adopted the OVA's Bylaws, policies, rules and regulations" (p. 1). Club Members reside within the geographical parameters of each region in Ontario and the OVA defines a Club Member as: "an organized volleyball club registered with a Regional Member of the OVA with goals and objective similar to the Association" (p. 1). With

regards to the current study, participants are members of a club team registered with Region 5 in the OVA. Finally, the OVA defines an Individual Member as: "any individual who is a coach, manager, official, referee, athlete or administrator registered with a Club Member, Regional Member or the OVA" (p. 1). Given this study's focus on athletes' experiences of care, documents outlining the OVA's member categories, as well as the OVA's relationships with Individual Members, are pivotal.

While these definitions delineate boundaries between the different groups and may identify points of commonality among member groups, the identification of these member categories, and subsequent documents pertaining to the needs of particular members groups, is underpinned by a justice-oriented approach insofar as these categories are constructed in abstraction and assume a sameness for all persons included which, in turn, is meant to structure subsequent behaviour for all individuals in their respective member group. The OVA's parameters for membership categories inform the guidelines for behaviour in their *Code of Conduct* (2015). For example, the *Code of Conduct* defines Individuals as:

> All categories of membership defined in Section 2.1 of the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA) Constitution and By-laws, as well as, all individuals engaged in activities with the OVA, including but not limited to, clubs, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, directors and officers of the OVA, spectators of OVA events and parents of OVA members (p. 1).

Thus, while governing documents may be oriented towards a path of care via the meeting and fulfilment of fundamental needs, because they cannot engage with people in local contexts, they cannot respond to expressed needs and are restricted to assuming needs of members broadly, despite their acknowledgment of various member categories (i.e., athletes, coaches, parents).

An additional distinction between care- and justice-oriented ethics is that care is needs-based and justice is rights-based (Noddings, 2015). Once again this prioritizes the individual and highlights a foundation on which all members ought to be treated equally. The OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) outlines specific responsibilities for different member groups and employs the language of 'rights' to assert an equality of value across all member groups. For example, coaches are responsible for:

> Recognizing the power inherent in the position of coach and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment. Coaches have a special responsibility to respect and promote the rights of participants who are in a vulnerable or dependent position and less able to protect their own rights (p. 5).

As noted in Chapter Three, justice also prioritizes fairness (Rawls, 1971; 2009), which is inherently linked to the concept of rights and individual autonomy. Furthermore, the OVA's documents can be understood as taking the standpoint of the *generalized other* (Benhabib, 1987), in which they "abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other" (p. 163). Another example of the OVA's prioritization of rights is expressed in the *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) which states:

> The OVA values the safety, rights and well-being of our athletes and their families. It is the responsibility of every OVA club, coach, volunteer and staff member to participate in the effort to create a safe environment for all OVA participants (p. 1).

This prioritizes commonalities across members; specifically, the value of athlete rights and safety as well as the responsibility of OVA members to act in accordance with this standard. This, once

again, illustrates the justice-oriented approach to care through the identification of assumed needs of *all* members.

Overall, the caring capacities of texts are limited to assuming the needs of members, focusing on fairness, rights and equality across member groups. It is not necessarily incorrect for the institution to assume the needs of members; alternatively, it is reasonable for the OVA to create policies and establish procedures based on universal physical and psychological needs (e.g., Miller, 2012). However, the OVA recognizes the agency of individual members and outlines specific responsibilities for *all* members as well as specific member groups (i.e., coaches, athletes). Documents such as the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) addresses the conduct of all member groups, while the *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) and *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) specifically address the behaviour of coaches and PIAs. With regards to the fulfillment of fundamental needs involved in caring, these documents provide more clear and precise definitions of outlawed and/or prohibited behaviour associated with specific harms. Kant's theorizing of *perfect* and *imperfect duties* more clearly addresses the distinction between refraining from harmful action and engaging in desirable conduct (Johnson & Cureton, 2019).

Perfect and imperfect duties.

As noted above, as a collection of words and phrases the OVA's texts can only make suggestions and encourage a standard of behaviour and conduct among members. They do not have the power to enforce or ensure that these guidelines are being followed. An examination of the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015), *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) and *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) shows that the guidelines prohibiting harmful behaviour are much more precise and clear than guidelines to encourage positive, or caring, behaviours. Kant's distinction between

perfect and *imperfect duties* (Johnson & Cureton, 2019) is useful for this analysis. As noted in Chapter Three, *perfect duties* are acts of omission, which are fulfilled when one refrains from engaging in actions or behaviours that are deemed inappropriate or unlawful. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) provides a list of outlawed behaviours for all members. Adhering to the OVA's behavioural guidelines, in this case, requires that members, "refrain from the use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities" (p. 3). Framed as *perfect duties*, members are able to fulfil the OVA's behavioural obligations by simply refraining from the prohibited behaviour. However, an absence of harm does not necessarily lead to relations of care.

Imperfect duties, on the other hand, are acts of commission and are much more complex. Needs fulfilled by imperfect duties are more subjective and their expression will be determined by particularities of the individual persons in relation. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) states that all members are required to "maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of OVA members and other individuals" (p. 2), but *what* counts as self-esteem building and *how* that is accomplished cannot be communicated in, or addressed by, policies and documents. The OVA's *Code of Conduct* provides some additional details explaining how members are required to ensure that dignity and self-esteem are maintained by:

> Demonstrating respect to individuals regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, gender, ancestry, colour, ethnic or racial origin, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religion, religious belief, political belief, disability or economic status (p. 2).

While this appears to be a detailed description of how to maintain the dignity and self-esteem of OVA members, it merely provides a list of *perfect duties* or exclusion criteria to ensure that

members are treated with respect and it does not provide the same level of detail as the sections describing outlawed behaviour (i.e., harassment and hazing). The document continues to list behavioural expectations that are framed more clearly as *imperfect duties* which include: "consistently demonstrating the spirit of sportsmanship, sport leadership and ethical conduct" (p. 2), and "consistently treating individuals fairly and reasonably" (p. 2). However, the manner in which these duties are operationalized in context remains unanswered.

Thus far, the question of *how* needs are constructed and responded to in the OVA's governing texts has been examined. The focus has primarily been on the way in which the OVA categorizes its members broadly, along with their equal rights, responsibilities and assumed needs. As noted above, this aligns more so with justice-oriented responses to need due to the fact that texts cannot engage in the in-person relations required for care and responding to expressed needs. The inquiry now shifts to *which* needs are addressed in the OVA's governing texts and *who* is responsible for addressing them.

Fundamental Needs

As noted in Chapter Three, Miller (2012) more robustly theorizes an account of the needs involved in caring which she claims prioritizes "vital aspects of our shared humanity" (p. 2). Initially, this description aligns more so with a justice approach, highlighting the universality of human needs broadly. However, for Miller, "fundamental needs are those that must be met and cared for in order to establish, sustain, or restore agency" (p. 11), and therefore must extend beyond the universal to an acknowledgement of the particularities of persons in context. To recall, she offers the following definition: "I understand agency as the ability to achieve some manner of results in the world, to affect change in accordance with one's volition, and to maintain the ability

to carry out projects (often self-determined) in a surrounding environment" (p. 24). Thus, agency is inextricably linked to the eleven fundamental needs that Miller deems as morally worthy of a caring response: nutrition and water; rest; shelter; healthy environment; bodily integrity; healing, education; attachments; social inclusion, participation and recognition; play; and security (pp. 41-42).

Miller's list is universal in scope, aligning with *all* humans' experiences of need and she strengthens this claim by establishing a link between agency and harm. She writes: "…it is the relationship between needs and harm, however, that most clearly demonstrates the moral significance of fundamental needs" (p. 23). Framed in this way, the universality of fundamental needs is demonstrated in the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) which focuses heavily on identifying and describing specific harms that they frame as prohibited behaviours for members. For example all Individuals have a responsibility to: "Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes harassment, where harassment is defined as comment or conduct directed towards an individual or group, which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading, or malicious" (p. 2). Thus, identifying and outlawing such behaviour provides members with a simple and more accessible strategy for ensuring that these needs are fulfilled; specifically, *perfect duties* which occur more frequently in the OVA's governing texts. However, while refraining from harmful behaviours indeed highlights the universality of needs among members, Miller acknowledges that these needs will differ in how they are expressed, depending on particular historical, cultural and social circumstances and she writes, "agency is both constitutively and causally social, that is, it is both created socially and maintained socially" (p. 24). This applies more so to needs fulfilled by *imperfect duties* or acts of commission that are shaped by the particularities of the context.

The degree of influence of the contextual circumstances will differ depending on the category of need. For example, the need for *nutrition and water* are more universal with regards to their fulfillment and Miller writes: "…perhaps the most obvious of fundamental needs, all agents will require adequate nutrition and clean water to develop, survive and thrive" (p. 41). Other universal needs include *rest* and *shelter* and, in sport, these fundamental needs are linked to constructions of athlete performance and health; specifically, the roles and responsibilities of coaches in ensuring the physical health of athletes. For example, the OVA's *Youth Competition Manual* (2017) mentions the NCCP's *Nutrition* multisport module (CAC, 2019z) in a section explaining coaches' certification requirements.

As noted above, Miller also identifies categories of need that are more heavily influenced by the context in which they arise. For example, Miller (2012) defines the need for *attachments*:

Positive emotional attachments to others create the possibility of agency in the first place. It is also that which helps to sustain and replenish agency. Without attachments to others, agency often withers. Agents need to express emotions and to receive the emotional expression of others (pp. 41-42).

How one experiences positive emotional attachments and what factors are involved will undoubtedly be shaped by the context and norms of relationships. In the case of coach-athlete relationships, the expression of positive emotional attachments will be informed by the aims of sport, the role that coaches play in athletes' development and performance, and the particularities of both the coach and individual athlete with regards to achieving those goals. This complexity is addressed in the above sections examining *imperfect duties* and in the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) which offers an example stating: "…all individuals have a responsibility to maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of OVA members and other Individuals" (pp. 1-2). The

plethora of ways in which dignity and self-esteem can be maintained and/or enhanced are uncapturable by documents and, thus, require in-person negotiation and work of persons in local settings.

Another fundamental need identified by Miller is *social inclusion, participation and recognition* and she writes: "Agency calls for a degree of inclusion in the surrounding world, participation in one's material and social environment, and sufficient recognition from others. All three relate to forming and maintaining some sense of personal identity necessary for sustaining agency" (p. 42). This is an example of a need that relies on *imperfect duties* to be fulfilled and will depend on the context in which it is expressed as well as the particularities of persons involved. For example, with regards to the responsibilities of coaches and other persons in roles of authority, the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) states that: "All PIAs must treat persons with dignity and respect" (p. 3), thus requiring duties of commission instead of omission.

Overall, Miller (2012) asserts, "fundamental needs are both concrete and universal: they arise in specific circumstances and may vary in terms expression, but nonetheless are a universal aspect of human finitude" (p. 38). Furthermore, "the level of identification of the need is universal, holding for all; its expression is particular, insofar as it is beholden to concrete, local factors" (p. 38). As noted above, the OVA is limited to identifying needs that are grounded in this universality and human finitude and, without the in-person expression of need, the identification and response process is assumptive. This aligns with a justice-oriented approach as the provision of these policies does not guarantee that *expressed* needs will be met because the in-person care work brings a host of complexities to the relation from the subjective viewpoints of the carer and care recipient. To recall, the EoC construes care as a relation, "not a specific set of behaviours"

(Noddings, 2005, p. 17) and governing documents, by nature, can only provide a specific set of rules to guide the conduct between members.

In her theorizing, Miller asserts that the eleven fundamental needs fit loosely into two categories: physical and psychological. Miller's describes these categories as "loosely collected," due to the artificial separation between the two and, "given how needs in the two groups interact with one another in a myriad of ways in real life, and especially in terms of how they are generated, expressed and met" (p. 38). However, according to Miller (2012) and as noted above, needs relating to physical necessity are less likely to spark debate, while needs pertaining to psychological or social necessity give more rise to objections due to their subjective nature. In the context of the current study, the OVA more clearly addresses physical and psychological needs linked to physical safety and a lack of harm through the provision of *perfect duties*. Care, however, requires more than ensuring the physical safety of others. It is linked more so with well-being and flourishing which requires *imperfect duties*, or acts of commission, tailored to the particularities of the context. The following sections will examine how the OVA addresses physical and psychological needs in their governing texts.

Physical Needs.

The physical needs of OVA members are fulfilled by measures designed to ensure their safety while participating in OVA events and activities. This includes detailed descriptions of OVA procedures and standards for competition settings as well as behavioural expectations which include refraining from behaviour and conduct that could result in physical harm. As Miller (2012) emphasizes, the distinction between physical and psychological needs is loose because there are many fundamental needs that overlap which have implications for the complexity of care and the

link between the physical body and one's psychological state. Overall, efforts to ensure the physical and psychological safety of members align with Miller's need for a *healthy environment* and she writes: "In order to become an agent and to maintain agency, one must be surrounded by an environment that is sustaining rather than injurious" (2012, p. 41).

Procedural documents.

The OVA's *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017) outlines the playing rules, regulations and parameters that govern all competition and play during OVA events. It states that the OVA follows Volleyball Canada's *Official Volleyball Rules* (2018), while also providing organizational guidelines to ensure that all sport-related equipment, as well as the sport setting, adheres to a standard of safety. These guidelines address the physical needs of all members and spectators by attending to safety and organizational criteria in local settings. They align with a justice-oriented approach to needs because it is assumed that these guidelines will take care of the physical safety needs for all members, regardless of their particularities or the context. As noted above by Miller (2012), physical needs tend to spark less controversy for this reason. For example, the OVA's *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017) provides specifications for tournament hosting according to the age division which includes the required distances between the court and spectators to ensure athlete safety during play. It also requires that "lines are clearly marked, bright lighting, floors are clear, nets and standards are secure and padded for safety" (p. 9). These parameters for competition attend to the physical safety needs of all members in competition settings.

Another way in which the OVA attends to the physical needs of athletes and members is through their warm-up protocol which provides guidelines for how teams conduct their defensive and offensive pre-game routines for the purpose of protecting athletes and spectators in crowded

competition spaces. The protocol is included in the OVA's *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017) and it states:

> Athletes remain on one side of the net during a hitting warm up and team staff, volunteers or teammates not hitting retrieve the balls on the opposite side. Athletes should not be crossing under the net during hitting warmups into the direct path of the balls. Athletes should run around the outside of the court to retrieve balls (p. 24).

By adhering to this protocol, the OVA claims that injuries will be minimized. It is an example of a justice-oriented approach which prioritizes equality and sameness with regards to the physical needs of members; specifically, safety from concussions and other head-related injuries.

Given the increasing concerns regarding concussions and head trauma in sport, the OVA implemented a *Concussion Policy* (2019b) which can be accessed online through the OVA's website as well as in the Appendix of their *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017, p. 58). The *Concussion Policy* states:

> Whereas the education and awareness of concussion is an important part of providing a safe sporting environment; and whereas the OVA is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure sporting environment for participants in its programs, activities and events; and whereas this Policy is one of several tools that the OVA will use to fulfill its commitment to provide a safe sporting environment and to protect its members from harm (p. 1).

Overall, the purpose of this policy is to "contribute to a safe sporting environment through education and by promoting awareness of concussion diagnosis and graduated return to play of players who have suffered a concussion" (p. 1). The policy applies to all members however, given the pivotal role of coaches in sport, a mandatory component to NCCP coach education is the

Making Headway (CAC, 2019y) module which addresses the concussion protocol in more detail and will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Six.

Behavioural documents.

Beyond the scope of procedures and protocols, the OVA also addresses the physical safety needs of all members in their *Code of Conduct* (2015). The physical safety needs addressed in these documents highlight Miller's assertion of these loose-fitting categories because of their undeniable link to psychological harms. For example, the OVA addresses the issue of physical and sexual harassment by identifying and prohibiting such behaviour (i.e., *perfect duties*). Thus, all individuals are to: "Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, require for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature" (p. 2). Conduct such as this threatens both physical and psychological safety by jeopardizing the fulfillment of several fundamental needs including a *healthy environment*, *security*, *attachments*, and *bodily integrity*, which Miller (2012) describes as:

> Though not often included in lists of needs, freedom from physical and sexual assault and abuse (in all its forms including child abuse, domestic violence, rape, physical intimidation, etc.) is a requirement of agency. In addition, agents must be able to determine matters affecting their own bodies, including medication and reproductive issues. Bodily integrity may also include some form of healthy sexual activity and determination of the nature of that activity (p. 41).

The OVA's documents address the physical needs of members through the provision of *perfect duties* which highlight the universality of members with regards to physical safety. While this section of the *Code of Conduct* (2015) applies to *all* members, there is also a section dedicated

specifically to the role of coaches and their interactions with athletes which is addressed more thoroughly in the *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) and will be examined in the following sections.

Psychological Needs.

As noted above, physical and psychological needs are linked, and the OVA addresses these by attending to the safety of members. To recall, the *Code of Conduct* (2015) addresses the issue of harassment and stipulates responsibilities, or *perfect duties*, for members to ensure that safety. It states that all members have a responsibility to: "Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes harassment, where harassment is defined as comment or conduct directed towards an individual or group, which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading or malicious" (p. 2). The document continues to describe in great detail types of behaviour that constitutes harassment. It includes written and/or verbal abuse, unwelcomed remarks, leering or other suggestive gestures as well as, "condescending and/or patronizing behaviour which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions" (p. 3), practical jokes which could endanger a person's safety, unwanted physical contact, unwelcomed sexual flirtations and physical or sexual assault. The OVA also provides a description of *hazing* and defines it as:

> Any potentially humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity expected of a junior-ranking athlete by a more senior team-mate, which does not contribute to either athlete's positive development, but is required to be accepted as part of a team, regardless of the junior-ranking athlete's willingness to participate. This includes, but is not limited to, any activity, no matter how traditional or seemingly benign, that sets apart or alienates any team-mate based on class, number of years on the team, or athletic ability (p. 3).

Hazing is a form of mistreatment that is especially relevant to sport and the OVA asserts that all members ought to be free from such harms.

Psychological needs are also addressed through the provision of *imperfect duties*. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) states that all individuals are responsible for "focusing comments or criticisms appropriately and avoiding public criticism of athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, volunteers, employees and members" (p. 2), as well as "consistently demonstrating the spirit of sportsmanship, sport leadership and ethical conduct" (p. 2). *How* these responsibilities are operationalized by members will depend on the context and particularities of the individuals involved. It also highlights the limits of a justice-oriented approach to needs.

Priority of Needs

Thus far, this chapter has examined how the OVA conceptualizes care and caring for *all* members by evaluating *how* fundamental needs are addressed. As noted in Chapter Three, *education* is one of Miller's fundamental needs which she describes as various means and modes of learning as "agents require some means of gaining knowledge about the world and learning skills designed to help them function in the world" (p. 41). In this case, all governing texts address a fundamental need for both members and non-members to be educated about the mission, vision and procedures of the organization. For example, the OVA's *Mission Statement and Organizational Values*, which can be found in their *Constitution and Bylaws* (2016a, p. 1) and *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (2016d, p. 1), communicates to its members the goals and aims of the organization. Their values include: accountability, excellence, collaboration, intentionality, sustainability, integrity and respect, and they underpin all subsequent OVA documents. For example, the *Code of Conduct* (2015) states: "The purpose of this Code of Conduct ("Code") is to

ensure a safe and positive environment (within OVA programs, activities, and events) by making all Individuals aware that there is an expectation, at all times, of appropriate behaviour consistent with the values of the OVA" (p. 1). As noted earlier, exactly *how* these values are operationalized is not always clear. However, it is evident that the OVA is more clear with regards to prohibiting behaviour that would violate these values, than providing descriptions of actions which would uphold them. Once again, this aligns with a justice-oriented approach that prioritizes equality and universality across member groups.

While the examination of needs for all members has provided clarity with regards to the OVA's caring capacities, the primary concern of this study is athletes' experiences of care and caring in a competitive youth sport environment. As a youth sport organization, the OVA asserts that it is primarily concerned with the needs of athletes, which is communicated in their *Mission Statement* via the use of athlete-centred language and it states: "The OVA is an athlete-centered association where dedicated volunteers and professional staff provide leadership in growth and development of volleyball for all Ontarians" (2016a, p. 1). This priority is evident throughout the OVA's governing texts which are aimed at providing a safe and positive environment for all participants during OVA events where athletes are competing or training. It is also exemplified in the OVA's *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (2016d) where the strategic priorities are designed to "help shine a light on our most important stakeholder, the athlete" (p. 3). Thus, the policies, protocols and resources provided by the OVA are aimed at ensuring the development of athletes, while recognizing the necessary contributions of other key stakeholders, such as coaches and volunteers.

Fundamental Needs of Athletes.

In sport, coaches are responsible for responding to and fulfilling athletes' needs. This is reflected throughout the OVA's governing texts where any operationalization of needs response, extending beyond physical and psychological safety minimums, requires the in-person negotiative work of persons in local contexts. This highlights the limits of justice-oriented responses to needs which are prevalent in these documents, while also emphasizing the pivotal role of coaches.

The OVA acknowledges the pivotal role of coaches with regards to the care of athletes in their *Code of Conduct* (2015), *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b), and the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a). These documents frame care, both physical and psychological, in ways that align with the needs of all members; specifically, they identify a fundamental need of *all* athletes in sport which is the ability to participate in a safe sporting environment and focus primarily on coach conduct and behaviour that is prohibited in order to ensure athlete safety. In particular, the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) provides a definition of PIAs:

> Persons in authority (PIA) includes any person who hold a position of trust or authority over an "Athlete" pursuant of the role assigned to them by the OVA or an "OVA Decision Maker". PIAs include but are not limited to coaches, managers, trainers, officials, staff, administrators, club directors, third party service providers (i.e., strength and conditioning trainers or yoga instructors), and volunteers (p. 2).

The document outlines specific boundaries for PIAs which are communicated as *perfect duties*; specifically, conduct that is outlawed or prohibited for the purpose of protecting athletes. As stated in the document:

> The boundaries established in this Code are intended to protect athletes from grooming, inappropriate, abusive, discriminatory and harassing behaviour. By identifying behaviour

that violates boundaries, the risk of abuse to athletes is reduced and expectations for the

conduct of persons in authority are clearly outlined (p. 2).

This aligns with Miller's (2012) need for *security* which she defines as: "freedom from coercive,

threatening environments – physical, psychological, and emotional" (p. 42). However, as Miller

asserts, the expression of those needs will vary depending on the individuals in the relation and

the particularities of the context, which will ultimately impact *how* coaches respond to the physical

and psychological needs of athletes. To review, care is a relational and dynamic construct that not

only includes safeguarding, but also attending to the needs of athletes while respecting their rights

as human beings (Cronin et al., 2019). This requires in-person negotiation(s), or *imperfect duties*,

to fulfill those needs.

Coach Responsibilities.

Consistent across the OVA's governing texts is an acknowledgment of influential role of

coaches in sport. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) outlines a section pertaining

specifically to coaches stating that, in addition to the responsibilities of all members:

> Coaches have additional responsibilities. The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one
>
> and plays a critical role in the personal, sport, and athletic development of the athlete.
>
> Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this
>
> relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or unconsciously
>
> (p. 4).

Similarly, the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) states:

> Coaches play a vital role in shaping the youth of tomorrow through sport. The OVA relies
>
> on them and other persons in authority to be role models and to put young athletes on a

path to success. The dynamic between coach and athlete gives rise to a power imbalance

and a culture of unquestioned trust that can result in abuse. As such, it is imperative that

all persons in positions of authority be held to a high standard of conduct. Abuse in sport,

particularly sexual abuse and the grooming behaviour that precedes it, destroys the positive

impact of sport and causes untold harm to victims and those around them. Consequently,

the OVA has a strong obligation to establish and maintain systems that prevent abuse and

respond to conduct that poses risk to OVA athletes (p. 1).

The OVA's focus on ensuring the safety of athletes and the detail they provide to frame prohibited

behaviour aligns with Miller's account of fundamental needs involved in caring. However, a caring

relation requires more than simply refraining from uncaring behaviour. It requires attention,

sensitivity, and responsiveness cultivated in relation between persons (Noddings, 2013).

Physical and psychological needs.

The responsibilities of coaches with regards to athletes' needs capture both physical and

psychological dimensions. As noted above, the power position occupied by coaches and their

influential role with regards to athletes' experiences, creates a stronger link between physical and

psychological needs. As is the case members' needs broadly, the OVA's account of how coaches

ought to respond and fulfill the needs of athletes are communicated as both *perfect* and *imperfect*

duties. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) states that coaches will: "Under no

circumstances provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed

medications) or performance-enhancing substances and, in the case of minors, alcoholic beverages

and/or tobacco" (p. 4). In addition, coaches will: "Not engage in a sexual relationship with an

athlete of under the age of 18 years, or an intimate or sexual relation with an athlete over the age

of 18 if the coach is in a position of power, trust or authority over such athlete" (p. 5). These excerpts are examples of *perfect duties*, or actions that coaches are required to refrain from in order to fulfill athletes' physical and psychological safety needs, in addition to the responsibilities of all members which have been addressed throughout this chapter.

The OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) provides more detail with regards to prohibited conduct of coaches and other PIAs. This document outlines "grooming conduct specifically prohibited" (p. 4), and provides a list of behaviours that PIAs are not permitted to engage in. Some examples include:

> Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities; spending time with an individual athlete outside of team activities; socially isolating an athlete; becoming overly-involved in an athlete's personal life; making sexual or discriminatory jokes or comments to an athlete; and mocking or threatening an athlete (p. 4).

This document also outlines "physical contact specifically prohibited" (p. 4), and some examples include:

> Physical contact that does not take place in public; physical contact that is not for benefit of the athlete (i.e., instead it meets a need of the PIA); butt-pats, tickling wrestling horseplay with one or more athletes; and physical contact that an athlete has specifically requested not to occur (p. 4).

Finally, this OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* provides examples of "harassment and discrimination" which is prohibited and states that a PIA shall not engage or participate in the following:

> Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, slapping, or purposely injury and athlete; displaying offensive materials, gestures or symbols to an athlete; negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's disability, ethnicity, religion,

race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression or gender identity; withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on the athlete's disability, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression or gender identity; and overlooking hazing or other activity that is humiliating, degrading, abusive or dangerous to an athlete (pp. 4-5).

In addition to the sections above, the document also includes mandatory communication protocols, travel protocols and reporting requirements. Overall, the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) focuses on identifying and preventing behaviours that threaten the physical and psychological safety of athletes.

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) also attends to the physical and psychological safety of athletes by linking ethical principles with standards of behaviour expected of coaches. In contrast to the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) and *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b), the *NCCP Code of Ethics* attends more so to *imperfect duties*; specifically, behavioural standards of coaches aimed to extend beyond minimizing and preventing harm. Overall, this document "deals with the fundamental values of safety, responsible coaching, engaging in relations with integrity, respecting athletes, and honouring sport" (p. 1). For example, coaches are expected to ensure the physical safety and health of athletes, which is linked to the following behavioural standards:

Ensure that training or competition site is safe at all times; be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency; avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or that are beyond their level; and strive to preserve the present and future health and well-being of athletes (p. 2).

This list outlines *imperfect duties* required of coaches that will vary in expression and fulfillment depending on the context and particularities of coach and athlete.

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a) also provides a list of expected coach behaviours linked to the value of coaching responsibly. Once again, these are framed as *imperfect duties* which highlight the complex work required of coaches with regards to adapting to context particularities. They include:

> Make wise use of the authority of the position and make decisions in the interest of athletes; foster self-esteem among athletes; avoid deriving personal advantage for a situation or decision; know one's limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action; honour commitments, word given, and agreed objectives and; maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information and use it appropriately (p. 2).

These behavioural standards, while they are abstract enough to apply to all athletes, will undoubtedly be expressed differently depending on the context. More specifically, this document does not actually explain how to ensure that athletes are respected in these ways, it merely asserts that they ought to be. Once again, this highlights the limits of justice-oriented approaches and emphasizes the pivotal role of coaches in negotiating the context-specific expressions of these needs.

Care Limitations of OVA Documents

As noted throughout this chapter, the OVA's governing texts are limited in their capacities to address the needs its members. Consisting of a collection of words and phrases aimed at including *all* members, at best, documents can provide rules and guidelines aimed at governing human behaviour and conduct, but their effectiveness is reliant on the operationalization and enforcement of such guidelines by institutional members and representatives in local settings (i.e.,

coaches). Thus, governing documents are best suited to describe *what* needs are relevant, to *whom*, and *how* they ought to be fulfilled, but these recommendations are justice-oriented because they assume a symmetry across member categories with regards to needs and exist in an abstract form with assumed universal application (cf., Rawls, 1971; 2009).

To recall, Noddings (2015) affirms that an organization's efforts can be evaluated with regards to its contributions to systems of care; specifically, they can be "instrumental in establishing the conditions under which in-person caring can flourish" (2002, p. 23). This requires a process of translation whereby the expressions of care in the OVA's governing texts are operationalized by coaches who are responsible for responding to, and negotiating the particularities of, athletes in local settings. In other words, given the limited reach of governing texts, *how* they frame and conceptualize needs will be influenced and translated by coaches, a process that will be shaped by coaches' interpretations and understandings of those needs as well as athletes' particular expressions.

Need for Coach Education.

As this chapter has shown, the OVA conceptualizes care in their governing texts by addressing fundamental needs of members in justice-oriented ways with a heavy focus on preventing harms through the provision of *perfect duties*. However, this exemplifies the limited reach of the OVA with regards to caring for their members broadly, and athletes specifically because caring involves more than meeting fundamental needs through the prevention and mitigation of harms. The on-site care work of coaches is pivotal in this endeavor because, aligning with tenants of athlete-centred coaching, responding to the overall needs of athletes involves 'knowing' the athlete and supports a social constructivist approach whereby the coach recognizes

that each athlete has a history and is committed to understanding them (Penney & Kidman, 2014). As noted in Chapter Four, coaches are considered 'frontline professionals' (Devault & McCoy, 2006) responsible for the on-site care work and maintenance of attachments that cannot be accomplished by the OVA's governing texts. Thus, the following chapter will examine how care is conceptualized in the educational resources, those which are meant to prepare coaches for the work that they will do with athletes, available to OVA coaches.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS & DISCUSSION II: CARE IN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The following chapter will address the second objective of this study which is to examine how care is conceptualized in the educational resources available for OVA coaches. As noted in Chapter Five, the OVA's governing documents and statements address needs through justice-oriented rules and policies which focus heavily on the prevention of harms for *all* members. The detailed descriptions of these harms emphasize the threat to both physical and psychological fundamental needs (e.g., Miller, 2012), which can be avoided through the provision of *perfect duties*, or acts of omission, whereby members refrain from engaging in harmful conduct or behaviour (Johnson & Cureton, 2019). However, care not only involves meeting fundamental needs through the prevention and mitigation of harms, but also by responding to *expressed* needs, which establish and sustain the agency of care recipients. This requires the attention and sensitivity cultivated in relation to account for the particularities of individuals in context, a dimension of care that the OVA's governing texts are incapable of addressing.

For the purpose of this IE study, the question of *how* coaches interpret and respond to the needs of athletes can be traced to the strategies provided by the organization's governing texts. However, as noted in Chapter Five, documents pertaining to behaviour and conduct of OVA members broadly, and coaches specifically, such as the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015), *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b), and the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a), have limited organizational power over the conduct between members in local settings. In other words, the operationalization of the OVA's caring efforts, via the fulfilment of fundamental needs of athletes, requires the work of coaches to uphold, negotiate and apply the organization's efforts in context. Thus, educational resources made available to OVA coaches, which provide strategies for meeting specific physical and psychological needs of athletes, can be thought of as continuing a process of caring that begins

at the level of the institution and requires translation at the local level where the particularities of athletes and the context impact *how* needs are expressed. However, this does not guarantee the creation and maintenance of caring relations.

As noted in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, the CAC is the governing body for coach education in Canada and it offers formal coach education and supplementary resources to Canadians, most notably through the NCCP. The OVA works in partnership with the CAC and NCCP coach development pathways to ensure that coaches are educated and properly trained so that they can best serve athletes: "We believe coaches are the backbone of the sport, fostering an environment where players can learn, develop, and continue to enjoy the sport. A coach's impact on player experience contributes significantly to the growth of Volleyball for Life" (OVA, 2019a, para. 1). The educational resources reviewed for this chapter include open-access summaries of formal NCCP *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z) as well as informal educational resources or *Coaching Tips* (CAC, 2019m) offered by CAC through their website. Each *Coaching Tip* references one of the formal NCCP modules which will more thoroughly address the topic(s) covered in the online resource.

Moral Evaluation

As discussed in Chapter Five, employing the EoC to evaluate conceptualizations of care in documents requires an imaginative step; specifically, it involves positioning governing documents and statements as moral agents whose efforts are aimed at fulfilling and meeting the needs of members through in-person relations. Similar to OVA documents, the CAC's coach education resources examined in this chapter are a collection of words and phrases and, thus, cannot *respond* to needs in the manner required by care ethics. However, they focus more clearly on the needs of

athletes and *how* coaches, specifically, ought to manage the complex task negotiating athletes'

needs in sport broadly with the particularities of the individual persons that occupy those roles. In

essence, coach education resources are intended to help coaches translate care from the abstract

level of harm prevention, as demonstrated in governing documents and statements, to the local

contexts where they are responsible for operationalizing such efforts. The coach education

resources examined in this chapter offer more specific guidelines for coach behaviour and

instruction spanning a wide range of athlete needs in sport while still requiring the work of coaches

to navigate and apply them according to the particularities of the context.

Overall, the CAC's educational resources, both formal and informal, aim to provide

coaches with tools and strategies to respond to the *expressed* needs of athlete in local settings.

Unlike the OVA's governing texts which prioritize justice-oriented responses to needs through the

provision of *perfect duties*, the educational resources addressed in this chapter prioritize strategies

for coaches that extend beyond the mitigation and prevention of harms, often by framing coach

responsibilities as *imperfect duties*. In other words, for athletes to be cared for, coaches must

engage in continuous negotiative work with athletes and, as Miller (2012) writes, "moral agents'

emotional attunement and involvement with others with others are necessary to foster and maintain

agency in others" (p. 24). However, the CAC's educational resources make several assumptions

regarding the needs of athletes; in particular, efforts and strategies designed to respond to athletes'

needs are driven by sport-related norms such as athlete development and performance, which are

then linked athletes' overall positive sport experience. The main concern is that these educational

resources employ the language of caring for, and meeting the needs of athletes, while still

prioritizing performance outcomes. This aligns more so with justice-oriented responses to need

which, given the pivotal role of coaches in athletes' development and sport experiences, requires coaches and other PIAs to ensure that they translate to care in local settings.

CAC Coach Education Pathways

OVA coach education is overseen by Volleyball Canada (VC) and the CAC via the NCCP. However, an important dimension to consider is the structure of the coach education system; specifically, which formal elements are made mandatory for coaches, and which learning pathways are optional. The OVA's website provides links to information about VC's NCCP coaching streams which are: *community* (ages 6-12 years), *development* (ages 13-18 years), and *performance* (ages 18-22 + years) (VC, 2019). The *development* coach stream is further subcategorized into *development coach context* (ages 13-16 years), which is the scope of the current study, and *advanced development coach context* (ages 17-18 years). With each stage, there is a growing emphasis on coach education with regards to training methods and performance analysis. In order to be fully trained in any category, coaches are required to have completed the *Making Ethical Decisions* (CAC, 2019x) module and *Making Headway* (CAC, 2019y). These are both examples of NCCP *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z), meaning they are not volleyball-specific and will often have coaches from multiple sports enrolled in each workshop. In addition, in order for coaches to retain their certified status, they are required to obtain Professional Development (PD) points which can be earned through a multitude of activities including: national and provincial sport organization conferences and workshops, eLearning modules, NCCP workshops, coach mentorship programs, and active coaching (CAC, 2019w, para. 2).

Formal coach education modules such as the NCCP's *Making Ethical Decisions (MED)* (CAC, 2019x) and *Making Headway* (CAC, 2019y), which are the minimal mandatory

requirements of OVA coaches, address physical and psychological needs by focusing on minimizing harm and providing coaches with tools to ensure safe environments for athletes. These modules also include strategies to help coaches respond to sport-related scenarios where there has been a violation of athletes' needs and agency, or a potential violation may occur without the proper response. The themes addressed in these modules correspond with several informal CAC *Coaching Tips* (2019m) and they will be addressed throughout the following sections. As noted above, *MED* and *Making Headway* prioritize physical needs and preventing harm, however as Miller (2012) notes, physical and psychological needs are not exclusive. Thus, the spectrum of Miller's fundamental needs are addressed in many of the NCCP's optional *Multisport Modules*.

CAC coach education resources.

Information regarding the NCCP's *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z) is provided by the CAC and can be accessed online. These resources provide detailed descriptions of each course and emphasize the importance of addressing the physical activity needs of the learner through the synthesis of multidisciplinary knowledge (Armour & Chambers, 2014). Similar to the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) and *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b), the CAC acknowledges the powerful and influential role of leaders in sport by stating: "Coaches are mentors, motivators, and leaders. Along with parents and teachers, coaches have a profound impact on the future of our children. It's a great responsibility, and Canada's two million coaches embrace it with passion and dedication" (CAC, 2019z, p. 2). The CAC also asserts that the NCCP "gives coaches the confidence to succeed" (p. 2), which is a value that underpins all coach education initiatives offered by the CAC through the NCCP. More specifically, the CAC claims that coaches will not only gain technical abilities, "but also mentoring and decision-making skills" (p. 2). Overall, the NCCP

offers twenty-five *Multisport Modules* and an extensive examination of each one falls out of the scope of the current study. However, they are all designed to assist coaches in responding to physical and psychological needs of athletes by increasing coaches' knowledge and learning.

Online coaching tips.

In addition to the pathways noted above, the CAC offers fourty-five NCCP-inspired *Coaching Tips* (CAC, 2019m) designed to educate coaches in responding the wide range of athlete needs. These tips are available online and free of charge. They cover a wide range of athlete needs, coaching strategies to address those needs, and they each reference one of the NCCP's formal *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z), which provides a more expansive and thorough review of the material in either an online or classroom setting. In some cases, a multisport module will have more than one related online *Coaching Tip*. An examination of all forty-five coaching tips falls outside the scope of this current study. However, this chapter will review the strategies associated with meeting the fundamental needs of athletes (see Appendix D for an example of a CAC online *Coaching Tip*).

Mandatory training.

As noted above, VC and the OVA require a minimum standard of education and training for coaches in order to be certified at each level and to be eligible to coach at the Ontario Championships (OCs) (OVA, 2017, p. 32). Important to note is that these eligibility requirements apply only to head coaches, and are not mandatory for assistant coaches or other staff present during OCs. Additionally, these training requirements are not mandatory for any coach to participate in practices, training, or competitions during the regular season. Assistant coaches and

staff who are sitting on the bench at Provincial/National Championships are only required to adhere to the PSO's *Screening Policy and Disclosure Form* (OVA, 2014), which is mandatory for all coaches registered with the OVA. The lack of mandated coach education in the OVA not only has implications of the effectiveness of the NCCP, but also for how athletes' needs are framed and fulfilled.

With regards to the scope of the current study, all head coaches for teams ranging from 11U to 16U are required to have completed *Volleyball eLearning*, *Making Ethical Decisions* and *Making Headway*. These are the minimum head coach requirements for their training as a *Development Coach*, which are mandatory for their first appearance at the OCs and are clearly outlined in the OVA's *Youth Competitions Manual* (2017, p. 32). Additional requirements become mandatory with each subsequent head coach appearance at the OCs. For example, head coaches appearing at OCs for a second time, in addition to the requirements listed above, must have also completed the Development Coach Volleyball Workshop and, for their third appearance, in addition to all previously stated requirements, head coaches are required to have completed the Development Coach Evaluation, as well as one of two NCCP *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z): *Planning a Practice* or *Nutrition*. As noted above, the NCCP modules are part of formal coach education pathways and, thus, the content delivered in these courses falls out of the scope of the current study. Therefore, the remaining sections of this chapter will evaluate the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (CAC, 2019m) and NCCP summaries of mandatory modules (CAC, 2019z) through the lens of Miller's (2012) fundamental needs.

Fundamental Needs

As noted in Chapter Three, caring involves responding to the fundamental needs of an other. Furthermore, and as noted in Chapter Five, the OVA's governing texts address fundamental needs and *how* they ought to be fulfilled; specifically, through the provision of *perfect duties* in order to ensure the physical and psychological safety of all members. The following analysis in this chapter will differentiate between resources that prioritize either physical or psychological needs. In particular, scenarios that address physical needs include: injury management, nutrition, and the use of performance enhancing drugs.

The CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) provides coaches with strategies for navigating the complexities of coach-athlete relations which align with Miller's (2012) physical and psychological categories of fundamental needs. As noted by Miller, these are loose categories because each fundamental need has both physical and psychological dimensions. In the case of the CAC's *Coaching Tips*, these categories are useful for determining which dimension of fundamental needs is prioritized. Consistent across both categories, however, is the underlying assumption that athletes need coaches to ensure that they are safe and well-nourished for the purpose of athlete development and performance success.

Physical Needs.

Several of the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) prioritize the physical needs of athletes. Unlike the OVA's governing texts which focus on preventing and minimizing harms (i.e., harassment and sexual abuse), these tips focus more so on injury management and nutrition. Furthermore, they frame coaches' responsibilities as *imperfect duties*, or acts of commission, whereby the coaching practices adjust to the particularities of the context, requiring coaches to

negotiate the abstract parametres of the duty with the particularities of athletes shaping their expression.

Injury management.

Resources that focus on managing athletes' injuries acknowledge the physical risks of sport participation, as well as necessary recovery processes to ensure athletes' physical health. In particular, they address fundamental needs such as *rest*, *healthy environment*, and *healing*, which Miller (2012) specifically defines as:

> Many (if not all) agents need some form of medical attention or healing that they are not themselves able to perform. I have selected the term healing to indicate the breadth of possibility. Obviously, not every culture embraces a Western model of medicine. Within most if not all cultures, however, forms of healing are provided when agents are ill or injured (p. 41).

This is especially the case with sport where injuries and injury management are a normalized and institutionalized dimension of sport performance and sport medicine. For example, the CAC's *6 Steps to Follow When an Injury Occurs* (2019g) acknowledges that: "By its very nature, physical activity can present some risk of injury. One of the key responsibilities of the coach is to manage the potential risks that present themselves during practice or competition" (para. 1). This tip references the NCCP's *Planning a Practice* (CAC, 2019z) module which claims it will provide coaches with the "skills to organize a well-structured practice plan with safe activities to match the level of participants" (para. 7), as well as "identify potential risk factors and to create an emergency action plan in case something goes wrong" (para. 7). This resource connects athletes' physical safety with the types of activities relative to skill level.

As noted in Chapter Five, a concern across sport is the increase in concussion and head injuries among youth athletes. To address this concern, the CAC outlines the graduated recovery process in their *6 Step Return to Play Guidelines Following a Concussion* (2019f) coaching tip as well as *Lower the Risks of Concussions with a Safe Environment for Athletes* (2019v), which provides tips for coaches with regards to safety and inspection of the facilities in which they train as well as proper use of equipment. This is linked to the NCCP's *Making Headway* (CAC, 2019y) module which provides concussion education and is mandatory for all coaches participating in the OVA's annual Provincial Championship competition. In particular, the above coaching tips and NCCP module provide coaches with the six steps for graduated *Return-to-Play* and they are: symptom limited activity; light aerobic exercise; sport-specific activities; begin drills without body contact; "on field" practice with body contact (once cleared by a doctor); and game play (CAC, 2019f). Again, these coach education resources are designed to assist coaches in responding to the physical needs of athletes with little to no attention to athletes' psychological needs.

Nutrition.

Several of the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) focus on ensuring athlete health for the purpose of training and competition scenarios. This links to fundamental needs such as *nutrition and water*, *rest*, and *bodily integrity* (Miller, 2012). For example, *The Current Top 10 Nutrition Tips* (CAC, 2019iii) is designed to keep athletes healthy, preventing injuries and achieving maximum performance. It also emphasizes the influential role of coaches and parents in encouraging athletes' healthy habits by stating:

Coaches and parents should encourage athletes to consume a nutritionally and energy balanced diet as the first line of defense for keeping healthy performing at their best.

Getting a balance of all the major food groups with enough calories, carbohydrates, proteins and fats combines with proper rest and recovery is the best recipe for top performance (para. 25).

Another example is the CAC's *5 Reasons Why Hydrating is Important* (2019d) which explains the importance of athletes staying consistently hydrated with regards to their performance: "Athletes rarely consume enough fluid to maximize the absorption capacity of the digestive system or to balance fluid loss. Hydration offers many benefits and is pivotal to maximizing one's performance, either while training or in a competition" (para. 1). The two examples above reference the NCCP's *Prevention and Recovery* (CAC, 2019z) module which addresses in more detail the strategies for coaches with regards to ensuring athletes' physical and nutritional needs are met to improve and maximize performance.

The CAC also acknowledges athletes' fundamental need to *rest* (Miller, 2012); specifically, they offer coaches some strategies to evaluate their athletes' energy levels in the coaching tip *7 Signs Your Athlete is Suffering from Sleep Deprivation* (2019k). The CAC writes:

Did you know lack of sleep can slow down recovery and compromise the immune system of your athlete? Sleep is one of many variables that can provide an advantage over the competition. When an athlete experiences chronic sleep deprivation, it increases the risk of injury and may even cause the body to store extra fat (para. 1).

Once again, the health implications of *rest* are linked to athletes' performance. This coaching tip references the NCCP's *Prevention and Recovery* (CAC, 2019z) module which focuses on ensuring and maintaining athletes' physical health and wellness.

Performance enhancing drugs.

As noted in Chapter Two, the use of performance enhancing drugs is an ethical concern not only in Canadian youth sport or volleyball specifically, but in competitive levels of sport broadly. While there are several health implications associated with the use of drugs, the ethical issues in sport is more associated with the impact on results and an unfair advantage in competition (Bowen et al., 2017; Wenner, 2016). The high priority of this concern, and the consequences for athletes with regards to testing "positive" has also resulted in CAC offering strategies for coaches to ensure that their athletes are not ingesting prohibited substances. The CAC addresses this concern in *Leading Drug-free Sport: 3 Considerations for Assessing Dietary Supplement Claims* (2019u) and it writes:

> Supplement companies use many marketing strategies to convince athletes that their product fulfills an actual need better than conventional methods. In some cases, undeclared substances found in a product can be prohibited under anti-doping regulations. Advising your athletes on how to best interpret the claims made by dietary supplement companies can go a long way (para. 1).

This coaching tip references the NCCP's *Leading Drug-free Sport* (CAC, 2019z) module and, once again, prioritizes athletes' eligibility in competition under the guise of physical health and wellness. The following section will examine CAC coach resources that prioritize athletes' psychological needs. However, it is important to recall Miller's assertion of the loose parametres of these categories due to their intersectionality in context.

Psychological needs.

The CAC's *Coaching Tips* (CAC, 2019m) that prioritize psychological needs focus heavily on preventing conflict, maintaining positive relationships with parents, fostering athletes' self-esteem, and supporting coaches in navigating this complex terrain. For example, the CAC's *5 Tips to Make a Coach a Better Leader* (2019e) asserts that coaches, "have a responsibility to help their athletes navigate through their athletic journey" (para. 1). While this includes physical needs such as those examined above, helping athletes navigate through sport requires strategies to help athletes directly as well as strategies for coaches to help manage this process. These strategies are framed as *perfect duties*, requiring coaches to account for athletes' particularities in their application. However, while it appears that these less abstract approaches move away from a justice-oriented approach to needs, these strategies still assume that *all* athletes experience fundamental needs in these ways, an approach that does not fully align with a caring response as conceptualized in an EoC framework.

Athlete needs.

The CAC *Coaching Tips* (2019m) that prioritize athletes' experiences include strategies for managing conflict, stress, and for ensuring athletes' positive development in sport. While these resources are designed to help coaches, the focus is on facilitating athletes' skills and development in sport. For example, the CAC's *6 strategies for preventing conflict* (2019i) aims to address two myths regarding conflict in sport and it states:

> The first is that conflict is negative, and the second is that conflict is a contest. The result of conflict can certainly be negative; however, conflict can also have positive results.

Achieving a positive outcome depends entirely on the skills used to handle the conflict. If

you handle it well, conflict can result in many positive outcomes (para. 1).

This *Coaching Tip* is linked to the NCCP's *Managing Conflict* (CAC, 2019z) module which

recognizes how important it is for coaches to manage conflict effectively. However, the

management of conflict by coaches is underpinned by the goals of athletes' performance and

success first and foremost. For example: "Conflict that is poorly handled, however, can result in

deteriorating relationships that negatively affect your team's or athletes' ability to train effectively

and achieve important goals or your ability to function effectively as their coach" (para. 2).

Therefore, the coaching tip outlines the six strategies that will be covered more thoroughly in the

formal NCCP module. They apply to pre-season and pre-competition situations and they include:

share information; share expectations; clarify roles and obtain commitment to them; create stability

and predictability; build relationships; and establish a pleasant environment. Overall, this strategy

prioritizes psychological needs during sport-specific scenarios. However, while these strategies

appear to account for the particularities of athletes in context through the provision of tools that

prioritize communication and relationships, they are underpinned by performance-oriented goals.

This is problematic because, and as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, there are cases where the

expressed needs of athletes do not align with these assumed needs indicative of competitive sport

and coaches' efforts to manage conflict with these underlying assumptions can result in an athletes'

experience of compromised agency.

The CAC incorporates research from the lens of PYD in their coaching tip *5 core*

foundations of positive athlete development (2019c). The motivation of this coaching strategy is

to move beyond the elimination of athlete harm to ensure positive conditions that nurture athletes.

It states: "In addition to recognizing maltreatment in sport and determining when and how to

intervene, coaches need to know how to identify the conditions that create health sport experiences" (para. 1). It references the NCCP's *Empower +* (CAC, 2019z) module and lists the five C's of PYD: competence; confidence; character; caring and compassion; and connection. In particular it states: "To ensure that athletes receive the greatest benefits from their sport participation, coaches should use positive, holistic, and values-based approaches to athlete development. Coaches can do this by paying particular attention to enhancing the core foundations of positive athlete development" (para. 2-3). One way that the CAC suggests coaches employ the values of PYD in their sport coaching is through goal setting; specifically, *Goal-setting in 6 easy steps* (2019q) is designed to help coaches set goals with their team, once again prioritizing performance success. The CAC writes: "Goals are statements of what an athlete or team wants to accomplish. They provide both a sense of purpose and a sense of direction to training and competition. Use this 6-step process to set seasonal and/or annual goals and to develop a road map for your athletes" (para. 1). This resource references the NCCP's *Basic Mental Skills* (CAC, 2019z) module which is designed to help coaches: "Recognize the signs indicating that an athlete may need to improve his/her goal setting, focus and anxiety control skills, and develop tools to help the athlete to make improvements in these areas" (p. 4). It also attends to fundamental needs of *attachments* and *social inclusion, participation and recognition*, which link to the psychological needs of athletes. Once again, these strategies emphasize the importance of acknowledging and working with athletes' particularities. However, the range of athlete particularities are underpinned by assumptions related to performance-oriented goals which can result in coaches discounting any expression of athletes' needs that conflict with the goals of competitive sport.

Coach needs.

The CAC acknowledges the important role of coaches in several of their online coaching tips; specifically, with regards to athletes and ensuring a positive sport experience (i.e., PYD). Thus, they offer strategies to support coaches in their own practice as they navigate the complex world of sport and responding to the needs of their athletes. For example, the CAC's coaching tip *Develop a coaching philosophy in 3 easy steps* (2019o) asserts that a coaching philosophy is an essential component of leadership and, thus, provides coaches with steps to creating their own based on the coach's "fundamental reason for coaching and the coach's core values" (para. 1). The CAC writes: "Providing a positive sport experience for athletes, providing the opportunity for athletes to achieve their full potential through sport, and using sport as a holistic means of individual development is your priority" (para. 3). The CAC associates coaches' philosophies with establishing clear fundamental values and, thus, references the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a). The CAC explains:

> A value is an enduring, and deeply held belief that is a statement of personally or socially preferred ideals. When you determine your values as a coach, you need to pay attention not only to what is important to you but also what is important to society. They values set out in the NCCP Code of Ethics are an example of socially preferred ideals, having been formulated over time by consulting across a broad spectrum of coaches, athletes, and others involved in sport about what is essential in sport (para. 6).

Linking the *NCCP Code of Ethics* to "socially preferred ideals" indicates how these values operate on the assumed needs of athletes and coaches with regards to sport-related values. However, as noted in Chapter Five, these ideals are abstract and intentionally universal which has the advantage

of applying to *all*, but requires the work of coaches to negotiate *how* these broad values are shaped by the particulates of athletes in local settings.

Another example of efforts to help coaches navigate the terrain of youth sport coaching is the CAC's *Creating positive sport experiences: A self-reflection tool for coaches* (2019n), which also employs the five PYD principles and states:

> Sport is a vehicle through which many positive developmental outcomes may be achieved. Participation in sport does not, however, guarantee these positive outcomes. To ensure that athletes receive the greatest benefit from their sport participation, coaches should therefore use positive, holistic, and values-based approaches to athlete development. Coaches can do this by paying particular attention to enhancing the Core Foundations of Positive Athlete Development, the 5Cs (para. 1).

The resource provides examples of the 5Cs employed across physical, intellectual, psychological and social dimensions of human development and invites coaches to assess how well they integrate these principles into their athletes' routines. Overall, this exemplifies the CAC's awareness regarding the pivotal role of coaches and they write, "whether you're a first-time coach or an experienced veteran, it's important to keep the 5Cs in mind and regularly reflect on how well your actions impact the participants' sport experience" (para. 7). This resource references the NCCP's *Empower +* (CAC, 2019z) module which is designed to help coaches empower their athletes as they navigate the complexities of sport as well as encourage coaches to critically reflect on their own experiences in sport. While the 5Cs prioritize the experience and development of athletes, it offers a broad set of categories that aim to encompass *all* the developmental needs of athletes without an acknowledgment of *how* athletes' particularities will impact the coach's efforts. Such

a framework aligns more so with a justice-oriented approach to athletes' needs which leaves coaches responsible for the negotiative work that occurs in practice.

Aligning with the CAC's acknowledgment of the pivotal role of coaches, the CAC also offers strategies for coaches when dealing with constructive and/or critical feedback. For example, *6 ways to deal with concerns about your coaching conduct* (CAC, 2019j) states:

A concern about coaching conduct should not be interpreted as a criticism of you as a person. Rather, it is an opportunity to learn, reflect, and improve as a coach. What matter is how you receive the feedback and incorporate any lessons learned into your coaching practice (para. 1).

The tip continues to provide specific strategies for coaches when they receive such feedback. They include: listen carefully; understand; self-reflect; seek advice; problem solve; and follow-up. Of particular interest is the second step 'understand,' which acknowledges the complexities that coaches must navigate with regards to athlete perceptions. In particular:

Although you may not intend to use harmful behaviours, athletes may perceive the messages you send differently than you meant them to. As well, a variety of personal factors such as age, gender, cultural/ethnic background, and history of harm, may influence the way your coaching behaviours are viewed. Even if you did not intend to harm the athlete, it is important to correct your behaviour so that you do not continue to harm the athlete (para. 3).

These strategies acknowledge the individual particularities of athletes and how they impact coaching practices. It also highlights a particularly challenging dimension for sport coaching which includes the perceptual work of understanding an athletes' position and how that position influences their needs. More importantly, it acknowledges these challenges and the reality that

coaches may not always act in a way that responds to expressed needs. However, this passage aligns more so with the EoC by asserting that coaches are responsible for recognizing when their conduct has not addressed athletes' needs, and that they are required to modify their approach to do so. The CAC links this tip to the NCCP's *Empower +* (CAC, 2019z) module which is described as, "an intense and thought provoking 4-hour workshop that will teach you how to enhance the well-being of the athletes in your care and be a positive role model in the world of sport" (para. 8).

The CAC's *3 tips for delivering a clear message* (2019a) also assists coaches in managing difficult conversations with athletes individually and the team as a whole. The CAC writes:

> As a coach, it's essential for you to talk about you and your team's inspirations and values. Athletes and those who support them need frequent reminders about why they are working so hard or struggling to resolve a difficult problem. There are a variety of situations you will experience as a coach where the most appropriate leadership action is to get your message across (para. 1-2).

This resource references the NCCP's *Coaching and Leading Effectively* (CAC, 2019z) module which is designed to help coaches, "identify opportunities to interact with all athletes and use feedback to improve and correct performance and behaviour" (p. 5). and frames athletes' needs as a priority with regards to performance success.

In accordance with the coaching tip addressed above, the CAC's *Help young people develop confidence and self-esteem in these 5 situations* (2019r) also recognizes the influential role of coaches. It states:

> As a coach, what you say (verbally or through your body language) is extremely important in the eyes of athletes, and you have direct influence on their self-esteem. You must always

assess the potential impact of the words you say to athletes or the comments you make to

them (para. 1).

The five situations identified include: making comments and giving feedback in practice; before and during practice – listen to athletes; pre-competition communication; after winning a competition; and after losing a competition. Once again, while athletes' self-esteem appears to be the focus, this tip frames this concern with regards to performance success. It is linked to the NCCP's *Teaching and Learning* (CAC, 2019z) module which is designed to help coaches assess their own beliefs regarding effective teaching, analyze certain coaching situations to determine if they promote learning and, create conditions that promote learning and self-esteem.

Once again, the CAC acknowledges the complex responsibilities of coaches with regards to coach-athlete interactions in sport in their tip *6 steps to help master the difficult conversation* (2019h). The CAC writes, "resolving issues informally involves approaching an individual about his or her conduct. This often requires having difficult conversations, a skill that requires practice to fully develop" (para. 1). The six steps include: identify the issue/state the problem; determine a desirable outcome; select possible options for action; agree on a course of action; set up a follow-up meeting; and have a follow-up meeting. The goal of the follow-up meeting is to:

Reinforce positive attributes, attitudes, and behaviours, and acknowledge positive improvements. This gives the individual confidence in his or her change in behaviour and serves as a reminder of the previous conversation. At this state, it is also important to ask the individual to re-reflect on the situation – it encourages both recognition of self-improvement and reflection on alternative courses of action. To be most effective, the conversation should be free of personal judgment, criticisms, threats, and allegations (para. 8).

This final step reads similarly as sections of the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) which outlines *perfect duties* for member broadly, and coaches specifically. This resource references the NCCP's *Empower +* (CAC, 2019z) module.

Similar to the resource addressed above, the CAC's *5 approaches to conflict management* (2019b) was designed to provide coaches with tools for managing conflict situations that arise in sport broadly, and with their athletes specifically. The CAC recognizes the complexity of tasks that coaches are responsible for navigating and writes:

> Not all conflicts are created equal. Some conflicts you face as a coach will be more difficult to resolve than others. As a coach, you'll need to consider how your approach to conflict management might impact the outcome of the conflict, or to tailor your approach to better suit the situation. This article will help you determine your preferred approach to managing conflict and help you understand the various approaches, when you use them, and characteristic behaviours of those who employ them (para. 1).

The resource provides a short survey for coaches to take in order to determine their preferred approach to managing conflict. This recognizes that there is more than one way to manage conflict which is reflective of the spectrum of particularities for athletes and coaches. However, it still imposes predetermined conflict management constructs which may cover all possible approaches to managing conflict in sport. In regard to the current study, a set of predetermined strategies for managing conflict aligns more so with a justice-oriented response to needs which are grounded upon abstract and universal constructs. Thus, *how* these strategies are operationalized by coaches will either attend to athletes' assumed needs or, via a process of recognizing and negotiating athletes' particularities in context, respond to athletes' expressed needs thereby cultivating relations of care. This resource references the NCCP's *Managing Conflict* (CAC, 2019z) module.

Fundamental needs and sport performance.

Beyond the scope of managing conflict and difficult conversations, another challenge for coaches with regards to the needs of athletes is the management of anxiety and stress that accompany performance. As noted above, the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m), along with the associated NCCP modules, address many fundamental needs involved in caring (Miller, 2012); in particular, the fulfilment of athletes' health needs is framed as the coach's responsibility. They are also linked to the goals of performance in both training and competition which can elicit feelings of anxiety and stress among athletes. To aid coaches in managing this dimension of athlete care is the CAC's coaching tip *Overcome performance anxiety and stress to enhance performance* (2019ii). This resource addresses the concept of an "ideal emotional state" (IES) which is defined as, "the condition in which the athlete experiences appropriate feelings and maintains them at optimum levels of intensity and functioning in a way that enhances performance" (para. 3). The CAC recognizes that: "Emotions can provide the athlete with energy that triggers the joy and ecstasy of performance, or they can shift drastically towards despair and hopelessness when things go wrong or expectations are not met" (para. 1). The coaches' goal of enhancing athlete performance as they navigate athletes' anxiety and stress is prevalent. Excluded from this definition is the view that athletes' negative emotions communicate to coaches a real state of distress that may be indicative of greater issues than enhancing performance. Thus, an assumption of the underlying causes, and remedies, of athletes' stress may compromise the fundamental need for *attachment* as well as *social inclusion, participation and recognition*, specifically with regards to their relationships with coaches.

Closely related to the coaching tip examined above, the CAC's *Helping athletes manage anxiety* (2019s) also addresses the need to manage athletes' sport-related anxiety that could

influence performance. Once again, the CAC asserts that "anxiety can be a positive emotion when it reflects excitement or eagerness to perform well" (para. 1), often linked to feelings of preparedness and confidence. However, in cases where feelings of anxiety arise due to a lack of preparedness the CAC writes:

> The coach should seek to help the athlete identify and understand the specific causes of their anxiety and the resulting consequences on performance. Coaches should also provide the opportunity for athletes to learn coping mechanisms that will help them manage their anxiety and therefore improve their performance (para. 2).

The CAC lists the coping mechanisms they suggest, including: relaxation exercises; breathing control exercises; and visualization strategies. This resource references the NCCP's *Basic Mental Skills* (CAC, 2019z) module.

Another responsibility bestowed on coaches is the design of effective training plans for their individual athletes. The CAC's *Choosing the right exercise at the right time for maximum performance* (2019l) exemplifies this and it states, "in order to achieve peak performance, an athlete's training program needs to be periodized according to the demands of their sport, as well as their individual development needs" (para. 1). This resource references the NCCP's *Performance Panning* (CAC, 2019z) module. Once again, these strategies align with a justice-oriented response to needs which focuses on the needs of athletes as a whole. However, they acknowledge that athletes are best served when coaches cultivate relationships and learn how athletes' particularities influence their sport experience broadly, and with performance anxiety specifically. This aligns more so with an EoC approach, although it still frames the needs of all athletes in the context of performance-oriented goals which risks some expressed needs of athletes going unnoticed, unaddressed or misidentified.

Coach-parent relations.

As noted above, particular fundamental needs of athletes are addressed via the educational resources for coaches. The CAC prioritizes the athletes' experiences and the links to development and performance success. A key dimension relevant to the current study is the role of parents and how they impact the overall experiences of youth athletes. The CAC addresses this concern in *How to maintain a positive coach-parent relationship* (2019t) where they assert: "Parents play a key role in the sport experience of many athletes. In many cases, it is the parents who initiate the child's involvement in sport. As a result, coach-parent relationships also have a major effect – positive or negative – on athletes" (para. 1). The CAC stresses the how important it is for coaches to ensure they create and maintain positive relationships with the parents of their athletes. This resource references the NCCP's *Coach Initiation in Sport* (CAC, 2019z) module which is was developed to "introduce new or experienced coaches to the foundational skills in coaching such as: long term athlete development, ethics, coaching motivation, and athlete safety and wellness" (p. 5).

In addition to the CAC's strategies, the OVA offers coach resources for communicating with parents, with a focus on tryouts and team selection. The OVA acknowledges that tryouts are a busy and stressful time, and that conflicts between parents and coaches will ultimately arise. The OVA stresses that, to avoid potential miscommunication leading to disappointment, coaches must clearly define expectations before the season starts (OVA, 2016c). To assist coaches, the OVA provides templates for information with parents. For example, the OVA's *Pre-tryout Information Template* (2016c) is designed to help coaches communicate basic information about their team for the upcoming season so that parents and athletes can make educated decisions about which offer to accept. The form includes: level of coach certification, team objectives (whether they are

performance or result oriented), the days of the ween that the team will train, number of tournaments the team will play, the cost for the season, information on the OVA's *Tryout Window Policy* (2018c) and signing periods.

The OVA also provides a *Parent Information Template – 16U Girls* (2016b) that is designed to help coaches of each age category structure all the information they are required to share with parents before the season starts to ensure that all team members and parents are on the same page. For the current study, participants were part of a 16U girls team and the beginning of the document states the objective which is, "to provide you with all the information about your child's upcoming volleyball season and to make all expectations clear for everything. Communication between parents and the coaching staff will be very important for everyone to enjoy a successful volleyball year and this document represents a first step in this direction" (p. 1). The document provides a space for general club information, the club's mission and values, the club's contact information, information about the OVA and a link to their website, as well as specifics about the training space according to the team's age category (i.e., 16U girls will play on a net height of 2.24m), as well as any new rules for the age/gender category. For example, at 16U girls, Liberos (a specialized defensive position) are permitted and over-head passing is allowed because "players are strong enough to execute the skill properly and are ready to develop the cue-reading and decision making skills associated with the skill of serve-reception" (p. 4). The form also includes space for the team's season plan, values and principles, objectives, seasonal plan, practice schedule, and rules and responsibilities for athletes with regards to behaviour, communication and practice attendance. Overall, this resource coaches in meeting the needs of athletes by establishing clear guidelines and relations with parents, who are a pivotal dimension to youth athletes' sport experiences and will be addressed in the following chapter.

Limits of Educational Resources

The examination of care and caring across the educational resources available for OVA coaches provides a broad view of how the CAC conceptualizes care and the fundamental needs of athletes. The coaching tips examined in this chapter, and corresponding NCCP modules, illuminate the categories of needs prioritized by the CAC and, subsequently, the OVA. However, the conceptions of care and needs communicated in open-source and mandated coach education materials does not ensure that these strategies are employed by coaches in local contexts. Alternatively, it is more likely that these resources have little impact on coaches' decisions on a daily basis given that they are optional. What they do articulate is a normalized idea of what constitutes care and caring in Canadian sport coaching and the influential role of the coach; in particular, many strategies assume the needs of athletes and frame them within a context of performance-oriented goals. Furthermore, the open-access resources primarily act as a marketing tool for the formalized NCCP modules. To recall, minimal formal education is required of OVA coaches. Thus, the following chapter will examine *how* care is constructed, negotiated and lived by coaches, athletes and parents of one youth volleyball team during a competitive season.

CHAPTER SEVEN
RESULTS & DISCUSSION III: COACHES, ATHLETES, PARENTS

This chapter will address the third objective of this study which is to identify how coaches, athletes, and parents construct, negotiate, and live care within youth competitive sport broadly, and volleyball specifically. Overall, the results showed that coaches linked care to ensuring their athletes had a "positive experience," while athletes constructed care as feelings of happiness or contentment, sentiments echoed by their parents, and contingent upon the actions and behaviours of coaches. In particular, care was linked directly to *how* coaches framed and distributed performance opportunities (i.e., playing time), which either contradicted the performance-oriented goals of sport or went above and beyond the coaches' responsibilities; however, despite the volume of responses situating care on a spectrum of performance, care remains poorly defined and understood. Broadly, the results showed that the institution of competitive sport is not designed to support the caring work of coaches; in addition, the structure of sport, characterized by a relentless pursuit of performance excellence, makes it especially difficult for coaches to care for all of their athletes, a struggle which can be thought of as a tug-of-war between the overall aims of sport and the lived experiences of particular athletes in localized sport settings.

This chapter will focus on the interview data collected from coaches, athletes, and parents. As noted in Chapter Four, the observational data collected for this study was utilized during interviews; specifically, it was used to develop context-based probes regarding care and caring in practice. However, given that the theoretical foundations and methodology employed for this study prioritize the experiences and perceptions of people in local settings, their responses are the primary focus. As a reminder, pseudonyms were used to protect participants and ensure their anonymity.

Subject of Care

Participants' conceptualizations of care and caring centred primarily on athletes' experience of care and how the actions of coaches constrained or facilitated those experiences, a struggle induced by the aims of competitive sport and unclear definitions of care. Notably absent from these accounts is any mention of self-care or care for coaches. Instead, the results of this study provides a picture of care that is only concerned with athletes and their happiness with regards to playing time and performance opportunities. Given the demands and responsibilities shouldered by sport coaches, their absence from participants perceptions of care and caring is particularly worrisome.

Contextual constraints.

Before examining participants' views on care and caring, it is important to contextualize the role of coaches within the competitive sport system in order to fully explicate the worries identified above. Given the structure of youth sport broadly, and Ontario volleyball specifically, coaches' contributions to athletes' development and performance opportunities are limited to in-person training and competition settings, as well as off-court interactions via phone or text. In addition, the seasonal format of OVA youth competition culminating in the Ontario Championships (OCs) in April-May of each year, along with the freedom athletes have to switch between clubs each season, facilitates coaching strategies that prioritize short-term performance goals which, in some cases, are pursued at the expense of long-term athlete development goals. Thus, *how* coaches managed the balance between performance- and development-oriented goals through their coaching practices were foundational to participants' conceptualizations of care and caring and were specific to training and performance settings.

As noted above, athlete development and individualized approaches are a necessary condition of athlete performance overall according to this study's participants. However, this becomes more complex when managing a team of twelve athletes over the course of a competitive season. For example, participants identified playing time as a development opportunity and, given that at one time only six athletes can be on the court, this leaves six athletes who are not benefiting from the same development opportunity. It is important to note that participants were not calling for equal playing time, but a more equitable distribution and communication with regards to coaches' decisions. For example, Claire (Sharon's mother) acknowledged the difference between coaching practices that developed athletes in training settings versus competition settings. In particular, she felt that athletes need opportunities to develop in competition scenarios and *how* coaches managed this balance was linked to her conceptions of care and caring. She states:

> If you care about their development, you care about them. So, yes. It has to be tied to them, otherwise, I mean, the whole point is for them to be developed. You can't just leave one off to the side. Because development doesn't just happen at the practices because they're all developing in the practices, they're all being treated equally in the practices, they're all working hard in the practices, but what's happening at the tournaments really develops.

Given the pressures of competitive sport, balancing players' development opportunities during competition can be quite challenging. However, the amount of playing time is not directly correlated with participants' conceptualizations of care and caring.

Team particularities.

As noted in Chapter Four, the participants in this study were members of a 16U girls club-based team. The age category is of particular relevance because the structure of the OVA applies

different standards and rules for different age groups. In the case of the current study, the 16U girls age group is characterized by several changes that effect athletes and coaches. For example, the net height for the 15U girls age group is set to 2.20 metres which changes to 2.24 metres at the 16U age level (OVA, 2017, p. 24). A second notable change concerns the OVA's *Fair Play Rule* which states that "any player on the starting scoresheet who does not start the first set must start the second set," and "a player who did not play the first set cannot be substituted in the second set" (p. 25). It is important to note that youth volleyball matches for this age group in Ontario are structured as best 2 of 3, with a minimum of two sets being played for each match. With regards to the current study, the 16U girls age category is the first year without the *Fair Play Rule*, which means that coaches have more agency and choice when determining starting line-ups and playing time, and it also means that playing time will not be distributed evenly. For athletes transitioning from a competitive sport experience marked by fair play, to a level of higher competition and less equally distributed playing time, the experience may be challenging; particularly if the athlete does not get the chance to play often.

An additional structural factor impacting caring coaching practices was the team's training schedule. In particular, the team had the opportunity to practice 2-3 times per week, each for a two-hour period (see Appendix A). Once per week the coaches would ask the team to arrive an extra half hour early to work on mental training and off-court skills. Overall, the time coaches had to spend with athletes on court was minimal which, as the remaining sections of this chapter will show, lead to particular challenges for coaches with regards to caring for all their athletes.

Coach Conceptualizations of Care and Caring

Broadly, the coaches constructed care in relation to the experiences of their athletes; in particular, they felt that an indicator of their caring efforts was that athletes had a positive sport experience overall. This is a problematic indicator given the pressures of competitive sport and constraints on the coaches' resources as a result. Furthermore, the asymmetrical balance of power inherent in the coach-athlete relationship may result in athletes' inaccurately expressing their feelings about the season and the coaches' efforts. Thus, coaches are never fully aware of an athletes' experience which illustrates the tension between care and the institution of sport broadly. More worrisome is that these coaches framed care as pertaining only to athletes and did not include themselves as persons requiring care or self-care. In addition, coaches also framed athlete care as solely their responsibility for managing and negotiating, which emphasizes the tug-of-war between care of the individual and care of the institution of sport, and illustrates how the structure of sport reproduces patterns of care which are not supported by the system overall.

Care constructed.

As noted above, the coaches linked care and caring with ensuring that athletes had a positive sport experience. For example, Coach Tom referred to the end of the season and constructed care in relation to athletes' feelings of positivity regarding their experience. He states:

> I think it's about, at the end of the season, having them walk away from the sport feeling like they've gained some friendships, some relationships there, with other players, other teams, a lot of different things. Respect for the sport, respect for one another.

This passages illustrates the lack of clarity regarding a "positive experience," while still being directly linked to Coach Tom's construction of care and caring. As will be shown in latter sections

of this chapter, athletes and parents also associated care with positive sport experiences which were linked to athletes feeling valued and appreciated, thus eliciting feelings of happiness and contentment. Overall, the coaches felt that athletes would have a positive experience as long as they managed a balance between the performance aims of sport and the individual needs of athletes, a task they asserted as necessary yet challenging.

Challenging and confusing.

According to the coaches in this study, athletes' positive sport experiences requires finding and maintaining balance between the aims and pressures of sport and the particular needs of athletes. As noted above, the tension between these two aims underpins the struggle experienced by coaches in their attempts to articulate care and caring during their interviews, as well as in their practice of care in context. Overall, caring for athletes was constructed as a challenging and confusing endeavor which is evident in Coach Grant's reflection on the aims of the current study and he states:

> There are particular things that a coach has to deal with that fall right in the face of caring or not caring or: How do you care? How do you even show that you care in a situation where you have to do something that seems uncaring?

Coach Grant identified a challenge particular to sport, which is ensuring that all athletes feel valued despite the procedures of sport that do not allow for an equal distribution of value measures (i.e., playing time). He also commented on the subjective nature of caring and how, as a coach, one may have the best intentions for the players, but questions if this is enough to ensure athletes feel cared for. He explains: "To me, the whole human experience has to involve caring. So, is being a jerk a form of caring if you really, truly want the best for the player? I don't know. And it depends on

your upbringing too, right." What counts as caring will undoubtedly be influenced by one's upbringing and previous experiences of care and caring. Exemplified by Coach Grant's statement is an understanding that care is relational and that a simple declaration of care by the coach does not necessarily mean that it *is* caring from the athletes' perspective. What this shows is that the structure of competitive sport presents specific challenges for coaches with regards to ensuring that athletes' have a positive experience.

Coach Tom also acknowledged this challenge with regards to caring for athletes. He emphasized that, to him, caring was not only about positive affirmations. In many cases, it meant providing feedback to athletes that is constructive and, at the same time, may be difficult for them to hear. He states:

> And I think that part of caring is that you can't just be all rainbows and whatever and telling them what they want to hear and stuff, because I'm sure their parents are doing that enough already. But you need to be subjective, and they need to hear what they need to work on as well. But I think it's the order that you say it.

Coach Tom's description of care with regards to feedback, as well as possible difficulties that may ensue, aligns with Coach Grant's provocation presented above; specifically, that it is challenging to ensure all athletes feel cared for when particular coaching practices may be interpreted otherwise. Coach Tom also constructed care as a process of negotiation with parents, assuming that they are consistently showering their child with positive affirmations which makes space for more constructive feedback. However, this contradicts his initial measure of care which is linked to athletes' positive experience. In particular, athletes may feel as if their experience was not positive due to the constructive feedback they receive from coaches. This paradox illustrates how the structure of competitive sport makes it difficult for coaches to understand and practice care.

Balance between performance and development.

For these coaches, an integral part of caring for their athletes involved managing the balance between performance and development, which relates to a broader theme underpinning this study; specifically, the tension between care of the individual as athlete and care of the institution of sport as a whole. For example, Coach Grant associated care with coaches' decisions prioritizing a positive experience instead of performance outcomes and he states:

> Caring about the kids and developing the kids to be the best they can be, that's more important than a gold medal at the provincial championship. I would take 4th with an awesome experience where every kid got to play and had opportunities, over 1st where the first six played and the others sat there.

This passage highlights the tension that exists between caring for the institution of sport and caring for the individual/athlete. In particular, care is constructed as the result of a coach's orientation being directed towards the well-being and development of athletes at the expense of performance outcomes, an attitude which is incongruent with the aims of sport. It is also important to note that, alternatively, if a coach focuses more so on performance than athlete development, it does not necessarily mean that every athlete will feel uncared for. Given that playing time is strongly associated with care and caring, as will be addressed later on in this chapter, athletes who are allotted the majority of playing time (i.e., starters), may feel cared for simply because of their position and status on the team. For coaches, the challenge then becomes framing non-starting athletes' contributions as valuable which they claim can be accomplished through effective communication about athletes' roles.

While the coaches constructed care as a balance between performance and development, they also discussed the challenges associated with managing this balance. These challenges were

often associated with the structure of the OVA, which are linked broadly to sports' emphasis on winning and performance. In particular, the structure of volleyball is such that only six players can be on the court at one time, leaving half of the team on the bench. For example, Coach Tom recalled challenges with managing playing time and its impact on athletes' experiences of value and contribution. He explains: "Managing playing time and stuff, I think, when you're only allowed six on the court and you have twelve on your roster at provincials and nationals, not everybody is going to be happy." In this case, Coach Tom came to the realization that, if playing time is the most coveted and clear measure of value from the perspectives of athletes and parents, and the team's goal is to compete for the best possible finish, then there will always be athletes who are unhappy. He states:

> If you're content with finishing wherever, then you can get everybody in. But if everyone's goal is, and everybody's bought into it right from the beginning of the season and working towards that, to do as well as we can at provincials and nationals and finish top three, everybody is not going to be happy.

This passage illustrates a dimension of sport which is especially relevant in the context of the current study; specifically, sport's normalization of the performance principle which is articulated and reinforced by Coach Tom via his expectations of athletes with "buying in" to the overall goal of performance success. His comment also highlights the underlying tension between care for the individual/athlete and care for the institution of sport, stating that unhappy athletes will be unavoidable due to the uneven distribution of playing time indicative of competitive sport. To remedy this, Coach Tom emphasized the importance of communication prior to the season and competitions where playing time distribution is established and actualized.

Care negotiated.

As noted above, the coaches constructed care as ensuring that athletes had a positive experience which required broad conceptualizations of caring and uncaring coaching practices centred on communicating effectively with athletes and responding to athletes when they express a need for coach support. In addition, when asked to describe 'competitive athletes,' Coach Tom asserted that there must be a "desire to win." To accomplish this, athletes must know their place on the team and coaches are responsible for keeping lines of communication open. Coach Grant stated that competitive athletes, "have to develop that autonomy and intrinsic desire to do it." These are underlying assumptions of athletes' motivations and drive which influenced their perceptions and negotiation of caring practices. More importantly, it shows how coaches reproduce the overarching aims of competitive sport which, as this chapter will illustrate, contribute to the challenges they experienced and the tensions between care for the individual/athlete and care for the institution of sport.

Communication and transparency.

Communication was a consistent theme articulated by coaches in their descriptions of how they negotiated care and caring in competitive sport; in particular, keeping lines of communication open, being receptive to athlete feedback, and communicating with athletes about their role on the team in relation to performance opportunities (i.e., playing time) were subthemes that emerged from the coaches' responses. For example, Coach Tom discussed the need for communication within the context of the current team and articulated how he and Coach Grant addressed this need with all their athletes; in particular, they asserted that they are available and always open to feedback. Coach Tom states:

And that's the other thing we try to establish at the beginning of the year, you can come to us with anything, you can talk whenever you feel comfortable. If you don't feel comfortable that's fine. You can approach us about anything, and we want to have an open-door policy.

The coaches' open-door policy and emphasis on communication shows that they value the particular experiences of their athletes and that they recognize it is not possible for them to know and/or infer the status of an athletes' experience. However, establishing this policy with their athletes at the beginning of the season, and even reinforcing it throughout, does not guarantee that every athlete will feel comfortable enough to approach the coaches. More importantly, given the coaches' emphasis on communication as integral to caring, mainly because it allows for them to be more in tune with athletes' needs, this negotiative tool limits the caring capacities of coaches by directing care only towards those athletes who feel comfortable approaching them with feedback or concerns. Once again, given the power imbalance inherent in the coach-athlete relationship, and the intense pressures of competitive sport, there are most likely athletes who will be excluded from the coaches' caring efforts. However, it is important to keep in mind that the coaches have limited time with these athletes; thus, the communication strategy expressed above by Coach Tom is an example of how coaches negotiate caring practices within a system that makes it especially challenging for them to do so.

Coach Grant identified some of these challenges in his negotiation of care and caring. While playing time is the most definite and measurable indicator of value, as noted above, coaches also contributed to athletes' feelings of value in how they delivered feedback, as well as how much feedback they provided. Given that most volleyball teams have one or two coaches who are responsible for 10-12 athletes, ensuring equitable distribution of feedback can be a challenge. For

example, Coach Grant described the challenges associated with balancing attention between players. He explains:

> The toughest part with being a coach is, I try, I truly make an effort to give equal attention to each player. It's virtually impossible by the nature of the way things go. Not to mention the fact that the personality of the kids completely dictate. Some of them come up and ask questions all the time. Other ones just won't say a word. So it's really hard, it's incredibly hard.

This passage illustrates the degree of difficulty and constraints faced by the coaches in their efforts to care for all of their athletes. As previously noted, communication is an integral part of negotiating care in the context of competitive sport; paradoxically, the structure of sport does not enable coaches to give equal attention to each athlete, which is why the coaches stress the importance of communication and their open-door policy to their athletes with the unspoken hope that the athletes will employ steps forward to communicate with the coaches. To be clear, there is nothing unreasonable with hoping or expecting athletes to assume responsibility. In addition, Coach Grant highlights how the personalities of individual athletes can make it more challenging to care, which is an example of how the tension and struggle between performance and development can affect coaches' perceptions of athletes; specifically, how they shift the burden of responsibility to the athletes' shoulders.

Framing of athletes' roles.

The coaches linked care and caring with how they framed athletes' roles and contributions to the team, acknowledging that communication with athletes is directly linked to athletes' experiences of care and caring. In particular, Coach Tom asserted that athletes need to feel valued

and to know their place on the team, and he explains: "It's about being open, honest, keeping the lines of communication. As long as they understand where they fit in on the team and their role and their position and the lines of communication are completely open." From Coach Grant's point of view, communicating openly with athletes about their contributions is especially important during moments when athletes are in doubt. In particular, when athletes feel as if they are not contributing Coach Grant attributes this to athletes forgetting about the "big picture" and how their contributions are valuable to the team as a whole. He explains: "Lots of these kids live in the moment but they live really in the moment and can't get out of the moment. And they can't see into the future, they don't conceptualize the future in the same way." For athletes, these feelings emerge and are emphasized during competition; specifically, with athletes who have made errors and have been substituted off the court, or athletes who are not allotted much playing time.

Coach Grant's emphasis on helping athletes see the "big picture" is an example of how he negotiated care within the context of competitive sport. Given that, for athletes, care is linked to performance opportunities, and the institution of sport is structured such that not every player on a team will be allotted equal playing time, the caring work of coaches involves reframing and, in a sense, redefining what care means for athletes. It is difficult to see the future and the "big picture" when one is not occupying the role of a starting player or player on the court, which is why Coach Grant emphasizes the importance highlighting the contributions of all athletes to the team and their performance.

Timely and appropriate feedback.

The coaches' negotiation of care was also evident in how they delivered and distributed feedback to their athletes. The high-pressure/high-stakes environment cultivated by the structure

of sport often requires coaches to disseminate information to athletes quickly and effectively, sometimes at the expense of mindful and tactful delivery. In particular, Coach Tom discussed the importance of timely and appropriate feedback and provides an example of this being done poorly by coaches. For example, he felt that it was not helpful to single out athletes in front of the group when the feedback was constructive or corrective; to do so risks compromising athletes' agency, value, and feelings of contribution. Coach Tom states:

> I don't believe in singling someone out at a practice and calling them out. I don't think that does anything for anyone's confidence or self-esteem. Some can handle it better than others. I think it's all in the way you approach it. I think pulling them aside and having conversations is much more effective for me.

Coach Tom acknowledges that not all athletes are the same and, thus, may respond to coaches' feedback in different ways. However, he is firm on his stance regarding the ineffectiveness of providing athletes with feedback in this way and the risks it presents for athletes' confidence and self-esteem. More importantly, his example shows how he prioritizes athletes' well-being over the norms of sport, illustrating how care is constructed and negotiated as a possibility only if coaches override the norms of sport and prioritize individual athletes' needs.

Lived experience of caring.

Coaches' negotiation of what constitutes care and caring impacted how they lived and practiced care in local settings. For example, when asked about care and caring Coach Grant referenced the concept of empathy and being able to relate to the athlete and how they are feeling. In particular, he recalled his own sport experiences and how he felt this helped him understand how athletes felt, especially with regards to playing time. Coach Grant states:

I guess to me caring has to do with empathetic behaviour. Being able to put yourself in that

player's shoes. And the one thing I think which is important to this, which may explain

where I come from, is that I've been everything with respect to an athlete. I have been the

worst player on great teams, I've been the best player on average teams, I've been one of

the better players on some pretty good teams. So, I know what it's like to sit on the bench,

I know what it's like to be the last one picked in the school yard football game or whatever.

The passage above illustrates how Coach Grant relates to his athletes. However, simply occupying

the same position (i.e., starting, non-starting) on a team does not necessarily mean that he has better

insight into the experiences of his athletes. In contrast, given the difference in age and gender, such

a comparison may elicit feelings of understanding that will remain uncontested by athletes due to

the power imbalance in their relationship. More importantly, it demonstrates a recognition on his

part regarding how influential playing time is to an athletes' sport experience, as well as his efforts

to navigate this terrain to ensure that his athletes feel cared for.

Reframing and redefining in practice.

As noted above, the coaches felt that reframing how an athlete viewed her contributions to

the team was one way to ensure that she felt cared. For example, Coach Grant described how he

redefined an athlete's perception of her contributions to the team. Due to a lack of playing time,

Alison felt that she was not contributing to the team which compromised her feelings of value and

her experience overall. Coach Grant responded to Alison's worries by reframing her contributions

in the context of the team and he explains:

Everyone contributes in different ways. You can't look at the six that were on the court

when the final point was scored. You can't look at it that way because we are all together,

we are all one, we are all helping and we are all contributing along the way and if you think you're not, you're fooling yourself because you are. So those are tough lessons I think for kids, they don't quite see it.

This passage not only provides an example of how Coach Grant re-framed an athletes' experience, but also illustrates the tension between care for the individual/athlete and care for the institution of sport; specifically, he acknowledges the ultimate value of being on the court when the final point is scored, while simultaneously attempting to show how Alison contributed to the success of those athletes. Falling back on the rhetoric of "team," demonstrated by his stating "we are all together, we are all one, we are all helping and we are all contributing," denies Alison's feelings of inadequacy while simultaneously shifting the burden of responsibility to her and her perception, thus reproducing the overarching performance aims and attitudes of sport.

Coach Tom provided another example how he and Coach Grant managed athletes' feedback during competition. Once again, the intention of their feedback was to ensure that athletes' felt valued and that they contributed despite the errors they made and resulting substitution. Coach Tom explains:

There would be times where we would sub somebody off for their own confidence and their own state at that time, and she was just upset because she missed a serve at a key time. She was visibly upset and crying when she came off the court because she was putting it all on herself, but afterwards got the point and realized it wasn't just falling on her shoulders.

Coach Tom explained to the athlete that, "we all have those moments and we win as a team and we lose as a team. It's not one defining play that cost us that match or tournament. It's a combination of things throughout the day." Linking care to reframing an athletes' feelings of

disappointment and their concerns with letting the team down, illustrates how sport is not conducive to care and caring. In particular, the goals and aims of sport create these challenges due to the structure built around performance outcomes. Thus, while these coaches assert that communication is integral to caring, their view demonstrates how care is incompatible with the institution of sport overall. The following section will examine athletes' conceptualizations of care and caring broadly, and in the context of this current team.

Athletes' Conceptualizations of Care and Caring

Athletes' notions about care and caring were framed in relation to the behaviours and choices made by coaches; specifically, athletes linked care to feelings of happiness and satisfaction, which were primarily contingent on the distribution of performance opportunities (i.e., playing time), a power residing in the hands of coaches. However, given the structure and aims of competitive sport, athletes' construction of care as happiness, dependent on such opportunities, brings into question the caring capacities of the institution of sport; more specifically, it highlights the undocumented work that is taken on by sport coaches in order for all athletes to feel cared for in a system underpinned by an inequitable distribution of performance opportunities. This has troubling implications for the institution of sport and the lack of support given to coaches to manage this balance. As the following section will show, athletes in this study felt that coaches were directly responsible for their experiences of care and/or lack care.

    Care constructed.

As noted above, athletes constructed care as feelings of happiness and contentment which they linked to the behaviours and actions of coaches. Overall, athletes felt cared for when coaches

were communicative about their contributions to the team and they felt uncared for when they were not given opportunities to perform. *How* these feelings of happiness were linked to the practices of coaches was addressed more so in athletes' negotiations of care which will be examine in the following section.

Acknowledgment and appreciation.

Athletes linked care to the affirmation and acknowledgment they received from coaches which elicited feelings of happiness and contentment. For example, Gwen explains how she felt cared for when her coaches acknowledged that she performed well:

> I think [care] it's when coaches acknowledge that you did a good job. You know that they're watching and actually care what you're doing, and when they text you asking. I feel like when I come off the court, they are always there to high-five me to tell me I did a good job.

This passage illustrates how an athletes' experience of care is dependent on the actions of the coach which, in this example, implies that without these affirmations the athlete would not feel cared for. Given the ratio of two coaches to twelve athletes, and the limited time coaches spend with athletes overall, the structure of sport appears to be incompatible and/or not conducive to care. As noted in Chapter Three, caring does not mean a constant stream of affirmations; however, in Gwen's case, she linked care and caring to her coach's conduct in this way because she constructed care as appreciation for good performance. In addition, another worry is the link between coach affirmations and performance opportunities. Once again, given that sport is structured such that not every athlete has an equal opportunity to perform and contribute during competition athletes

like Gwen, who do not see the court as often, will most likely feel uncared for by coaches for the majority of the season.

Care negotiated.

Athletes' negotiations of care involved linking their feelings of happiness and contentment to the actions and behaviours of coaches. In particular, athletes felt cared for when coaches were communicative, available, and dedicated extra time outside scheduled practices and competitions to support them. Overall, athletes felt that caring was directly linked to the coaches' recognition of athletes' individual needs and, more importantly, to those actions and behaviours that contradicted the performance-oriented norms of sport.

Attunement to athletes' individual needs.

Athletes linked their experience of care (i.e., feelings of happiness and contentment) to how in tune coaches were to their individual needs. In addition, athletes acknowledged the variety of coaching styles and how the needs of each athlete differ, which is evident in Helen's description of her ideal coach:

I think they have to know how to push you. They have to know you because everyone is so different, so how I'm motivated is different than how my teammates are motivated. So they need to be able to get to know each person and build a relationship with them as well.

In this passage, Helen is negotiating athletes' needs for individualized and personalized coaching approaches with the goals and aims of competitive sport. In particular, she asserts that a primary job of a sport coach is to push and motivate their athletes, a norm which she does not contest. Thus, the caring work of coaches comes into play in their individualized approaches and attunement to

how athletes require different strategies to be motivated and pushed, once again shifting the responsibility of care onto the shoulders of coaches.

Athlete first, sport second.

As noted above, care was linked to the coaches being in tune with individual athletes' needs which, according to these athletes, required coaches to prioritize the needs of athletes over the performance-oriented goals of sport. For example, Helen describes the consequences of a coach prioritizing the latter:

> It's the coaches that only care about you on the athlete side. They see you and they see your potential and they push you, but they push you too much or they don't go to that personal level to care for you. They only want you to win because then it makes them a better coach. They will get recognized, they might get more athletes coming to them, it makes them look good… deep down they're doing it for themselves which isn't right.

A notable takeaway from the above excerpt is that, for Helen, care is contingent on coaches' prioritization of individual athletes' needs in lieu of their own. Given the structure and pressures of competitive sport, it is understandable why the actions and behaviours of some coaches prioritize winning. In the case of professional sport, the coach's job is dependent on performance outcomes, and while the realm of youth competitive sport coaching does not have the same economic pressures, it is still influenced by the overall aims and goals of sport. In essence, sport constructs a "good" sport coach as one who achieves results, which is problematic considering the current athletes' linking of care to coaching strategies, which contradict or resist this norm.

In another example, care was linked to coaches who focused on "raising the athlete" as a whole, which meant prioritizing the athletes' needs over the aims of sport. Sharon explains:

My ideal coach is someone who is raising the athlete more than themselves. If you are a coach, you're supposed to be a caregiver because you're responsible for that athletes, you're raising them, but you shouldn't just be in it because they are going places. Like if they are going to get an Olympic medal, you shouldn't just be there because they're going to get an Olympic medal.

This passage illustrates Sharon's recognition of the desirable goals in sport (i.e., Olympic medalist) which influenced *how* coaches interacted with their athletes. However, it also demonstrates how her understanding of care and caring places a heavy burden on the shoulders of coaches; specifically, she asserts that they are responsible for "raising the athlete," equating coaches' influence to that of a parent or caregiver. Given that coaches spend a fraction of the time with athletes, relative to athlete-parent/guardian interaction, this is an unreasonable expectation. Although, it shows how the current sport system is not conducive to caring and, thus, athletes constructions of care are underpinned by efforts which align more so with parenting than coaching.

Athletes' negotiations of care were also linked to how coaches responded to their injuries. As noted in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, sport institutions have many policies in places to ensure the physical safety of athletes. For example, the OVA's *Concussion Policy* (2019b), which includes a *Return-to-Play* protocol, are in place to ensure that athletes who experience a head injury are properly taken care of so that they can fully heal before returning to play. In addition, the NCCP's *Making Headway* (CAC, 2019y) module prepares coaches to respond quickly and appropriately in the event that one of their athletes suffers a head injury. However, athletes in this current study focused more so on the long-term dedication of coaches with regards to their injuries; in particular, athletes' negotiations of care valorized the efforts of coaches who went above and

beyond their regular coaching responsibilities as illustrated in Sharon's description of her previous sport experience:

> When I was injured, I was injured for about a year and a half, so throughout that whole time I had a coach who was helpful with the injuries. He was really supportive, he would drive me to my doctor's appointments and go for MRIs, but there was never a doubt in his mind that I wouldn't get better, or when I did get better, he wouldn't rush me into things so it hurts more, he wanted to make sure everything was fully healed.

In this example, Sharon felt cared for because of the extra effort put forth by the coach in regard to her healing process and overall support. However, while this may have been perceived as an act of care that prioritized the athlete, it is unclear whether the coach's efforts were fueled by the aims of sport, or if they truly cared about Sharon and prioritized her healing for her sake. In other words, the coach may have been motivated to aid in Sharon's recovery because she was a valuable part of his team and he needed her to participate in order to achieve performance results.

Sport-oriented care.

As noted in the previous section, some athletes' negotiations of care and caring in sport focused on the responsibilities of coaches and how they ought to prioritize the individual/athlete instead of performance-oriented goals. In contrast, some athletes felt that care was linked to the coaches efforts in supporting their development for the purpose of improving their skills and performance. For example, Tara described a past sport experience with coaches that did not fulfill these needs. She explains:

They were really positive which is obviously good, but to the point where they're not really

pushing us that hard, which was difficult for me. Other people were still developing so it

was just harder for me because it was not as high as a level as I wanted to be playing.

Tara follow this comment with an example of a previous coach and experience where the style of

coaching resonated with her. In particular, how feedback was delivered was indicative of her

preferred coaching style and she states:

Getting feedback is a big part of that for me. I don't need someone to always be holding

my hand. For me, I work well when people tell me what to do, not yelling obviously, but

being firm, and that is what [previous coach] would do last year and that worked well for

me, and that's kind of when I figured out which coaching style works best for me.

The examples above illustrate how Tara's negotiation of care and caring aligned more so with the

aims of sport; in particular, she associated good coaching with her skill development and receiving

feedback in a way that resonates with her which is linked to performance outcomes and desired

results. It is important to note that Tara is an athlete who was allotted regular playing time thus,

given her statement above, her negotiation of care aligned more so with the aims of sport (i.e., skill

acquisition and performance).

Lived experience of care.

Athletes' lived experience of care and caring were informed by their negotiations of care,

as described above. A notable variation across the data is that athletes' experience of care differed

depending on when the interview took place during the season; specifically, athletes who were

interviewed closer to the end of the season communicated more concerns and discontent regarding

the season overall and the actions of coaches. Thus, this section will highlight the variability of

care and caring within the context of one team and over the course of one competitive season; in particular, it will illustrate the challenges faced by coaches in their endeavor to ensure that all their athletes feel cared for and have a positive experience.

Balance between athlete and sport.

Athletes' descriptions of care and caring on this team were linked to the coaches' ability to balance between the goals and aims of sport and the individual needs of athletes. For example, in her first interview, Alison described the training environment as safe and welcoming and she felt that the coaches were able to balance individual athlete needs with the needs of the group. She explains:

> The coaches create a safe environment, I think. They make it really welcoming and happy. They make it really intense, but also fun and you want to come to practice. There's never been a time when I don't want to come. And that's what's really good I think because if you want to come to practice, you're coming there because you want to get better. And they always make it really personalized to you.

For Alison, care was associated with her desire to return to practice each week, which was cultivated by an intense training environment balanced with personalized feedback and approaches. It is important to note that Alison's view changed over the course of the season. However, at the start, she felt cared for by the coaches. This passage also illustrates how athletes expect coaches to be able to tailor their efforts towards the individuals needs of each athlete which, as noted at the start of this chapter, is an unrealistic expectation due to the structure of competitive sport.

Available and approachable.

In context, athletes' lived experiences of care and caring were linked to coaches' availability, approachability, and ongoing efforts to check-in with each athlete. For example, Meghan is an athlete who was a part of this team the previous year and she was also given a lot of playing time by the coaches. Meghan associated care with coaches being approachable and helpful:

I definitely feel cared for on this team. I would say what makes our coaches very special is that they are very approachable. They are always asking 'How you are?' and they will go out of their way to make sure you're doing okay and if you need any help, they're there to help and they make themselves really available. The fact that we can just text them or call them if we have any trouble or anything, it's just really good.

From Meghan's point of view, when asked about care and what it means to her, she responded with the statement above, immediately linking care to her experience of being cared for on this team specifically.

Feedback and extra training.

Several athletes' experiences of care were linked to how the coaches provided feedback in training and competition settings. For example, Meghan emphasized the importance of communication and how the coaches delivered information during competition. She explains:

They tell us when we're not doing something right, but they do it in a way that you want to listen. You feel a lot more comfortable when you're playing. You're never afraid to mess up in front of them because you know if you do, they're there to help you, they're not there to yell at you, it's just really good.

For Meghan, the coaches' approach to feedback (i.e., supportive and non-yelling) resonated with how she felt cared for. Once again, it is important to note that Meghan is a player who saw the court often and, thus, was not as worried with making errors given that she was the strongest player in her position on this team. What this shows is that caring within the parametres of sport is still linked to performance opportunities and, in this particular case, *how* coaches responded to athletes' performance when given the opportunity to contribute. In addition, it shows how the structure of sport cares more for athletes who are allotted playing time, resulting in an uneven and problematic distribution.

Athletes also felt cared for when the coaches went out of their way to provide extra training or feedback to help the athlete improve. For example, Sharon is newer to volleyball so Coach Grant made extra efforts to train and develop her, efforts which Sharon interpreted as caring. She states:

> I don't have as much experience as the other girls on the team, but they know that and it's not like they throw it aside, they actually help me. Coach Grant will ask me to come to extra things with him so he can help me because my technique is not there yet. But I can really tell that he is really trying to help me improve just as an individual.

Once again, this sets up a problematic construction of care given the uneven ratio of coaches to athletes, along with the limited time coaches have with athletes in training settings. In addition, while care is linked to efforts of coaches that extend beyond their normal responsibilities, these efforts are underscored by the aims of competitive sport which is to develop athletes in order to achieve performance results. This is evident in the following passage where Sharon links her development and skill to playing time:

When they tell me to do something as an individual, I apply that. So, it helps me as an individual because obviously I want to have more court time, I want to be the one that they always want to be on the court.

This interview was conducted earlier on in the season. However, as the following section will demonstrate, the lack of playing time allotted to Sharon left her feeling uncared for. This shows how the caring efforts of coaches are linked to, and dependent on, the structure and aims of sport. More importantly, the passages above illustrate how an athlete may feel cared for at one point in the season, and that those moments of care can be overridden when they are unsatisfied with the coaches' playing time decisions later on.

Playing time.

As noted above, there is a strong correlation between care and playing time; in particular, coaches' decisions regarding the distribution of playing time, along with their communication about athletes' performance opportunities, directly influenced athletes' feelings of happiness and contentment. For example, in her second interview, Sharon explained how continuously sitting on the bench severely compromised her experience of care:

Being on the bench and not being able to contribute or do anything when the team's losing because changes aren't being made were really frustrating. But overall, I still learned a lot and I wouldn't regret coming to the team at all.

Given that volleyball is a team sport, and the link between playing time and care, it is understandable why Sharon would feel like she is not contributing and why she associated the coaches' decisions with a lack of care. However, despite Sharon's uncaring experience, she asserted that the opportunity to play for this team was valuable overall and that she had no regrets.

Care and gender.

The influence of gender on athletes' perceptions of caring coaching practices was not addressed by many participants. In cases where gender was mentioned, their concerns aligned with some of the challenges noted by the coaches addressed earlier on in this chapter. In particular, some athletes felt that male coaches were not as intuitive or understanding of their experience which had implications for athletes' experience of care. For example, Tara explains:

> This is my first year having male coaches, and they don't really understand as much. Female coaches, they understand when something is wrong. They see that and they can address it. For me, I felt more comfortable with a female coach, in the way that I could actually talk to her.

Tara's comment illustrates how she negotiated and linked care to coaches' attunement to her individual needs and, more importantly, how her lived experience on this team did not live up to these expectations. What is concerning about this claim is how care is contingent on the gender of the coach. Given that competitive sport coaching is male-dominated terrain, the assumption that athletes are better served by a coach of the same gender risks reproducing the current state of affairs in sport and sport coaching, catering primarily to male athletes and coaches; it also does not give Tara many opportunities to feel cared for due to the lack of female coaches in sport. The following section will examine parents' perceptions of care and caring with regards to their daughter's experience in sport broadly, and on the current team specifically.

Parents' Conceptualizations of Care and Caring

Broadly, parents associated care with their daughters' positive experience in sport; in other words, they felt that their daughter was cared for provided she was happy and content with her

experience. Parents notions of care were consistent with athletes' responses, framing care as contingent on the actions and behaviours of coaches; in particular, *how* coaches communicated with athletes and distributed playing time were major themes that emerged from the data. Some parents showed care for coaches by recognizing the difficult role they have and how much time and effort they dedicated to ensuring that their daughters have a good sport experience, while others were more critical. Similar to the trend identified across athlete interviews, parents' perceptions differed depending on the point in the season in which the interview took place.

Care constructed.

As noted above, parents constructed care in relation to their daughter's feelings of happiness and contentment, which was dependent on the actions of coaches. In some cases, parents framed caring coaches as "respectful" and "receptive." For example, Tony (Meghan's father) described caring coaches as respectful, willing to give and receive feedback, as well as communicate overall. He explains:

> I think it's when the coaches respect the player the athlete, doesn't really matter what age. And it's where they're willing to listen to feedback as well as give feedback. It's where the channels of communication are open.

Coaches' willingness to listen to athletes' feedback is integral to caring, according to Tony, which he equates with respect. This is a vague and problematic description of care because what counts as respect for one athlete may be different for another, and because respect is rarely unidirectional – it involves exchange or give-and-take between individuals (something that was missing in the context of this study given the intensified focus on care for the athlete above all). More importantly, learning *how* to respect each individual athlete takes time and energy, resources that are not always

available to coaches within the confines of practice and competition times. In addition, the information coaches received from athletes about what counts as "respect" is undoubtedly influenced by the asymmetrical balance of power inherent in the coach-athlete relationship. What is concerning is that athletes may respond or express that they feel respected by the coach simply because of the position of power coaches occupy in sport, which risks camouflaging disrespectful or uncaring behaviour.

Overall, for parents, care is constructed as a process that goes beyond the resources and role of coaches in sport. This supports the claim that the structure of competitive sport is at odds with caring and that coaches are responsible for picking up the slack. Given the pressures of sport, this places coaches in a position where they will always be seen as lacking care towards some and providing extra care to only a few.

Safety.

Parents also constructed care in relation to physical safety. This aligns more so with the themes addressed in Chapter Five which showed how the OVA, through their governing texts, is better equipped to prevent or mitigate harms and maintain minimal levels of safety. These polices are operationalized via the actions and behaviours of coaches in how they maintain a safe environment for athletes. For Victoria (Gwen's mother), being cared for in sport meant that coaches ensured that her daughter was safe:

> I think like safety is important. You don't want them, you know pushing you to do things that wouldn't be safe. I think you have to trust the athlete and I think you have to have safety as the number one concern, physical safety.

In this passage, Victoria is linking safety to how her daughter is pushed and motivated by the coach; specifically she recognizes that, in sport, there is a risk of coaches pushing athletes past the point of physical safety. However, she is not suggesting that the institution of sport ought to change; instead she places the responsibility of safety on the shoulders of coaches which requires them to trust the athletes' response and to be in tune with their physical needs.

Care negotiated.

Parents' negotiations of care focused on the actions and behaviours of coaches and how they adjusted their coaching practice to the individual needs of their daughters. Once again, their negotiations were underpinned by their daughters' construction of care as being happy and content with the coaches' actions and behaviours.

Attunement to athletes' individual needs.

Several parents linked care with the coaches' efforts geared to adapting their coaching style to the particular needs of the athletes. For example, Claire (Sharon's mother) explains the importance of coaches being in tune with the particular needs of their athletes and states:

A good coach will adjust their coaching style to accommodate that athlete. If they can do that, that's pretty incredible. And that's really difficult. Because this athlete may need more, to be more strict with them, pushed more, and this athlete may need you more on an emotional level in terms of coddling them more. This athlete may need something else to drive them because they're individuals and if you can't recognize that and sort of a little bit adjust yourself to that, a good coach will do that.

The passage above illustrates the expectations of parents with regards to coaching efforts towards attunement and personalized strategies for their daughters. More importantly, Claire's description acknowledges the diversity of athlete needs and how challenging this is for coaches to manage; in particular, she states: "If they can do that, that's pretty incredible," which is an indicator of how care is linked to the expectation that coaches go above and beyond the parametres of their role in order to care for their athletes.

Communication.

Many parents emphasized the importance of communication; specifically, in order for their daughters' needs to be met, coaches must be in tune with their individual needs which requires constant and effective communication. For example, Nicolle (Tara's mother) commented on athletes' feelings of value and appreciation and how this can be achieved by coaches in their delivery of feedback: "I think caring is value. People pay attention to you and give some feedback so that negative or positive, both, not just positive not just negative." For Nicolle, caring was not inextricably linked to coaches being nice or pleasing all athletes and parents simultaneously; instead, it meant being honest about everyone's role and contributions to the team, potential or otherwise, by providing both positive and constructive feedback. This contradicts athletes' constructions of care as happiness and satisfaction because constructive feedback often elicits unpleasant or dissatisfied feelings.

Communication was also identified as an integral part of caring with regards to playing time and performance opportunities. From Sandra's (Alison's mother) point of view, care was linked with coaching practices of treating athletes fairly in this regard; in particular, she was not suggesting that all players ought to receive equal amounts of feedback or playing time. Instead,

fairness referred to coaches communicating with all the athletes to ensure that they know *why* certain decisions are being made. Sandra explains:

> I think for kids, they can tell when things are not fair and they also need someone to share what they're thinking, maybe what their visions are for them in particular and the team. I think most kids will understand why they are sitting on the bench or why certain things happen if the coach communicates to them why, and I think that when that doesn't happen then they become unhappy because they see the unfairness and they see that, well they don't understand, there is just a lack of understanding.

Her response encapsulates the value of coach communication and how, when there is insufficient communication or reframing by the coach, athletes are more likely to view the situation as unfair or unequal. Keeping in mind athletes' construction of care as happiness, the passage above once again places the burden of responsibility on the coaches for ensuring that athletes understand their role and perceive their decisions as fair and equitable.

To illustrate her point, Sandra described one of Alison's previous sport experiences and how this past coach was unfair with how he managed substitutions and errors during matches. She explains:

> He would start her and then if she made one mistake, he would pull her off but he would leave other kids on the court and let them make mistake, mistake, mistake. So there was this unfairness that she saw and it eroded her confidence. And for me that was more of an issue. You can pull her off for whatever reason you want but when it starts to erode her confidence and it starts to affect her then there is a problem.

While the erosion of an athlete's confidence is worrisome, expecting the coach to continuously ensure that their athletes understand their role and the coaches' decisions at every turn is

unrealistic, given the limited time and resources available to coaches. In addition, the goals and aims of competitive sport require the coaches to make quick and on-the-spot decisions during competition which keeps their focus on the match and those athletes who are currently competing; not the athlete who was just subbed off or on the bench.

Balance between athlete and sport.

Consistent with athletes' responses, several parents linked care and caring to *how* coaches managed the balance between performance- and development-oriented goals. Expectations of coaches regarding communication and attunement to athletes' needs underpin these accounts. For example, in her first interview, Claire (Sharon's mother) made connections between passion and caring. In particular, coaches need to be passionate about the sport which, for Claire, meant caring about the development of the athletes and not solely their careers in the sport. She explains:

> I think caring, for sport, it starts with passion. If the coaches don't have that for their sport, they're not going to care. If they are passionate about what they are doing, about their sport, about developing their sport, not just developing their players and their careers, for the good of their sport, for the good of Volleyball Canada, I think that when they have that, they will give it all to their athletes no matter what.

This passage shows that there are tensions between care for the individual/athlete and the structure of competitive sport. If care is linked to the passion and dedication of the coaches, to ensure that athletes' development is balanced with the team's performance goals, than this is clearly at odds with the performance principle underpinning all competitive sport which prioritizes winning above all. On a more worrisome note, according to Claire, coaches are responsible for negotiating this tension in order to ensure that athletes are cared for. She explains:

And I think that coaches, obviously they play a huge role. When they care about their

athletes, not just caring about winning, because of course we're in competitive sport, you

want to win, it's part of it. But when that becomes the only thing, it's not healthy.

In a sense, she expects coaches to act as a buffer between the aims of sport and the needs of

individual athletes, which is a responsibility that is not clearly accounted for in the descriptions of

coaches' roles, in the resources they are provided or, as noted in Chapter Six and will be examined

more robustly in Chapter Eight, via the educational resources available to these coaches.

Lived experience of care.

Parents' perceptions of their daughters' experiences illustrated how, within the same team

and over the course of one competitive season, coaches managed to care for some athletes and fell

short with others. Overall, parents felt that their daughter was cared for when the coaches went

"above and beyond" their traditional coaching role. The following section will examine these

perceptions and link them to major themes addressed thus far.

Attunement to athletes' individual needs.

As noted above, parents linked care to how in tune coaches were with their daughters'

needs; specifically, any efforts made by coaches to learn about the particularities of their athletes

was considered caring. For example, in her first interview Claire (Sharon's mother) expressed her

appreciation for Coach Grant and Coach Tom, and how they took time to establish relationships

with each individual player and how this is indicative of caring:

I think that Coach Grant and Coach Tom established a relationship with each player, and it's a different relationship with each of them because each of them are different. They care about those girls, there's no doubt in my mind.

At this point in the season, from what Claire had observed, the coaches had made great efforts to cultivate relationships with each of their players which she perceived, without a doubt, as caring.

Above and beyond.

Several parents felt that the coaches were caring because they went beyond the parametres of their roles and made consistent efforts to ensure that athletes' individual needs were met; this resulted in positive experiences for their daughters. In the passage below, Andrew (Helen's father) expresses his appreciation for Coach Grant and Coach Tom:

It's been a great experience. I respect both of them, I think they do a really good job. The amount of energy and effort they put into the team given both of their personal situations that neither of them has a kid on the team and both are obviously passionate about it. I'm not sure how they're compensated but, whatever it is, it wouldn't even come close to compensating for the time and energy and effort. And it's not even the time and energy but the emotional commitment as well. It's not just a physical punch in the clock time, it's their commitment. You can tell they are truly engaged and involved in these girls and committed to their development and to their lives as well which is great to see.

What Andrew has also acknowledged is how the coaches' dedication and efforts extends beyond the physical spaces in which athletes train or compete; specifically, he links time, energy and emotional commitments to his daughters' positive experience on their team. This is an element of coaching that is often overlooked; specifically, the resources coaches exhaust while caring about

the team and each individual athlete outside of the sport setting. This shows how parents constructed care as coaches going above and beyond the parametres of their role in sport.

In another example, Victoria (Gwen's mother) recalled a moment with the current coaches where they acted in a caring way by going above and beyond their role. Gwen's role on the team is as a defensive specialist (DS), which means that she only plays in the back row and can only be substituted into the match once per set. This is a high-pressure position because the athlete does not get a lot of time on the court or opportunities to contribute, but is expected to fulfill her defensive role flawlessly. Victoria recalls:

> Gwen said to me after one of the games, I think it was provincials or whatever, she said that Coach Grant would tell her, if she missed a play or whatever and they lost, that that wasn't her fault: "We understand that we are putting you in to a really high-pressure position." You know, he would explain it to her. And I thought: "That was really good." He didn't really need to. She knew that was her job but again that's why we came here because that's, to me, important. I think it just takes it to the next level. It's easier not to say anything.

According to Victoria the coaches were not obligated to communicate with Gwen in this way and this is not the norm; alternatively, Victoria expressed how it was Gwen's responsibility to know her role and not shoulder all of the responsibility when she makes an error. Once again, this shows how parents constructed care as a coaching practice that extends beyond the norms and aims of sport. In this case, Victoria felt that the coaches were not responsible for reframing Gwen's contributions in this way; athletes ought to know how they contribute without coaches needing to reaffirm. However, the efforts Coach Grant took to reframe Gwen's experience were indicative of good and caring coaching practices from Victoria's view.

Falling short.

While there were parents who spoke highly of the coaches and felt that their daughter was cared for throughout the course of the season, there were also parents who perceived the coaches as unfair and uncaring. For example, in her second interview, Sheila (Alicia's mother) commented on how she felt that the coaches prioritized some athletes over others. In particular, she identified two athletes that she perceived as receiving the majority of attention and feedback from the coaches:

> The coaches have made this season about two players and it's been on the backs of the rest of the team. And two players have gotten all the attention, all the coaching, all the accolades, and the rest of them are just kind of lucky to be there and it's had a massive effect, not just on my kid, but on a lot of other girls.

As noted throughout this chapter, given the constraints faced by coaches within the structure of competitive sport, the expectation that coaches provide each athlete with equal attention is unrealistic. However, as illustrated in the passage above, when coaches succumb to these pressures they are perceived as profoundly uncaring. Sheila is also assuming that many of the athletes have suffered as a result of this perceived imbalance in coach accolades and attention, while asserting that her daughter was not affected. This shows how parents' perceptions of care and caring will be biased towards their daughters, naturally, which results in a lack of consideration for the pressures and constraints faced by coaches in sport.

Playing time.

As noted above, many participants linked care to playing time opportunities, which presents some challenges for coaching with regards to caring for their athletes in sport given its

structure. However, despite this tension being at the root of uncaring, the experience lived by athletes and perceived by their parents evoked strong feelings of mistreatment and an overall lack of care. For example, in her second interview, Sandra (Alison's mother) spoke freely about how disappointed she was with how the coaches managed the remainder of Alison's season. In particular, she felt that the coaches did fail in treating Alison as part of the team. She explains:

> Being part of a team is just that… a team. Alison was picked to be part of that team and I feel sick and upset at how they so destroyed her, and how much work I've had to do to make her not feel like she's a piece of shit and not good enough to play on that team.

This is an example of how the structure of sport can result in a profound lack of care as experienced by athletes and perceived by parents. In Alison's case, she was not given as many opportunities to perform as she desired, which resulted in her feeling unappreciated and devalued, as illustrated in Sandra's comments above. Alison's experience illustrates how the coaches decisions and perceived lack of communication were identified as the direct cause of her unhappiness, once again holding coaches responsible for the consequences associated with the structure of competitive sport.

General Conclusions

Overall, participants' responses illustrated how care and caring are at odds with the aims and goals of competitive sport broadly. Most notable is the conflicting negotiations of care that were illustrated in athletes' views of care and caring. While they all linked care to feelings of happiness and contentment, *how* this came about was described in contradicting ways; specifically, their negotiations of care required coaches to either align their efforts with the aims of sport or deviate from them. In both cases, athletes felt that coaches ought to tailor their efforts according

to the needs of each individual athlete. The crux of this paradox is the differing experiences between starting and non-starting athletes; more specifically, between athletes who feel they are allotted adequate playing time and performance opportunities, versus those who feel they have been short-changed. What this shows is that sport creates a dichotomy of athlete experience that makes care seemingly incompatible with the competitive sport system overall.

In Chapter eight, I identify key themes that emerged from the analyses presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven and, in doing so, will address the fourth research objective of this study which is to: *Explore how current conceptions of care may or may not align with the Ethics of Care, a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour.* The final chapter will also address the strengths and limitations of this study as well as recommendations for future directions.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This final chapter draws on the results of the previous three chapters to explore how current conceptions of care examined thus far may or may not align with the EoC, a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour and, in doing so, this chapter attends to the fourth research objective of this study. A novel contribution of this study is its attempt to employ both sociological and philosophical theory to examine care within the context of a specific sport institution, which adds a moral dimension to the IE agenda. As noted in Chapter Four, IE is designed to illuminate the links between the ruling relations that operate at the level of the institution and the lives of people in local settings and, in the context of this study, the OVA's governing texts and the CAC's educational resources were examined using features of the EoC as a way of linking them to the experiences of care articulated by coaches, athletes, and parents. In other words, what counts as 'good' and 'right' care at the institutional level organized *how* care was conceptualized by this study's participants in local sport settings.

Employing a normative ethical theory to examine care at the institutional and local levels brought this researcher's attention to the moral relevance of care and, in particular, how the context in which care is constructed, negotiated, and lived has a definite impact on what is considered right and wrong action in sport. The context for this study, outlined in Chapter One, highlighted the current, and worrisome, state of affairs in sport that lead to the abuse and mistreatment of many athletes by their coaches. However, the initial motivation to conduct this examination of care in sport was my personal experience as an assistant coach that involved witnessing a profound moment of uncaring by the head coach towards an athlete.

A Magnifying Moment

The moment occurred mid-season at a point when the team had few wins to show for their efforts. The head coach had asked each athlete to prepare to share with the team their motivations for playing volleyball and how it contributed to their lives. At the start of this particular practice, the athlete who had been assigned to present responded, "No," when asked by the head coach if they were prepared. The head coach was instantly and visibly angry as he began to scream and shout how disappointed he was at this athlete's lack of preparation and, as the team dispersed to begin training, the coach's voice filled the gym as he declared the athlete an "embarrassment." As the assistant coach, I was aware of my role, 'place' on the team, and that this was not the time to question the head coach's reaction; in fact, I felt frozen in place. However, not only did I experience a profound discomfort and anger towards the head coach in this moment, I could see all the athletes' viscerally react with discomfort (e.g., faces flush red, eyes darting towards the floor) as a haunting silence filled the gym making the head coach's reactions sound that much louder.

The head coach started practice and the athletes carried on, noticeably more silent than usual but still continuing to participate in drills and execute skills. The paralysis I experienced as the assistant coach in this moment not only re/drew my attention acutely to the power and hierarchy in sport, but also to the normalization of this shaming tactic employed by the head coach. Motivated by overwhelming feelings of compassion for this athlete, as well as an underlying certainty that this response was morally reprehensible, I approached the coach in private roughly one week after the incident to express my concerns. While I agreed that the athlete's lack of preparation should have been addressed, I communicated to the coach that his reaction was not the right way to handle this issue. In response, the head coach was quick to justify their actions,

claiming that there was educational value to "calling out" this athlete in front of the team because it affirmed a standard of behaviour. To my shock, the head coach's response was not reactive but calculated, with a clear objective in mind: affirming team expectations for the purpose of cohesion and overall performance.

There are very clearly some notable differences between the moment described above and the case of Megan Brown outlined in Chapter One. However, both are examples of a coach abusing their position of power within a competitive sport setting and, given the increase in reported cases of athlete abuse and mistreatment in sport (Donnelly & Sparks, 1997; Donnelly et al., 2014), as well as the high-pressure/high-stakes environment that is conducive to abuses of power by coaches (Hardman & Jones, 2011; Malloy & Zakus, 2004; Simon, 2013), *how* this context influenced notions of care and caring emerged as a central theme of this current study. To that end, the results of this study contribute to a more fulsome understanding of the landscape of care in youth sport as a complex social terrain imbued with power hierarchies that prioritize performance and cultivate an environment in which uncaring is overlooked or justified. Thus, examining care within the context of a sport institution illustrates *how* the organization's superficial conceptualizations of care leaves a messy and uncharted space for coaches to navigate while being charged with the responsibility of caring for athletes as well as needing to remain loyal to the performance aims of sport.

Summary of Key Takeaways

Keeping in mind the contextual factors stated above, the results of this study are summarized in the following key takeaways: First, based on this study's findings, it is clear that there is a strong sense of care in this one competitive youth volleyball team but the subject or

direction of that care is highly influenced by the performance principle. Examining care in sport through an IE lens highlights this dimension and affirms the importance of treating people as complex social beings whose perceptions and lived experiences of care are inextricably linked to the messiness of the sport context and, to recall from Chapter Two, this aligns with tenants of an athlete-centred philosophy which prioritize the contextual particularities that influence an athletes' experience (Penney & Kidman, 2014). Thus, the direction of care oscillates between prioritizing the particular needs of athletes and the broader aims of performance-oriented sport.

Second, consistent across all the data collected for this study, a key takeaway is that athletes are the primary subjects, or recipients, of care and coaches are constructed as the primary providers; in other words, care relationships are generally unidirectional from coach to athlete. Employing the EoC brings focus to the athletes' perceptions of what counts as caring for them and the resounding responses from these particular athletes linked care to feelings of happiness and contentment, which were contingent on performance opportunities (i.e., playing time). For those athletes who did not play as often, their notions of care still centred on *how* the coach communicated with them about their development and playing time opportunities. This shows how the institution of sport, broadly, relies heavily on coaches to ensure athletes' needs are met, and that this distribution of responsibility is reproduced by sport participants overall. Furthermore, the results of this study showed that notions of care were not reciprocated towards coaches. In other words, coaches were not constructed as subjects in need of care from athletes or parents, nor were there any references to coaches needing self-care.

The remaining takeaways explicate more precisely *how* coaches are constructed as the primary providers of care. For example, as an organization, the OVA is limited with regards to the application and efficacy of their policies and procedures without the operational work of coaches

in local settings. In other words, the OVA relies on coaches to ensure that athletes are cared for; however, as explained in Chapter Five, the features of care articulated in the organization's governing texts focused on identifying prohibited behaviours and ensuring the physical safety of all athletes (and members broadly) which, at best, outlined a minimum standard of care. Once again, the coach is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that these standards are upheld, while also ensuring that athletes feel cared for beyond these minimum protections.

In addition, the OVA acknowledged that athletes require more than this minimum standard of care and implicitly relies on the CAC to educate coaches on how to accomplish this. Given the analysis provided in Chapter Six, this is extremely problematic with regards to care because the majority of NCCP modules are not mandatory for coaches, and the ones that are (i.e., *Making Ethical Decisions* and *Making Headway*) focus solely on managing head injuries and do not capture the breadth of ethical dilemmas faced by coaches (Stirling, Kerr & Cruz, 2012). This has implications for the coach education system in Canada broadly which will be addressed in the concluding section of this chapter.

Finally, based on this study's findings, it is clear that care remains a condensation symbol (cf., Bundon & Clarke, 2015; Edelman, 1985; Kaufer & Carley, 1993) for youth sport participants whereby there is much assumed meaning of what constitutes care and caring, and how this ought to be enacted by coaches. The implications of this uncharted and messy terrain of sport, left to the individual negotiations of coaches and highly influenced by the performance principle, are illustrated by this study's participants who often equated care with feelings of happiness and/or contentment which were dependent on how coaches managed playing time. Thus, this study represents a first step in charting this messy domain of sport coaching by more clearly defining what constitutes care and caring.

This final chapter will begin by integrating key features of the EoC within an IE framework by drawing on broad conclusions from Chapters Five, Six and Seven and, in doing so, will begin addressing the fourth research objective of this study which is: *To explore how current conceptions of care may or may not align with the Ethics of Care (EoC), a theory that prioritizes relations between persons as a guide for moral behaviour.* This objective will be addressed throughout the chapter and, to recall, the key features of this theory include an expanded notion of *care* which takes into account not only relationships between persons, but also relationships between institutions and the experiences of people in local settings, as well as an analysis of *fundamental needs* (Miller, 2012) and *how* they are met (i.e., *perfect* or *imperfect duties*). Given that the EoC was not specifically intended to examine institutions in this manner, this study drew on features of the EoJ to explicate the OVA's limited caring capacities. It is important to note that Kant's *perfect* and *imperfect duties* (Johnson & Cureton, 2019) are not original components of the EoC framework; however, they have been utilized in this study to explicate the different conceptualizations of care that exist at the institutional and organizational levels. Overall, this chapter will highlight that the ways in which care was conceptualized in the OVA's governing documents and the CAC's educational resources placed heavy responsibility on the coaches to ensure that athletes' needs were met, which was consistent with participants' conceptualizations of care examined in Chapter Seven. The implications of this burden of responsibility on coaches will be critically unpacked throughout this chapter. The final section will offer concluding arguments for this study by outlining the opportunities and challenges of blending sociological and philosophical theory, the strengths and limitations of this specific study, and by offering suggestions for future research directions.

IE and the EoC

As noted in Chapter Four, an IE study examines an organization's texts and documents because they operate as 'crystalized' (cf., Smith, 2005) ruling relations that have organizational power over the local setting. Given that the EoC is a theory that pertains to the relations between persons, employing this framework to examine care at the institutional level required an imaginative step; specifically, to envision the OVA as a moral agent whose caring efforts are expressed through policies and documents. Broadly, the analysis presented in Chapter Five showed how the OVA's governing texts attended to needs in a justice-oriented way, which has implications for their moral orientation and the scope of their efficacy which will be addressed in the final sections of this chapter. Specifically, the analysis illustrated that the OVA's conceptualizations of care and caring require some interpretive or translation work of coaches in local settings in order to operationalize due to their limitations as documents. In addition, this analysis illustrated that care expressed through the provision of *perfect duties* prohibiting harmful behaviours was more clearly articulated than the OVA's outlining of *imperfect duties*, which required more in-person interpretive or translational work by coaches to operationalize. *Imperfect duties* capture a more accurate depiction of the messy work of coaches as they attempt to discern and respond to the particular needs of athletes. An account of these complexities is more accurately illustrated in the CAC's informal educational resources which are examined in Chapter Six.

Employing the EoC within an IE study also brings focus to *how* care recipients' understandings of what counts as care and caring, for them, is heavily influenced by the context in which these relations are cultivated. In other words, it illustrated *how* sport participants' notions of care reproduced the organization's heavy reliance on coaches to ensure athletes experienced care. For example, and as noted in Chapter Seven, athletes linked care to the provision of

performance opportunities and felt that it was the responsibility of coaches to ensure that these processes were managed in such a way that they felt cared for. Given that, in most cases, "sport is a zero-sum enterprise where there are winners and losers and the ill treatment of others can be tainted and exacerbated by this accepted perception of contextual discrimination" (Malloy & Zakus, 2004, p. 323); for me, this raised the question of whether care is ever or can ever be compatible with sport. In other words, how can a potential carer know if their care has been received as such when both carer and care recipients' perceptions of what counts as care in sport are so heavily imbued with performance-oriented norms that leave the majority of athletes feeling uncared for? In addition, if both the carer and care recipient's constructions align, is this enough to claim that a caring relation exists? Drawing on the work of Noddings (2013) and Miller (2012), it would seem that care involves more than an alignment of constructs and intentions; caring involves meeting and responding to fundamental needs. Miller's differentiation between needs and desires as articulated in Chapter Three, and throughout Chapters Five, Six and Seven, highlights this seminal distinction with regards to care.

Care context of youth volleyball.

As noted in Chapter Seven, participants' conceptualizations of care were linked to sport-specific practices (i.e., playing time) which, in itself, illustrates a tension between care and sport; specifically, sport is not conducive to care because it is structured in such a way that only some athletes will be given performance opportunities. Broadly, and as noted in Chapters Five and Six, the conceptualizations of care in the OVA's governing documents and the CAC's coach education resources were not capable of engaging in the in-person relations required of care ethics – there was no text, module, or policy on the topic of allocating playing time, for example. However, this

collection of institutional texts positioned coaches as the primary carers in sport with the core responsibilities for fulfilling, and responding to, the needs of athletes. Participants' responses reproduced this expectation and constructed athlete care as the coaches' responsibility; yet, and most notably in the context of this specific study, athletes' and parents' conceptualizations of care were linked to *how* coaches managed and distributed performance opportunities (i.e., playing time), as well as any subsequent challenges that were associated with playing time over the course of the competitive season.

As demonstrated throughout Chapters Five, Six and Seven, examining care through the philosophical lens of the EoC brings analytical focus to *how* coaches, athletes, and parents morally evaluate sport-related practices and behaviours as they relate to care, while also linking those evaluations to the institutional norms that organize the local settings. For coaches, strategies for managing athletes' lived experience of this tension included a moral evaluation and reorientation which shifted the burden of responsibility to the athlete with regards to reframing their experience within sport. For instance, in response to Alison's unhappiness with regards to her lack of playing time Coach Tom concluded that she was not seeing the "big picture," an example which will be more fulsomely unpacked later on in this chapter. In contrast, for athletes and parents, their moral evaluation shifted the burden of responsibility onto the coaches. Overall, the results of this analysis have implications for both the study and practice of sport coaching which will be addressed later in this chapter.

Primary Subject of Care

As noted above, the results of this study showed that athletes are the primary subject of care in sport, a claim that was also affirmed by the coaches and is also a fundamental tenant of

athlete-centred coaching (e.g., Kidman, 2005; Kihl, Kikulis, & Thibault, 2007; Penney & Kidman, 2014). Broadly, a reoccurring theme that emerged from participants' responses about care was the tension between performance- and development-oriented goals and, in particular, athletes constructed care as a feeling of happiness or satisfaction that was elicited by coaching choices that either aligned with, or deviated from, primary performance goals of sport. This tension between the aims of sport and the lived experiences of participants illustrates a seminal theme of this study; specifically, that the institution of sport is structured in such a way that makes care and caring difficult and, in some cases, incompatible.

The priority of athletes with regards to care was affirmed in the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015); in particular, and as noted in Chapter Five, there is a section pertaining to all members, as well as additional sections for coaches and athletes. For example, the section pertaining to coaches specifically stated:

> The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal, sport, and athletic development of the athlete. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or unconsciously (p. 4).

This statement not only frames the coach's role as pivotal and one of privilege, it also holds coaches solely responsible for any intentional or unintentional harm that may occur in their interactions with their athletes. In addition, the OVA reframed the coach's position, as well as all subsequent responsibilities, as one of privilege while simultaneously acknowledging the vulnerability of athletes in this relationship due to the asymmetrical balance of power. While we must acknowledge that there is an inherent power imbalance between coach and athlete in sport, to suggest that all athletes are always vulnerable all the time is problematic. Furthermore, to

suggest that the responsibility of care must only flow in one direction (from coach to athlete) is equally problematic given coaches' limited resources and the powerful undercurrent of performance-oriented goals. In addition, the physical vulnerability of athletes has also been reframed (i.e., through the normalization of physical injuries as part of sport participation), which makes for a complex and messy terrain for coaches to navigate with regards to appropriate standards of care.

Care and the performance principle.

As noted above, and throughout Chapter Seven, participants linked care to the behaviours of coaches with regards to the balancing of performance- versus development-oriented goals. Underpinning these responses is the priority of the performance principle which impacts all levels of sport. Several of the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) acknowledged this as the coach's responsibility to manage and some examples include: *Overcome performance anxiety and stress to enhance performance* (2019ii) and *Helping athletes manage anxiety* (2019s). In addition, *Developing focus plans for athletes* (2019p) illustrated that coaches are responsible for taking the time to learn how to attend to the needs of each individual athlete and that those needs are underpinned by the aims of competitive sport. It states:

> Focus plans are detailed plans setting out when and how athletes will work on all the different thoughts and emotions they need to manage to perform well. Focus plans train athletes to focus effectively on each aspect of their sport or event by helping them deal with distractions by using techniques such as visualization and goal setting (para. 2).

While the description of this resource appears to offer clear strategies for coaches to help manage athletes' performance-related stress and anxiety, it does not account for the limited hours and

resources available to coaches to learn and attend to the needs of all athletes. Alternatively, acknowledging the prevalence of anxiety and stress in sport, while simultaneously offering strategies for coaches, sets the precedent that all coaches are capable of addressing these concerns for others and that they ought to. The coaches' own anxieties and stresses are left unspoken and missing from the picture. From the ethical standpoint of care, this is an overwhelming moral concern.

Performance-oriented needs and desires.

The EoC, and Miller's (2012) EoN, is useful in explicating several dimensions of this moral concern; in particular, the arduous task of discerning athletes' fundamental needs amidst the complex and performance-oriented domain of sport. In Chapter Three, Miller's differentiation between needs and desires was explicated and brought attention to athletes' perceptions and expressions of their own fundamental needs, which then must be interpreted by coaches. As noted in Chapter Seven, athletes constructed care as feelings of happiness and contentment that centred on performance opportunities. However, while an athlete may desire to play and believe that they ought to be played more, the lack of playing time is not a direct threat to an athletes' fundamental needs (i.e., Miller, 2012). In addition, if an athlete expressed discontent along these lines, they undoubtably feel uncared for as a result, which then adds to the responsibilities of coaches with regards to deciphering particular athletes' needs. The following example from this study illustrated how Alison's experience of uncaring was inextricably linked to playing time:

> The first game we played, I didn't play at all. The second game they put me on in the second set and I played for ten points and they took me off. I made a couple of errors and they took me off and kind of just said that we needed to change things up. So, I was on the

bench, and for the rest of the day I didn't play at all. And they didn't come to talk to me after that, nothing.

Alison goes on to explain that she felt extremely uncared for after this tournament. As noted above, not being played is not a direct threat to her fundamental needs; however, her perception and evaluation of the experience was influenced by the performance aims of sport. This aligns with Miller who asserts that, "desires fluctuate with cultural and societal development," and she rearticulates, "although I can be mistaken about what I believe I need, my fundamental needs remain the same" (p. 22). From the EoC lens, this distinction is helpful for carers to tease out which fundamental needs are being threatened amidst the complex terrain of the sport context and, in Alison's case, a caring response from coaches would include an acknowledgment of the impact performance aims on her experience and would also influence their actions in response. In this example, it is more likely that Alison's fundamental need for *social inclusion, participation and recognition* were the underlying cause of her compromised agency.

Overall, one way to frame the above example is that the coaches failed to care for Alison because she did not feel cared for. However, when examining care in the context of competitive sport, the impact that performance-oriented goals have on the moral evaluations of coaches and athletes is pivotal. In particular, given that the OVA's governing texts and the CAC's educational resources constructed the coach as responsible for meeting the needs of athletes, future sport studies ought to examine the limits of policies with regards to athlete care and well-being. In addition, the results from this study suggest that scholarly research examining care ought to include the perspectives of both coaches and athletes if there is to be a fulsome understanding of how care is constructed in this context.

Primary Providers of Care

Thus far, it is clear that coaches are constructed as the primary providers of care in sport according to the OVA, CAC, and participants. As noted in Chapter Five, this is evident in the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b), which is a set of behavioural documents and guidelines specifically for coaches and other people in authoritative positions in sport, as well as the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a), which is designed specifically for coaches to ensure that they conduct themselves in a safe and ethical manner. In addition, the CAC stated that, "coaches are mentors, motivators, and leaders" (2019z, p. 2), and emphasized their responsibility with regards to training and caring for athletes. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two also highlights this trend, as it critically questions the authoritative role of coaches and how an abuse of this position has resulted in the harm and mistreatment of athletes.

This distribution of responsibilities articulated in the OVA's governing texts and educational resources was reproduced by the coaches in this study who framed athlete care as their responsibility. As noted in Chapter Seven, the coaches' negotiations of care were centred on strategies that enabled them to effectively communicate and understand their athletes in order to ensure that care was experienced. For example, Coach Grant referred to empathy and how it described his strategy for relating to the experiences of his athletes:

> I guess to me caring has to do with empathetic behaviour. Being able to put yourself in that player's shoes. And the one thing I think which is important to this, which may explain where I come from, is that I've been everything with respect to an athlete. I've been everything with respect to an athlete. I have been the worst player on great teams, I've been the best player on average teams, I've been one of the better players on some pretty good teams. So, I know what it's like to sit on the bench.

While, at first, it appears that this would be an effective strategy for understanding athletes and discerning their needs, the EoC raises some concerns with regards to empathy; in particular, it conflicts with the 'receptive mode' which underpins the carer's experience of engrossment and motivational displacement (Noddings, 2013). Alternatively, empathy aligns more so with a 'projective mode,' whereby the carer attempts to know the needs of the cared-for by putting themselves in the cared-for's position and asking: "What would I need if I were in that situation?" (2015). The concern here is that the carer makes some fundamental assumptions about the care recipient's experience and neglects to account for the difference in their positions. In the context of this study, the risk is that athletes' needs are assumed based on the coach's past experiences in similar positions which, in this case, also presumes an understanding and appreciation of how sport is dominated by the performance principles and that athletes ought to be grateful to be part of any team in any role. However, given the time, place, and gender differential (to name a few) between Coach Grant and his female athletes, associating care with empathy is problematic. With regard to Alison's case specifically, Coach Grant's assumption that he understood the experience of not being played may have resulted in his shifting responsibility to Alison with regards to her discontent, a worrisome strategy that will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Overall, the links between care and playing time place coaches in a challenging position where all of their decisions are zero-sum, leaving half the athletes feeling uncared for at all times. To negotiate this tension, the coaches' evaluations of athletes' discontent with not being played reproduced the sport norms influencing care; specifically, athletes who were unhappy with the lack of playing time were labeled as ungrateful, unappreciative, and not seeing the whole picture, despite Coach Tom's initial acknowledgement that "everybody is not going to be happy." This is not the fault of the coach per se, given the pressures of sport and lack of education around its

influence on sport participants' experience overall. However, it showed that Coach Tom, at the beginning of the season, understood that not every athlete will be happy because of the structure of competitive volleyball and that, in practice, it is much more challenging to continue honouring this acknowledgment of athletes' discontent without reframing it as the athletes' lack of awareness and appreciation.

Care minimums in OVA documents.

As noted at the outset of this Chapter, the OVA's scope of care was limited to preventing and mitigating harms which, subsequently, emphasized the responsibilities of coaches as primary providers of care beyond those minimums. This is evident in the OVA's *PIA Code of Conduct* (2018b) which is aimed at protecting athletes from harmful and abusive coaching practices; in particular, uncaring practices are recognized as agency-compromising and lead to the current state of affairs of athlete mistreatment and abuse in sport. For example, the document states:

> Abuse in sport, particularly sexual abuse and the grooming behaviour that precedes it, destroys the positive impact of sport and causes untold harm to victims and those around them. Consequently, the OVA has a strong obligation to establish and maintain systems that prevent abuse and respond to conduct that poses risk to OVA athletes (p. 1).

The above passage illustrates a profound tension with regards to care in sport; specifically, not only are coaches in a position of power making them responsible for athlete care, the OVA also holds them responsible for any harms that may occur as a result of occupying that position. Once again, given the limited time and resources available to coaches and the strong undercurrents of performance-oriented sport, this leaves coaches in a precarious position. In other words, coaches are positioned as the scapegoat for sport whenever something goes wrong. In addition, framing

care as the prevention or mitigation of harms does not fully align with the EoC and illustrates the limited reach of the OVA's caring capacities while simultaneously articulating the plethora of responsibilities coaches are expected to shoulder.

To recall, upholding a standard of moral conduct by refraining from prohibited behaviour is an example of a *perfect duty*, which can be found throughout the OVA's governing texts. For example, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* (2015) provides detailed descriptions of prohibited behaviours for all members which included refraining from "condescending or patronizing behaviour which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions" (p. 2). From a moral standpoint, the OVA's *Code of Conduct* is, at best, an example of a descriptive account of morality (cf., Gert & Gert, 2017) that is limited to identifying prohibited conduct and, as noted in Chapter Five, in cases where the OVA's governing texts articulate their moral code through the provision of *imperfect duties*, it is clear that they rely on the actions and behaviours of coaches in local settings to uphold these more complex moral norms of care.

Beyond minimum protections.

As noted in Chapter One, and rearticulated throughout Chapters Three, Five, Six and Seven, care involves more than the mitigation and prevention of harms, a responsibility that rests squarely on the shoulders of coaches. Interestingly, this has been affirmed in more recent studies examining sport coaching; specifically, "coaches have a duty of care that moves beyond protection and involves the development of caring relationships with athletes" (Cronin & Armour, 2019a, p. i). Similar to the OVA's governing texts, the CAC's educational resources focused on coaches as the primary providers of care. Given that the scope of care in the OVA's documents did not extend

beyond minimum protections and physical safety, and that the OVA recognized the power inherent in the coaches role, it appears that the organization is relying on the coach education system to ensure that coaches are trained to care for athletes across plethora of sport settings. To recall from Chapter Six, the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) are designed to help coaches care for athletes and, subsequently, frames coaches as solely responsible for athlete care.

The OVA's reliance on the CAC for the education of coaches is evident in the connections made between the CAC's *Coaching Tips* (2019m) and the *NCCP Code of Ethics* (CAC, 2016a), which emphasized the responsibilities of coaches with regards to care. To recall, a copy of the *NCCP Code of Ethics* is provided in the OVA's *Youth Competition Manual* (2017, p. 34), and is also referenced in several of the CAC's *Coaching Tips*. In particular, this document is designed to help coaches evaluate issues that arise within sport because "it represents a reference for what constitutes both "the good and the right thing to do"", and provides the following example: "The code of ethics helps coaches make balanced decisions about achieving personal or team goals and the means by which these goals are attained" (p. 1). However vague, this document acknowledged the moral complexities that coaches are required to manage while still ensuring that their athletes feel cared for. Overall, both the OVA's governing texts and the CAC's educational resources shift responsibilities of athlete care to the coaches. A primary concern is that the CAC's educational resources appear to aid coaches as they navigate the complex terrain of care in sport, but do not address *how* the performance aims of sport make this task extremely difficult. Instead, these resources support the assumption that all coaches are capable of caring for athletes, provided that they differ to these *Coaching Tips* and/or complete the NCCP's *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z).

Coach responsibilities.

The analysis presented in Chapter Six illustrated that the CAC recognized and affirmed the complex responsibilities of the coach's role with regards to meeting athletes' needs. The *Coaching Tips* (CAC, 2019m) addressing athletes' physical needs outlined clear steps for coaches to take in order to fulfill those needs (i.e., *6 Steps to Follow When an Injury Occurs*). However, the resources offered to coaches to manage athletes' psychological needs are not as clear; specifically, the language is vague and framed the strategies as suggestions because they cannot account for the particularities of the context in which these scenarios would occur. For example, the CAC's *5 core foundations of positive athlete development* (2019c) and *Help young people develop confidence and self-esteem in these 5 situations* (2019r) recognized that coaches are responsible for ensuring that athletes are cared for in these ways, but cannot offer guidelines as clearly as those *Coaching Tips* designed to address physical needs, or the behavioural guidelines outlined in the OVA's governing texts. Instead, it appears that the CAC expects coaches to figure out how to care for particular athletes via these informal resources.

As noted in Chapter Seven, the coaches' negotiations of care centred on communication and transparency with their athletes, a responsibility that aligned with several of the CAC's online *Coaching Tips*: *3 tips for delivering a clear message* (2019a), *6 steps to help master the difficult conversation* (2019h), and *Creating positive sport experiences: A self-reflection tool for coaches* (2019n). This aligns with the efforts of potential carers outlined in the EoC which, to recall, requires attention, listening and observation to maintain and cultivate relations of trust (Noddings, 2015). However, *how* coaches interpret athletes' communication does not always align with the EoC. As noted in Chapter Seven, the coaches interpreted Alison's feedback and communication initially in a positive and growth-oriented way, but as the season progressed and the pressures

increased, the coaches framed Alison's feedback as uncooperative and ungrateful. This shift shows how the pressures of sport restricts care for some and enables care for others by forcing coaches to reframe an athletes' experience of uncaring as inappropriate.

The results illustrated in Chapter Seven showed how the coaches stressed the importance of keeping lines of communication open throughout the season, a strategy that they communicated with athletes at the start of the season; in particular, this is one way that the coaches negotiated care and caring with their athletes. This shifts some responsibility back to the athlete with regards to expressing and meeting their needs. However, despite the stipulations and strategies articulated by the coaches at the start of the season, an athletes' experience is greatly influenced by the context of sport as the season progresses. Thus, coaches ought to make allowances for athletes' views and behaviours to challenge or contradict that which was outlined, and agreed upon, at the beginning of the season. It is not that the athlete is deliberately contradicting what they agreed to, or that they were disingenuous in their initial agreement; alternatively, this speaks to how the experience of sport participation can differ greatly from how it is theoretically framed prior to the season. It also showed how these coaches resorted to shifting the responsibility of care back onto the athletes in moments where they felt they were incapable of caring and, given that the results of this study showed that athletes are the primary recipients of care, this illustrates that the sport system is imbued with contradictions with regards to care.

Moral implications.

Overall, the OVA's governing texts are oriented towards care via their attention to fundamental needs and their focus on maintaining athletes' agency via the prevention and mitigation of harms. Care expressed in this way aligns more so with Noddings' (2015) notion of

caring-about which is concerned with attending to the assumed needs of multiple care recipients from a distance, reminiscent of a justice-oriented response. In the case of the OVA's governing texts, their moral strength is that they capture human universality and finitude (e.g., Miller, 2012), which is relevant to all athletes. However, this also implies that coaches' responsibilities with regards to care are upheld so long as they refrain from harming athletes in the ways that are articulated in these documents. This presents some glaring red flags regarding the caring capacities of the OVA; in particular, given that care requires more than the mitigation and prevention of harms, the OVA is relying on coaches to fill in the gaps and ensure that athletes are cared for above and beyond these institutional minimums.

In addition, the sport system, as represented by the OVA and CAC in this current study, seemingly recognized that the coaches shoulder the responsibility of caring for athletes, which is evident in the educational resources addressed above and examine in Chapter Six. However, the resources examined for this study were open-source and not mandatory for coaches to utilize. This is morally worrisome considering that these resources more clearly recognized the complexities of the coach's role when ensuring that the needs of all their athletes are met throughout the season.

Implications for the Practice of Sport Coaching

As noted in Chapter Seven, participants' conceptualizations of care were linked to performance opportunities; however, given that coaches are held responsible for caring for all athletes within a sport system that does not allow for equal performance opportunities, this resulted in a shifting of responsibility to the athletes when they expressed discontent in response to the coach's actions. According to the EoC, it is the coach's responsibility to ensure that the needs of athletes are met, due to the asymmetrical balance of power in the coach-athlete relationship.

However, this is the first time the EoC has been so rigorously applied to a sport-coaching context and the results show that sport, broadly, makes it difficult for coaches to cultivate caring relations with each of their athletes.

This tension was acknowledged by the coaches who participated in this current study; in particular, coaches demonstrated an awareness of the difficulties associated with managing playing time, which was articulated by Coach Grant during his first interview:

> Playing time for me is probably one of the hardest things I have to deal with because I want to play everyone. And it's not easy on a team like ours because they all really deserve to play. We have depth and we have tons of effort and good attitudes and the decision becomes very hard. And with the depth it can be hard to know which combinations of players is going to get the job done. You are never going to know.

The results of this study showed that coaches, when faced with allegations of being uncaring by athletes, fell back on the performance principle to justify their decisions and also shifted the burden of responsibility back to the athletes when they were not able to care in the way expressed by the athlete. Coach Tom reflected on the challenges he and Coach Grant faced with regards to managing playing time: "When you get a certain chemistry and things are working well, it's hard to inject somebody into the situation that just projects negativity, just the body language alone." He referenced Alison's case and felt that she based her season solely on court time when she should have been looking at the "big picture" and her contributions to the team as a whole. He recalls:

> She wasn't looking at the big picture and the work she was putting in at practices and during drills and stuff and helping to get better herself and helping her teammates to get better. She was just basing her season and her failure on not seeing the court. And I think she needed to hear that.

In other words, given that coaches bore the majority of caring responsibilities, when athletes claimed they are not cared for and subsequently blamed the coach for this experience, coaches must either accept that they failed in their role as carer and work towards rectifying; or, as was the case with the coaches in this study, shift the burden of responsibility to the athlete and use the aims and goals of performance-oriented sport to support this evaluation. Framed in this way, it is not that the coaches failed to care; alternatively, the athlete's expectations are influenced by the undercurrent of the performance principle in sport, as well as the construction of coach as primary carer as articulated throughout the OVA's governing texts and the CAC's educational resources. Therefore, the reality is that the coach is not solely responsible for athletes' experiences of uncaring but the institution of sport disguises this fact, leaving coaches to navigate this complex terrain which results in the prioritization of the performance principle over the particular needs of athletes.

Strengths of the Current Study

As noted above, an overarching finding of this study is that care remains poorly defined in the OVA's governing texts. Care expressed in these documents focused primarily on minimal protections through the provision of *perfect duties* as well as physical safety. However, while care framed in this way does not meet the criteria for the EoC's caring relation per se, it does align with a justice-oriented approach as its strengths reside in its universality and, more importantly, how it captures a unifying element that joins all human life. For example, according to Jeremy Bentham (1789) and John Stuart Mill (1861), preventing harm is the most important element of morality and the results from this study support this claim in a particular way; specifically, the conceptualizations of care articulated in the OVA's governing texts prioritized the prevention and mitigation of harms for all members, a unifying feature which enhances the validity of the moral

claims of preventing harm as noted by Miller (2012). To recall from Chapter Three, Miller's account of fundamental needs is underpinned by our human finitude and connectedness; more specifically, she highlights our universal vulnerability and subsequent necessities for the fulfillment of universal needs. Thus, care articulated in this way offers a point of relation from which in-person relations can be anchored.

Another strength of the current study emerged from its application of the EoC. Broadly, this theory's scope of care extends beyond minimum protections and mitigations of harm to include human agency and flourishing. To accomplish this, the EoC focuses on people's moral evaluations of themselves, and others, and how this influences actions and behaviours in context. Examining care through this lens brings into focus the limitations of institutional documents broadly, and the OVA's governing texts specifically, with regards to care. It effectively highlights where the organization's responsibilities end and where they expect coaches' responsibilities to begin. With regards to the education of sport coaches, this EoC analysis more clearly articulates the breadth of pressures they face as they attempt to care for athletes within a performance-oriented sport context.

In addition, the EoC and the EoN illuminated how athletes' perception of their fundamental needs are influenced by the sport context, which is illustrated by their notions of care being linked to performance opportunities and the actions and behaviours of their coaches. Recall Miller's (2012) differentiation between needs and desires from Chapter Three: "needs are morally significant in a way that desires are not" (p. 20), and their significance is rooted in their objectivity and universality. Furthermore, the "degree of plasticity" (p. 21) of desires illustrates how they reflect the particularities of the context and are, thus, subject to change. This has significant implications for the practice of sport coaching. In particular, it illuminates how the sport context

influences perceptions and practices of care which could potentially aid future coaches in navigating this complex terrain with their athletes and result in more experiences of care. It also brings focused attention to the current sport system and how it is not conducive to athlete care.

Another strength of this study are the implications for the study of sport coaching broadly, and for research conducted in the realm of Ontario youth volleyball specifically. In particular, employing the EoC brings focus to the care recipient's response to affirm a caring relation. In the context of coach-athlete relationships, *how* athletes perceive and express their needs has implications for the behaviours and actions of coaches with regards to care. As noted in Chapter Two, prioritizing athletes and their needs has been taken up extensively in athlete-centred coaching literature (e.g., AthletesCAN, 1994; Kidman, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). However, these studies failed to address how the context of sport influences athletes' perceptions and expression of their needs and how this presents challenges for coaches. Alternatively, research using features of the EoC to examine care in college/university sport settings (e.g., Fisher, Bejar, et al., 2017; Fisher, Shigeno, et al., 2017; Knust & Fisher, 2015), focuses primarily on how coaches perceive the needs of athletes and does not attend to the relation in a fulsome and robust way. Thus, a strength of this study is that it acknowledged and addressed this gap by rigorously applying the EoC theory to ensure that the experiences of athletes are meaningfully integrated and accounted for.

Finally, a strength of this study is that it illuminated several particularities characteristic of the OVA sport environment which can be helpful for youth coaches in this context. As noted in Chapter Seven, the current team is in the 16U age category which is marked by several notable changes compared to the previous 15U year. These changes impacted how care was constructed by participants of this team which has implications for youth volleyball coaches of 16U girls'

teams. In particular, the removal of the *Fair Play Rule* (OVA, 2017) undoubtedly emphasized the importance of playing time for those, like Alison, who did not see the court as often. Thus, the results of the study highlight an opportunity for the OVA to ensure that coaches are educated in the particularities of their age division which increase the likelihood that athletes' will feel heard and cared for.

Study Limitations

First, a limitation of this study is its scope: specifically, it only includes data from one volleyball team operating under the umbrella of one club in Ontario. Due to this limited sample size the conclusions, and subsequent implications, drawn from this study are also limited in their scope. Furthermore, while the results of this study are framed in such a way that implies broad and universal relevancy within the realm of Canadian sport, the specific results are not definite claims and should not be taken as such. A subsequent limitation of this scope is that this team was highly ranked and participated in many costly tournaments throughout the competitive season, above and beyond the four standard tournaments organized by the OVA for each age category. The social locations of this study's participants were not a primary focus; however, they cannot be disregarded in the context of a study which examines care using a framework that prioritizes the particularities of participants. While the sport environment is marked by powerful forces that work to assimilate participants into its narrow set of standards and expectations, the diversity of athletes' backgrounds undoubtedly influences how they construct, negotiate and live care and caring within this context and these factors were not addressed in this current study.

Another limitation is the scope of educational resources examined for this study. As previously noted, the CAC offers coach education via NCCP modules which require registration

and payment, and these resources were not examined. Instead, this study focused on the CAC's informal on-line *Coaching Tips* (2019m) which covered a range of coaching scenarios and athlete situations but did not include the more in-depth materials assumingly provided in official NCCP courses. However, they did reference the core courses as to give coaches an idea of what would be covered and are used in this study to broadly articulate *how* the CAC framed the responsibilities of coaches. Thus, the content covered in the NCCP *Multisport Modules* (CAC, 2019z) may address some of the worries articulated throughout this Chapter with regards to care. However, given that the CAC is the governing body for coach education in Canada, it is likely that the coach is still constructed as the primary provider of care for athletes.

As noted above, the EoC ideal requires that the care recipient respond to the carer in such a way that affirms or confirms that they feel cared for. This caring relation influenced the design of this current study with regards to the scope of participants (i.e., coaches, athletes and parents). However, given the power that coaches hold in the context of sport and that these interviews were conducted during the competitive season, the responses from athletes with regards to their experiences of care on this team are likely influenced by this asymmetrical balance of power. In other words, athletes who claimed that they felt cared for on this team may not have been comfortable sharing that they experienced the opposite (if that was the case) in case the coaches learned of the results which could impact their place on the team. Thus, while the EoC requires that the recipients of care be included in the caring relation, the high-pressure context of competitive sport may have influenced the results.

Finally, an important factor that, at times, worked to constrain this current study were my own challenges in grappling with preconceived notions and lived experiences of care that were fundamental in the choice to incorporate the philosophical EoC into a sociological IE study.

Throughout the stages of analysis and writing, I was continuously challenged to "release the grip" on my certainty with regards to the universal application of the EoC and how I believed it illuminated a dimension of human moral motivation that underpinned all action and decision-making in sport. Given that this is a sociological study, an approach which aims at critically unpacking the social world to reveal articulations of power, my relentless resistance to depart from the ethical ideal of care undoubtedly influenced this study's analysis and framing of results. However, the magnified moment described above is an example of my own lived experience of witnessing a profound lack of care in the sport setting, and despite my previous (and current) convictions that the EoC is capable of explicating even the most atrocious moments of uncaring, the primary aim of this study was to examine care from a critical standpoint. In doing so, this study brings forth a previously unseen view of sport and sport coaching that will hopefully address many of the concerns that underpin the current crisis of athlete abuse in sport.

Conclusion and Future Directions

As noted above, the results of this study showed that notions of care exist in sport but they are poorly defined and reflect a worrisome state of affairs that also contribute to the plethora of experiences of harm and mistreatment among athletes. Furthermore, it showed that the institution of competitive sport constructs athletes as the primary recipients of care and coaches as the primary providers. The results presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, as well as the overview provided in this current chapter, illustrated how the OVA and the CAC constructed the roles of athletes and coaches in this way which, employing the language of IE, explicated the responses of coaches, athletes and parents in this regard. In addition, the EoC analysis highlighted the limited scope of care at the institutional level (aligning more so with an EoJ approach), which illuminated the

complexities coaches are responsible for navigating with regards to meeting the fundamental needs of athletes. More importantly, the results of this study addressed a seminal worry with regards to care: in particular, its status as a condensation symbol which, to recall, is defined as a "concept or maxim that evokes an emotional reaction in the audience and that is assumed to be a desirable objective without ever being properly defined" (Bundon & Clarke, 2014, p. 354). Bringing analytical focus to care through this interdisciplinary lens begins to shed light on what care actually means in the context of competitive youth sport.

With regards to future directions, the results of this study highlighted some seminal worries with regards to the current coach education system in Canada which has implications for future research and examinations of care in sport broadly, and in youth sport specifically. For example, given the limited reach of coach education, it may prove useful to incorporate an acknowledgment of the impacts of the performance principle and its effects on the experiences of coaches and athletes into formal and informal educational resources. In addition, employing the EoC in the context of an IE study is an approach that has the potential to be useful across a variety of sport settings. To recall from Chapter Four, a seminal motivation for the development of the IE agenda is that the explication of peoples' experiences in local settings be useful to the people themselves. In the context of this study, the results are aimed at helping these coaches, athletes and parents understand how their notions and experiences of care and uncaring are not solely dependent on the coaches, but are greatly influenced by the sport context in which they are all embedded.

Sport coaching: A caring profession?

Given the sociological lens of IE employed for this study, and the plethora of research dedicated to examining caring professions from this standpoint, the results of this study beg the

question of whether sport coaching is a caring profession, where 'caring professions' are defined as: "those occupations that, on the basis of a high level of training in specific knowledge and skills, undertake work in which the human person is both the object and the subject, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually" (Hugman, 2005, p. 1). While traditionally, the scope of caring professions was limited to nurses, midwives, health visitors, social workers and probation officers (e.g., Abbott & Meerabeau, 1998), it has expanded to include 'allied health professions' such as dietetics, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, speech pathology, counselling, (clinical) psychology, religious ministry, teaching and youth work (Hugman, 2005). In addition to this description, Downie and Calman (1994) assert that when caring professionals acts, they occupy a dual role of individual as well as a member of their profession.

The primary reason for considering sport coaching as a caring profession is illustrated throughout the results of this chapter; specifically, sport coaches operate within a complex social terrain that exists between the performance aims of sport broadly, and the local contexts where they are responsible for athlete development and care. In other words, they are responsible for negotiating the aims of the institution with the lived experiences of service users (i.e., athletes). Thus, the scope of caring professions described above seems to apply. Furthermore, Hugman's (2005) work more clearly explicates the plethora of approaches to ethics in the caring professions which includes an account of feminism and care ethics; specifically, due to the occupational scope of caring professions and the moral relevance of care illustrated in this final chapter, adding sport coaching to the list is an appropriate and necessary move. Finally, while there may be legitimate arguments to refute this claim at the level of professional sport (the author does not take this stance), the moral relevancy of care and caring occupations is heightened when that scope includes the well-being of youth. Therefore, the results of the current study examining care in youth

competitive volleyball provides the foundation for this final argument and, hopefully, will spark

additional research examining the caring work of coaches in youth competitive sport.

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Appendix A

Tryout, Training and Competition Schedule

Weekly practice times: Monday (2 hours); Wednesday; (2.5 hours); and Sunday (2 hours)
*Note: Sunday practices were not held every week.

Date	Event	Duration/details
September 2016	Tryout	1.5 hours
September 2016	Tryout	1.5 hours
November 2016	Local pre-season tournament	1 day (5 matches)
November 2016	17U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (6 matches)
November 2016	16U Girls OVA tournament	1day (5 matches)
December 2016	17U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (5 matches)
January 2017	16U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (5 matches)
January 2017	17U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (5 matches)
February 2017	16U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (4 matches)
February 2017	USA Junior Volleyball Association (JVA) tournament	3 days (9 matches)
March 2017	16U Girls OVA Grand Prix tournament	2 days (4 matches)
March 2017	18U Girls OVA tournament	1 day (5 matches)
April 2017	17U Girls OVA Ontario Championships	3 days (8 matches)
April 2017	16U Girls OVA Ontario Championships	3 days (7 matches)
May 2017	16U Girls Volleyball Canada Nationals	3 days (9 matches)

Study Information Sheet and Recruitment Letter for Participant Observation

Date: _____

Project Title: Forms and Faces of Care and Caring in Ontario Youth Competitive Volleyball

Investigator: Emily McCullogh, PhD Candidate (York University)
Parissa Safai, PhD (York University) (Supervisor)

Dear _____,

I am conducting research on the lived experiences of care and caring in youth sport. Part of the data collection process for this study includes observation of athletes, coaches, and parents who are currently participating in youth competitive volleyball in Ontario. As a certified and experienced volleyball coach, I will be involved in the OVA youth competitive volleyball league and will be able to observe athletes, coaches, and parents during my activities as an assistant.

I am reaching out to the Directors of OVA-sanctioned clubs as a point of entry into a dialogue with potential participating teams. As the Director of _____ volleyball club, I feel that you would be knowledgeable as to which teams may be willing to participate in this project.

Athletes, coaches and parents will be notified of my study and my intent to observe prior to the start of data collection. All participation is voluntary and those who do not wish to participate will have no observational data collected or recorded. Any material used in publications resulting from this study will have identifying characteristics or statements omitted and/or paraphrased to hide the identity of the individual, team, and club.

I will keep a journal to record field notes. The journal will be kept in a secure, location at all times. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential, and electronic data will be kept on a secure password-protected computer accessible only to the researchers. Participants may review the researcher's field notes at any point in time during the study. There is no financial compensation for those participating in the study; however, participants may request a copy of the summary report upon completion of the project.

The study has minimal risks and the decision to participate or not is completely voluntary. The conceptualizations of care and caring within Ontario youth competitive volleyball is under-researched, and participants' involvement in this project will contribute our understanding of how care is interpreted and practiced in sport.

If you would like more information or are aware of individuals who are interested in participating, please feel free to contact Emily McCullogh. Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Emily McCullogh, PhD Candidate

Parissa Safai, PhD (Supervisor)

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in Research

Forms and Faces of Care and Caring in Ontario Youth Competitive Volleyball

Supervisor: Dr. Parissa Safai
School of Kinesiology and Heath Science
Faculty of Health

Graduate Student: Emily McCullogh
School of Kinesiology and Heath Science
Faculty of Health

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in a research project called **"Forms and Faces of Care and Caring in Ontario Youth Competitive Volleyball"** which focuses on the construction, interpretation, and experience of care by coaches, athletes, and parents.

Purpose of Study: I understand the purpose of this study is to learn about the understandings and experiences involving care and caring in youth competitive volleyball in Ontario.

Participation: For my participation, I will be interviewed once for 60-90 minutes, with a possible follow-up interview at a later date. I will answer questions about my experiences and observations of care and caring within the competitive youth volleyball context. The interview will take place at a location convenient to me in the Winter/Spring of 2016. I understand that my individual interview will be recorded on an audio digital recorder. I will receive a copy of the interview transcript and will have the chance to remove or clarify information.

Risks: I understand that for my participation I will answer questions about my personal views on care and caring, as well as asked to describe my relationships with others in the sport setting. I know that I do not have to answer any question that makes me feel uncomfortable, and I know that I am able to withdraw myself and my responses from the research project at any time.

Benefits: My participation in the research will help to generate a better understanding of the construction of care and caring within Ontario youth competitive volleyball. It will add to a broader understanding of caring relations within youth sport.

Confidentiality: I understand that the information I will share in the interview will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for this project. The researcher will not disclose any information that I have provided without my explicit permission.

Anonymity: I understand that my name will not be used in publications/reports unless I agree for it to be used. If I do not want information that I give to be linked back to me, I will not allow my name to be used. I will instead be assigned a made-up name (pseudonym).

I wish to remain anonymous in publications (circle one): YES/NO

Conservation of Data: The data collected in notes, tape-recorded interviews, or on computers will be kept in a locked drawer or on a password-protected computer in the researcher's office until 2036.

Compensation: I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation in the research project.

Voluntary Participation: I know that I do not have to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and I can refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Dr. Parissa Safai and Emily McCullogh in the School of Kinesiology & Health Science, Faculty of Health. I understand that by agreeing to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the numbers or email addressed provided at the top of this consent form.

If I have any ethical concerns regarding my rights as a research participant, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics, York University.

Signature of Research Participant:

I have read the information provided for the study **"Forms and Faces of Care and Caring in Ontario Youth Competitive Volleyball"** as descried herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Signature of Witness *(needed in the case of youth athletes who are under the legal age of consent in Ontario, Canada)*:

_____

Name of Witness (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Witness   Date

Signature of Researcher:

_____

Name of Researcher (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Signature of Supervisor:

_____

Name of Supervisor (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Supervisor Date

Sample CAC Coaching Tip

How to Maintain a Positive Coach-Parent Relationship

Parents play a key role in the sport experience of many athletes. In many cases, it is the parents who initiate the child's involvement in sport. As a result, coach-parent relationships also have a major effect — positive and negative — on athletes' experience in sport. It is therefore important for coaches to:

- Develop positive and meaningful relationships with athletes' parents
- Seek influence to influence parents and guide them so that they can have a positive and supportive influence on their child's sport experience.

Here are 5 suggestions for how to develop such relationships:

- Organize a formal meeting with parents to discuss the objectives of your program and your approach to coaching.
- Describe to parents — in detail — the behaviour you will be reinforcing in athletes. For example, if you plan to reward effort rather than performance, let parents know.
- Explain to parents the behaviour you expect from them. For instance, make it clear that you expect them to show respect for officials, that you do NOT want them to yell instructions to players.
- Recognize the need for regular, open communication with parents. Since misunderstandings between coaches and parents are usually the result of poor communication, it's important to work hard at such communication.
- Be positive and open about feedback – it will build parents' trust in you and lead to an even better program.

Coach Initiation in Sport is an online NCCP module developed to introduce new or experienced coaches to the foundational skills in coaching. Access Coach Initiation in Sport online module in the Locker, for $15, and start learning TODAY!