

National  
Volunteer  
Management  
Conference

## Masterclass *(Red)*

# Am I making the right decision? The role of ethics in volunteer engagement

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Certification in Volunteer Administration



# The Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration

## Our Vision

A world where competent, passionate leaders effectively engage volunteers.

## Our Mission

To advance excellence in volunteer administration by delivering professional certification and advocating ethical practice.

We administer the CVA credential and are a community of 1200 CVAs across the globe.



# The Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration

## The Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration

### Seven (7) Unique Competencies:

- Plan for Strategic Volunteer Engagement
- Advocate for Volunteer Involvement
- Attract and Onboard a Volunteer Workforce
- Prepare Volunteers for their Role
- Document Volunteer Involvement
- Manage Volunteer Performance and Impact
- Acknowledge, Celebrate, and Sustain Volunteer Involvement

These Seven Categories are further broken down into 67 unique tasks

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**[www.cvacert.org/info](http://www.cvacert.org/info)**

# Key Takeaways for Today

1. Defining Professional Ethics
2. CRAFT - 5 Core Values
3. The Ethical Decision Making Process

## Case Study - Aaron

Aaron is the Community Engagement Manager at a food pantry. One of their board members has heard rumors that a volunteer had an encounter with law enforcement and had to appear in court. The board member asks Aaron to confirm this information and says the volunteer must be dismissed if it is true. What do you think Aaron should do?

# Historical Context

- Volunteer Administration = an evolving profession since the 1960s.
- First “Statement of Professional Ethics” developed by Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) in the 1970s.
- Major revision and update in the late 90s, based on Josephson Institute of Ethics.
- Ethics material transferred to the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA) in 2006.
- Updated in 2016 by CVA task force to ensure relevancy and usefulness to the field.
- Commitment to professional ethics required for the CVA credential.

# Definitions

Morals – personal identification of right and wrong

Beliefs – an idea held to be true

Values – guide decision-making and prioritization

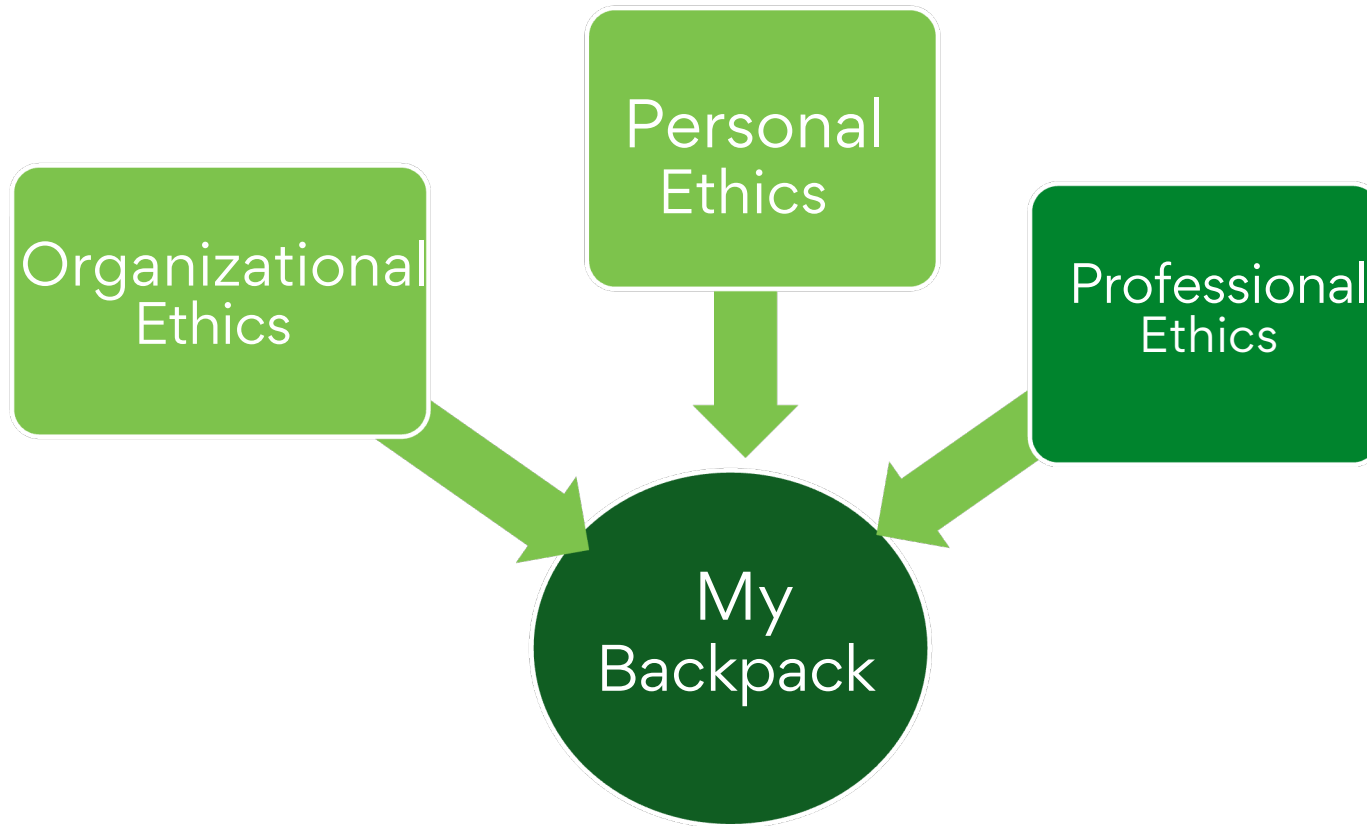
Policies – a standard or code for decision making

Culture – an organization's goals, values, and beliefs

Each of us carries an ethics backpack...



# What's in my ethics backpack?



# Core Values for Volunteer Engagement Professionals



# Professional Values and Principles

**CITIZENSHIP:** The Administrator of Volunteers understands that volunteerism is a foundation of civil societies and guides the organization and its stakeholders toward active community participation.

- Philosophy of Volunteerism
- Social Responsibility
- Philanthropy



# Professional Values and Principles

**RESPECT:** The Administrator of Volunteers acknowledges the inherent value, skills and abilities of all individuals and affirms the mutual benefit gained by the volunteer and the organization.

- Dignity
- Inclusivity
- Privacy

# Professional Values and Principles

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** The Administrator of Volunteers demonstrates responsibility to the organization, its stakeholders and the profession of volunteer administration.

- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement
- Professionalism

# Professional Values and Principles

**FAIRNESS:** The Administrator of Volunteers commits to individual and collective efforts that build and support a fair and just organizational culture.

- Impartiality
- Equity
- Justice

# Professional Values and Principles

**TRUST:** The Administrator of Volunteers maintains loyal and trusting relationships with all stakeholders and is dedicated to providing a safe environment based on established standards of practice.

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Commitment

## Yucky Situation or Ethical Dilemma?



Is this situation very unusual?

Is there a conflict between values or beliefs?

Are multiple stakeholders involved?

Policy says “do this”, but I’m not sure that is “right”?

Is there a downside to making the “correct” choice?

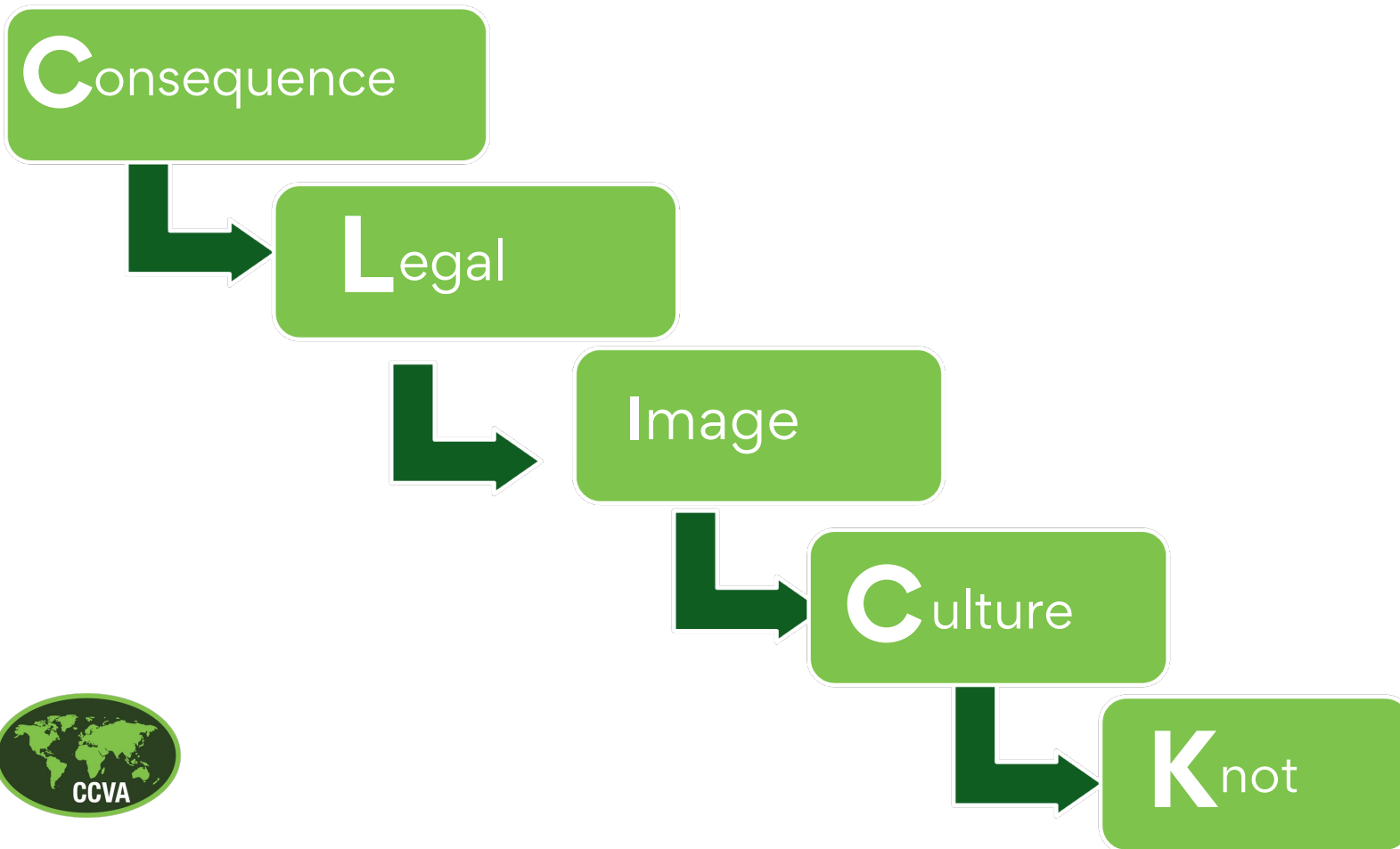
# Ethical Decision Making Process



# Decision Making Steps

1. Gather information: what led to this situation? who's involved?  
what else do I need to know?
2. Identify the dilemma: which two or more values or principles are  
at the heart of this dilemma? Where is the main tension?
3. Explore various options & consequences - What if I did this?  
What if I didn't do that? Who will be affected?
4. Make a decision and test it. Seek the path of least harm
5. Act - With confidence, courage, professionalism

# CLICK TEST (Testing your decision)



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# Decision Making Worksheet

[www.CVAcert.org](http://www.CVAcert.org)

## Ethical Decision Making Worksheet

Use this worksheet to record your thoughts. Select the action(s) which have the greatest positive consequences and the fewest negative consequences.

Stakeholders who will be affected by my decision:

Core values that are in conflict:

Possible Action/Response	Positive Consequences (include stakeholder most affected)	Negative Consequences (include stakeholder most affected)

## Case Study - Aaron

Aaron is the Community Engagement Manager at a food pantry. One of their board members has heard rumors that a volunteer had an encounter with law enforcement and had to appear in court. Aaron is already aware of the situation and it is not a barrier for the volunteer to be able to do their role. The board member asks Aaron to confirm this information and says the volunteer must be dismissed if it is true. What do you think Aaron should do?

# Step 1 – Gather Info

What are the organization's policies concerning background checks and privacy?

What is the board member's role and reach in this situation?

What information did the board member hear and how?

Has the board member discussed this rumor with anyone else?

Stakeholders: the food pantry, board member, CEO, the volunteer, other volunteers, clients, community, Aaron

## Step 2 – Identify the Conflict

Core Values at heart of the dilemma are:

Respect (dignity and privacy)

Fairness (impartiality)

Trust (integrity)

The main conflict for Aaron is that the board member is asking them for confidential information and is trying to direct Aaron to dismiss the volunteer.

## Step 3 – Possible Actions and Outcomes

- Aaron lets the CEO know what has happened so they can talk to the board member about what their board responsibilities are.
- Aaron listens to the board member and lets them know they will look into the situation. (It doesn't come up again.)
- Aaron listens to the board member and lets them know they will look into the situation. (The board member follows up and demands to know what happened.)
- Aaron listens to the board member and reiterates that the volunteer is entitled to their privacy.
- Aaron reminds the board member of the food pantry's screening processes and policies without compromising the volunteer's privacy.
- Aaron lets the volunteer know about the rumor.

Step 4 – Decide and test

Use CLICK

**Step 5 – Act with confidence,  
courage and professionalism**

# Moral Courage

“Moral courage is the quality of mind and spirit that enables one to face up to ethical dilemmas and moral wrongdoings firmly and confidently, without flinching or retreating.”

Rushworth Kidder  
Institute for Global Ethics

# “Exercising” Ethics

- Post the CCVA Values & Principles near your desk
- Discuss ethics at staff & volunteer orientations
- Use scenarios as a discussion starter
- Practice the decision-making process
- Devote time at staff or board meetings to focus on each ethical principle
- Find colleagues to serve as your “sounding board”

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Any questions?

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