CPL Resource

Leading Professional Practice Discussions

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice says Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) "understand the value of reflective practice and leadership development and how continuous professional learning supports their professional growth and contributes to improving the quality of early childhood education for children, families and communities" (Standard IV: B.3).

The College of Early Childhood Educators has developed this resource to support RECEs in leading planned, professional practice discussions using the College's scenarios and case studies. Collaborative discussions, reflections and analysis of everyday practice situations are examples of professional learning activities that can support RECEs in reaching their Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Portfolio goals.

cece college of early childhood educators

cpl continuous professional learning

This guide can help RECEs to:

- Lead collaborative discussions using scenarios, case studies and the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice**.
- Engage in critical reflection and analysis with colleagues to share collective knowledge and experiences, solve problems, generate solutions, and improve professional practice.
- Participate in discussions based on reflective practice and ethical decision-making.

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* While this CPL resource has been designed to help RECEs lead group discussions, it's also useful when considering ideas and concepts within other College resources such as Professional Advisories, Practice Notes, the Standards Matter series, and *Connexions* articles. For other useful resources, go to: college-ece.ca/resources

The benefits of professional practice discussions

Collaborative professional practice discussions help RECEs to better understand their practice while developing a stronger connection to the collective values and standards that guide the profession.

Analyzing practice scenarios and case studies as a group allows RECEs to examine practice issues from different perspectives and apply the Code and Standards to their own professional practice. These discussions can highlight the realities, complexities, ambiguities, dilemmas and emotional tension associated with the daily professional decision-making and actions of RECEs.

Participating in professional practice discussions is also an example of a continuous professional learning activity that could support RECEs in completing a CPL Portfolio goal.

Keys to a Successful Group Discussion

- Facilitators and participants come prepared and listen actively
- Objectives for the activities are clear
- The group's expectations are met
- Everyone's ideas are considered
- Dialogue is respectful and guided by the group's inquiries

Facilitators should:

- Guide participants through the chosen practice scenario or case study, and the ethical dilemmas and reflective questions presented.
- Help participants connect ethical dilemmas to the Code and Standards and their own professional practice.
- Take an active, balanced role in the discussion.
- Create an inviting, welcoming and accessible environment that supports collaborative inquiry.
- Be objective, keep an open mind and maintain respectful dialogue.

Tips to consider:

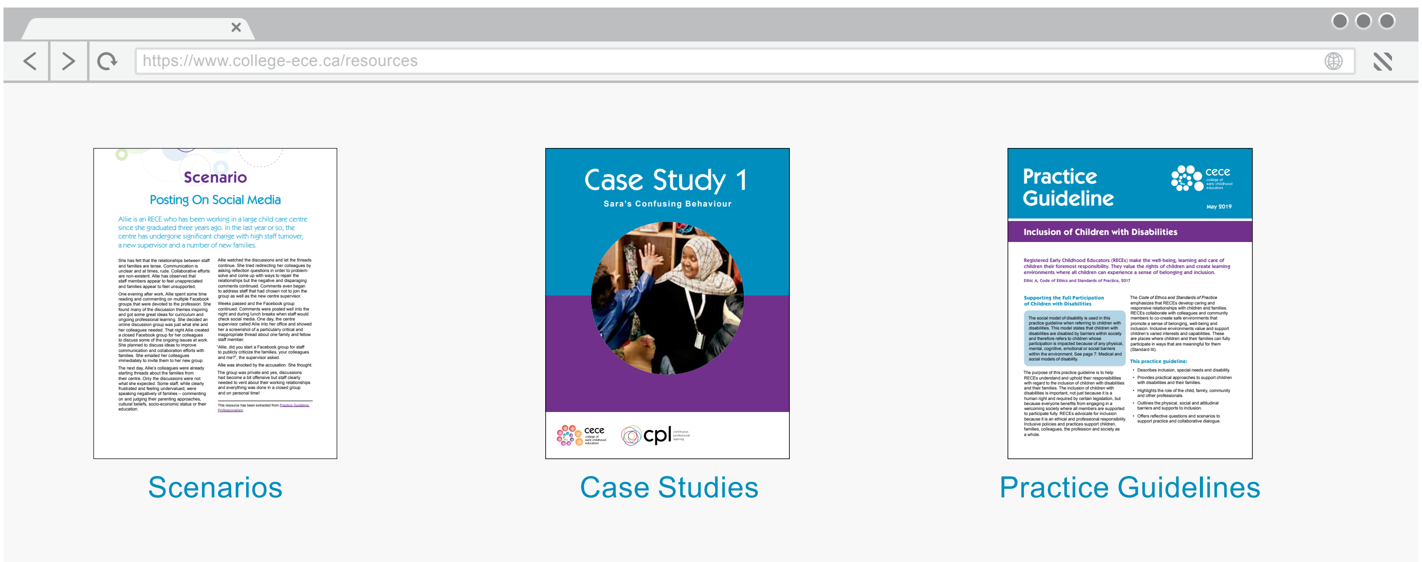
- Facilitators are not expected to have all the answers to the questions in the resources or questions that are generated by the group.
- Practice scenarios and case studies are written so there is not always one right answer or way to respond to an ethical dilemma or situation.
- Participants may have different reactions or opinions depending on their knowledge, experiences and realities.
- Group discussions can generate differing views but, when supported, these differences can generate deeper thinking and learning.
- Have fun! This is a chance to share ideas, reflect and enhance decision-making skills.

How to Facilitate a Group Discussion

1. Choose a College practice scenario or case study and become familiar with its contents

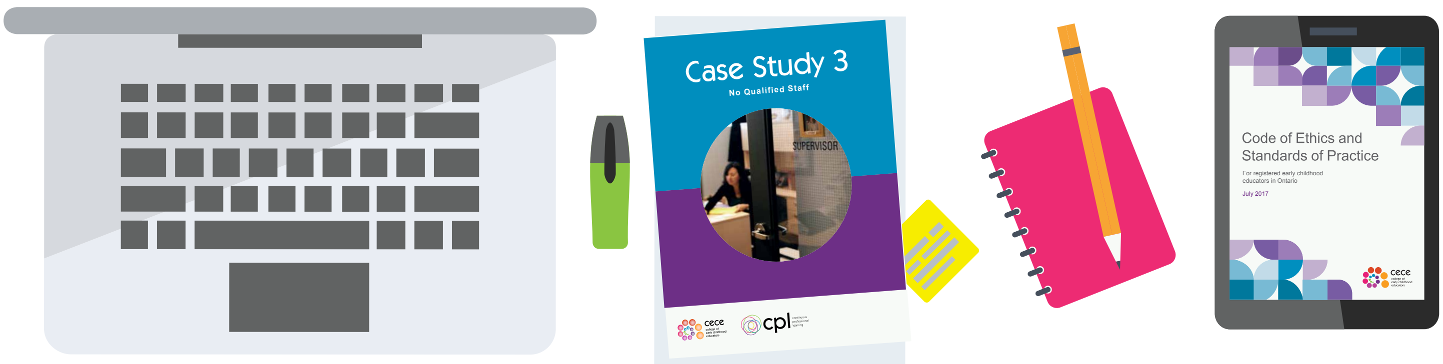
- Review different College resources, practice scenarios, case studies and the accompanying critical reflective questions to choose one that will work for the session.
- Highlight the practice issues for the group discussion.
- Refer to the Code and Standards to make connections between the issues in the scenario or case study and the ethical and professional standards.
- If questions are included with the resource, review and reflect on possible responses.

The following resources are available on the College's website at college-ece.ca/resources.



2. Gather materials and resources

- Provide the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and scenario or case study along with any additional handouts. If possible, ask participants to read the resource in advance of the discussion.
- Prepare electronic presentations and any other materials needed (pens, chart paper, markers etc.)



3. Lead the group discussion

The format of the session will depend on:

- The size of the group
- The time allowed
- The length and nature of the resource(s)
- The group's preferences

Sample discussion session

The following steps can be used as a general outline for a successful 1 to 1.5 hour discussion.

Agenda Item	Time
1. Welcome and setting expectations Welcome everyone and explain the purpose of the discussion. If the participants don't know each other, invite them to introduce themselves. Try a brief ice-breaker activity to help people feel more comfortable. Make sure everyone feels safe to express their opinions. Remind participants to maintain confidentiality if sharing lived experiences. **Facilitator Tips** Provide an agenda in advance so everyone is clear about the timing. Look for sample ice-breakers online or use the 'Pair and Share' ice-breaker at the end of this guide, which invites participants to talk about an ethical dilemma or recent issue they faced in their own professional practice.	10-15 mins.
2. Share the resource Distribute copies of the resources for the discussion and ask participants to read the material and highlight the most important details. **Facilitator Tip** If the group is discussing a longer document, ask participants to read the document before the session or focus on a specific aspect. In some sessions, participants may prefer to read the resource out loud together.	10-15 mins.
3. Large group opening discussion As a large group, discuss the general theme of the resource and invite participants to share their initial thoughts. Large group discussions allow participants to develop a shared understanding of the topic before they explore more thought-provoking questions. For example, identify the ethical dilemma. What are the key facts: who, what, where, when?	5-10 mins.
4. Breakout for small group discussion Divide participants into small groups of five or less. (If there are fewer than 10 participants in the discussion group, choose to do this activity together.) In small groups, work through the discussion questions included in the resource. Suggest that each group assign someone to take notes and report back to the larger group. Give the groups a five-minute wrap-up notice to organize their ideas. **Facilitator Tips** If there is limited time, assign each group a few questions and let the groups know how much time they have to discuss them. Encourage participants to think about the scenario from the perspectives of the different stakeholders involved.	15-30 mins.

Agenda Item	Time
5. Closing discussion Once participants have regrouped, give each small group an opportunity to report back and share some of their answers. As much as possible, encourage all participants to share their thoughts throughout the discussion. **Facilitator Tip** Write down big ideas or themes from the discussion and summarize them at the end.	15-20 mins.
6. Feedback and thank you Invite participants to share their feedback about the session or final thoughts about the discussion. Thank everyone who participated. **Facilitator Tip** If it's relevant to one of your professional learning goals, feedback from the participants could be a good source of documentation for your CPL Portfolio. The College also welcomes feedback to inform the development of future resources. Contact our Professional Practice department with any inquiries and comments: practice@college-ece.ca	5 mins.

Sample Ice-breaker: Pair and Share

Ask participants to think about and reflect on an event in their own professional practice that illustrates a professional dilemma, ambiguity, tension or a complex situation.

Give everyone time to jot down a few words describing the event, how it made them feel, and why this particular event came to mind.

When everyone has thought of an event related to their practice, invite them to find a partner and take turns talking about their stories, how it made them feel or what they might have done differently.

Remind participants to respect confidentiality and the privacy of any individuals in their reflections.

College of Early Childhood Educators

Telephone: 416 961-8558
Toll-free: 1 888 961-8558
Fax: 416 961-8772

Email: cpl@college-ece.ca
Website: college-ece.ca

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre : *Mener des discussions sur la pratique professionnelle*

If you require an accessible format and/or communication support, please contact the College at 1-888-961-8558 / communications@college-ece.ca.