

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: SWIMMING COACHES' PERCEPTIONS AND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY

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Abstract

Public awareness about sexual abuse and sexual harassment in sport has greatly increased over the last 10 years. In England, the sport of swimming has been especially affected, first because of several high profile cases of swimming coaches being convicted of sexual abuse, and secondly because the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has taken a proactive stance to protect children in swimming. Much of the previous research examining sexual exploitation in sport has been from the perspective of the athlete. This qualitative study was designed to examine swimming coaches' constructions of appropriateness about coach/swimmer sexual relationships. Nineteen coaches participated in either an elite, national, or county level focus group. Coaches discussed the appropriateness of coach/athlete relationships as presented in 7 vignettes. Analysis was conducted in accordance with the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and organised with the assistance of the software programme, QSR NVIVO. The coaches report that sex with an athlete below the legal age of consent is inappropriate. Coaches' perceptions regarding "legal" relationships vary according to whether the coach is talking about himself versus other coaches. The emergent themes influencing perceptions of appropriateness are: reducing opportunities for false allegations, the influence of public scrutiny, evaluating consequences of relationships, maintaining professional boundaries, and reluctance to judge fellow coaches. After completing the initial analysis, the emergent themes were further explored in individual unstructured interviews with three purposively selected coaches. One coach was in a long-term relationship with a swimmer, another served a prison term for child sexual abuse of a swimmer he coached, and the third had allegations against him dropped. The secondary analysis reveals that the themes about appropriateness relate to the broader issue of coaches' attempts to resolve perceived role conflict and role ambiguity that has arisen from increased awareness of child protection. This is examined with reference to how awareness of sexual abuse in sport has provoked coaches to question their roles and coaching boundaries. Results are discussed in relation to organisational psychology theories of role conflict and role ambiguity and directions for future research are suggested.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

~ Joy D. Bringer

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother,
Marian,
(12 August, 1908 to 8 September, 2000)
an independent, athletic, and intelligent woman who inspired me
to pursue my PhD.

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There are numerous people who have supported me in my efforts to complete this thesis. First, I would like to thank the Amateur Swimming Association and the Institute of Swimming Teachers and Coaches, who funded this project, as well as the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association and the swimming coaches whose support and time made this research possible. Steve Boocock, Josie Grange, Brian McGuinness, David Sparkes, and the ASA Legal Department were especially accommodating during the data collection stage. I am grateful to Kari Fasting, who organised the symposium on sexual harassment and abuse at the World Congress of Sport Psychology, where I was able to first present my findings to a large academic audience. I am also thankful for the constructive feedback offered by Barbara Barrett, Sandi Kirby, and Jenny Myers during the theoretical development of this thesis. I am extremely appreciative of my two supervisors, Celia Brackenridge and Lynne Johnston, who in addition to normal supervisor duties encouraged me to tutor child protection and qualitative software workshops. Tutoring these workshops has contributed significantly to this thesis and my professional development. Finally, I am grateful for the never-ending support of family and friends on both sides of the Atlantic.

Publications from this Thesis

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List of Acronyms

APA	American Psychological Association
ASA	Amateur Swimming Association
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
BPS	British Psychological Society
BSCA	British Swimming Coaches Association (now BSCTA)
BSCTA	British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (previously BSCA)
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CPSU	Child Protection in Sport Unit
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GMB	Britain's General Union
ISTC	Institute of Swimming Teachers and Coaches
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
POCA	Protection of Children Act 1999

Glossary of Grounded Theory and NVIVO Terms

Actions/Interactions	An attempt (by the participant) to modify the problem that is identified as the core category in a Grounded Theory study.
Attributes	Demographic type information that can be attached to documents or nodes in NVIVO.
Boolean	A method of searching data to create intersections (AND), unions (OR), differences (LESS), or negation (NOT).
Case Node	A node representing a specific instance of a particular type, in this thesis a case node was created for each focus group member.
Categories	Concepts representing phenomena.
Child Node	A node that is a subcategory of its parent node.
Conditions	The parts that make up the contextual context in which the core category is experienced.
Consequences	The outcomes resulting from experiencing the core category.
Core Category	The central theme that has emerged from the data analysis.
DataBite	A reference to an internal annotation or another computer file that can be attached to documents within NVIVO.
Dimensions	The range in which a property of a category can vary.
Free Nodes	A node that is not part of any hierarchical structure.
In Vivo Coding	The naming of a category by using the exact words of a participant.
Internal Annotation	A brief textual reference that is visible upon selection in an NVIVO document. This is often used for references to tone of voice or contextual information.
Modeller	An NVIVO tool for drawing conceptual models that have live links to the documents and nodes.
Node	The “container” in which notes and quotes pertaining to a category (or theme) are stored in NVIVO.
Parent Node	The higher order category of a child node.

Properties	Characteristics of a category.
Sets	An organisational tool in NVIVO for storing short cuts to a group of documents or nodes.
Sibling Node	A node that is of the same type and hierarchical level of another node.
Substantive Theory	Theory developed from a specific area of focus that is not necessarily generalisable to the larger population.
Theoretical Sampling	Collecting data from a participant (or in an area) that is specifically selected for characteristics that will allow for comparisons with the emerging theory.
Tree Nodes	Nodes that are ordered in a logical hierarchical structure.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Eitzen and Sage (1993) described sport as a microcosm of society. From this perspective it is not surprising to find abuse and exploitation within all levels of sport, including children's sport. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) identifies four types of child abuse: emotional, physical, sexual, and neglect. This thesis focuses mainly on sexual abuse in sport and how coaching in swimming has been affected by awareness of child protection. This chapter introduces the problem of sexual harassment and abuse in sport and sets out the purpose of this thesis. The detrimental effects of sexual harassment and abuse in general, and within sport specifically, are discussed with respect to society and to individuals. The history of the development of child protection measures in sport is presented with specific reference to how public awareness about sexual abuse has influenced policy development. This overview then narrows to focus on the sport of swimming. The purpose of the thesis is stated followed by a brief description of its structure.

Sexual harassment and abuse have been recognised problems in the workplace, schools, and residential homes for more than three decades (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999). Many professional policies highlight the potential for abusing positions of trust and forbid intimate relationships between, for example, doctors and patients, or psychologists and clients. Yet, abuse of power in the coach-athlete relationship has only recently been acknowledged.

Research examining sexual harassment in sport dates back to the mid-1980s. From this time, researchers have examined athletes' experiences of sexual harassment and abuse (Bowker, 1998; Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense, 1997; T. Crosset, 1988; Donnelly, Caspersen, Sergeant, & Steenhof, 1993; Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2000, in press; Holman, 1994; Kirby, 1995; Lackey, 1990; Leahy, Pretty, & Tenenbaum, 2001; Lenskyj, 1992a, 1992b; J. Myers & Barrett, 2002; Volkwein, Schnell, Sherwood, & Livezey, 1997; Yorganci, 1993).

The majority of these studies have provided valuable qualitative information about abuse and harassment in sport and have proved instrumental in demonstrating that sexual exploitation is a problem in sport. Prevalence studies in Canada (Kirby, 1995; Kirby, Greaves, & Hankivsky, 2000), Norway (Fasting et al., 2000), and Australia (Leahy et al., 2001; Leahy, Pretty, & Tenenbaum, 2002) have reported sexual *abuse* rates between 5% and 31%, and sexual *harassment* rates between 40% and 51% in sport. Some of the variance in these prevalence rates is due to definitional differences of harassment and abuse (see chapter 3).

It is known that even “less serious” sexual harassment can have serious negative consequences for the victim (e.g., depression, sleeplessness, persistent feelings of shame or guilt, loss of confidence; Stockdale, 1996). Research findings from sport (Brackenridge, 2001; Cense, 1997; Fasting, Brackenridge, & Walseth, 2001; Kirby et al., 2000) corroborate those from the workplace (Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Stockdale, 1996) which illustrate the devastating nature of sexual harassment and abuse. Even athletes not directly targeted for harassment may fear victimisation and, thus, experience the consequences of sexual harassment (Kirby & Wintrup, 2001).

Elite female Norwegian athletes who had experienced one of a range of unwanted sexual intrusions (such as sexually suggestive jokes or comments, ridicule, or stalking), reported loss of concentration, anger, irritability, confusion, and anxiety. Some women were affected for years after the initial incident and others left their sport to escape the harassment. The harassment and abuse also affected their self-esteem, body image and perceptions of and behaviour towards, other men and coaches (Fasting et al., 2001; Leahy et al., 2001). Although it has not yet been examined empirically, child sexual abuse in sport may put women at greater risk for revictimisation as adults, as is the case with child sexual abuse in general (Coid et al., 2001).

Although athletes are at the centre of research about sexual harassment, they are not the only stakeholders with a vested interest in the issue (Brackenridge, 2001). Parents play an important role in preventing abuse but have been shown to be overly trusting of coaches (Brackenridge, 1998). Coaches as abusers, bystanders, or nonoffenders are responsible for contributing to norms in sport. It is therefore

imperative that research is conducted with both working (active) and convicted coaches to enhance understanding of sexual abuse and harassment in sport. Two preliminary studies have examined coaches' and athletes' perceptions of sexual exploitation (Hassall, Johnston, Bringer, & Brackenridge, 2002; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001). Although these studies provide important information about what is and is not perceived as appropriate, the quantitative nature of these investigations does not allow for an understanding of *why* coaches approve or disapprove of certain coach/athlete interactions. These studies are discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

1.2 The Purpose of This Thesis

As explained above, research examining sexual abuse in sport is in its infancy; much of it has also been descriptive and atheoretical. A number of pathologically-based models from biology, psychology, and sociology have been proposed to explain sexual abuse in mainstream society (see reviews in Finkelhor, 1984; Morrison, Erooga, & Beckett, 1994). These models are often critiqued for being unidimensional and absolving perpetrator responsibility (e.g., Finkelhor, 1984; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). One exception is Finkelhor's model (1984) which is credited with addressing these limitations by incorporating individual, situational, and cultural influences in a social psychological model that examines four preconditions of sexual abuse (e.g., Morrison et al., 1994). This model (see Figure 1.1) suggests that sexual abuse occurs when perpetrators are motivated to sexually abuse, then overcome internal and external inhibitors, and finally overcome resistance from the victim. Whilst this model is a useful heuristic device, Finkelhor (1984) and others (Colton & Vanstone, 1998; Fisher, 1994) acknowledge that theory development is still needed, especially concerning perpetrators. This is especially true in sport. According to one study (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001) coaches' perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour were in line with legal definitions. However, 2.6% of coaches admitted to engaging in illegal sexual relationships with athletes. The above study provides initial data about coaches'

perceptions of appropriate behaviour, but it does not provide insight into how these attitudes are constructed by coaches.

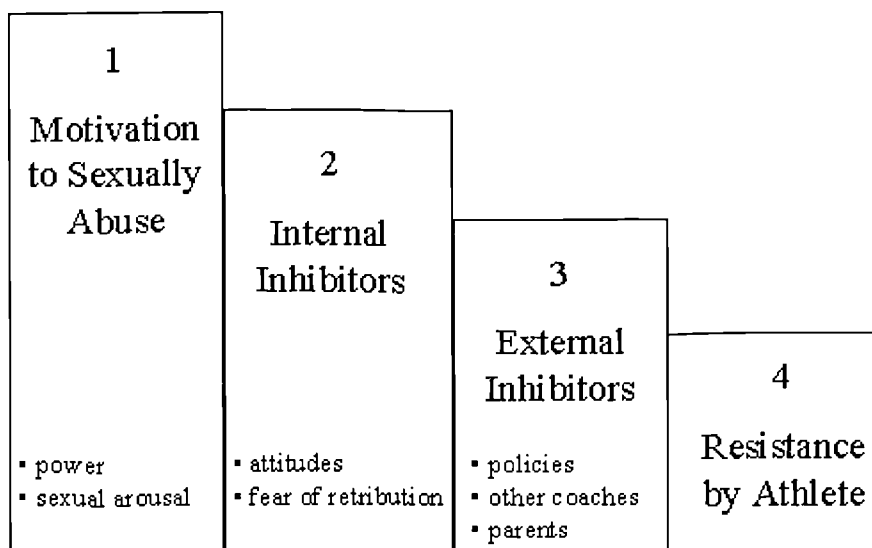


Figure 1.1. Preconditions of sexual abuse in sport (adapted from Finklehor, 1984).

Researchers have suggested that the culture of sport, specifically the power invested in the coach, facilitates an environment conducive to, and tolerant of, sexual exploitation (Brackenridge, 1997a; Donnelly & Sparks, 1997; McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000b). Some researchers (Bowker, 1998; Brackenridge, 1997a; Donnelly et al., 1993) have hypothesised that sexual abuse in sport is not perpetrated only by those with a sexual interest in children but also by coaches who have developed a “predator” mentality, and that abusive attitudes may be normative in some sports. As shown in institutional situations, attitudes of non-abusing authority figures can also influence the likelihood of abuse being reported (Green, 2001). Therefore, the initial aim of this thesis was to understand coaches’ perceptions of appropriateness in coach/athlete intimate or sexual interactions. (Throughout this thesis the terms intimate relationships and sexual relationships are used interchangeably.) According to the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) perspective, the central category that emerges from the data should dictate the focus of the research project. Thus the aim of this thesis

became, how the role of the swimming coach is being affected by child protection policies. This thesis discusses the results with reference to both aims.

The research questions are examined from a multidisciplinary perspective but predominantly social psychology. The thesis could have been approached from a number of deterministic perspectives within psychology. For example, I could have examined differences between active coaches and convicted perpetrators in sport in terms of their emotional congruence with children, cognitive distortions about abusive situations, denial, and deviancy (e.g., Beech, 1998; Blumenthal, Gudjonsson, & Burns, 1999; Fisher, Beech, & Browne, 1999; Keenan & Ward, 2000; Swaffer, Hollin, Beech, Beckett, & Fisher, 1999). This perspective, however, examines abuse as pathological and does not account for the influence of cultural norms. The results of this type of study would have been most meaningful to practitioners working with or investigating offenders in sport. The practical aim of this study is, however, was to contribute to an understanding of coaches' perceptions of appropriateness in a way that might directly inform the education of coaches. Rather than attempting to inform clinical practice, my aim is to inform coaching practice. The scholarly aim of the thesis is to contribute to theory development in the area of sexual exploitation in sport.

This task could have been undertaken from a feminist perspective. Feminist and profeminist studies of abuse and harassment have provided a much needed examination of gender relations and power issues within society and sport and of how particular discourses allow abuse and harassment to occur (Kelly, Regan, & Burton, 1995; McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000a; Stanko, 1988, 1990; Summers, 2000; Viinikka, 1989). I support a feminist ideology but, in this thesis, I do not take a feminist approach to gender and power relations. The Grounded Theory approach is used, instead, to allow interpretation of the emerging data to drive the research focus.

1.3 Summary Purpose

A shared aim of those working with sexual offenders and those implementing child protection procedures for sport is to prevent further sexual

abuse. In order to understand sport coaches who sexually abuse it is imperative to understand how the subculture in which they work affects the decisions they make and how current policies are influencing coaches' perceptions and behaviours. UK Sport, the governing body responsible for developing elite sport in the United Kingdom, expects that:

... by 2012 the practice of coaching in the UK will be elevated to a profession acknowledged as central to the development of sport and the fulfillment of individual potential ... [and that] ... coaching will have: professional and ethical values and inclusive and equitable practice ...
(UK Sport, 2000, p. 5)

If sport governing bodies are to succeed in their aim of increasing professional standards for coaches, it is important to understand coaches' current perceptions of appropriateness. This study is conducted within the sport of swimming and only examines male coaches. Its purpose is to explore coaches' constructions of appropriateness with regard to coach-athlete sexual relationships. The second purpose emerged from the data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) while exploring coaches' constructions of appropriateness. This second purpose is to examine how coaches perceive that child protection policies in sport are affecting their role as a swimming coach.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The overall structure of this thesis is presented in Figure 1.2. One of the characteristics of using Grounded Theory for a thesis is that it does not follow the conventional postpositivistic tradition of sequentially moving from literature review, research proposal, data collection, analysis, results, to discussion and conclusions. With Grounded Theory, the study evolves through an iterative process (see chapters 5 and 7) that requires the researcher to move back and forth between data collection, data analysis, and literature review. A thesis, however, is a linear document which cannot readily illustrate these dynamic activities. The arrows and double arrows in Figure 1.2 are meant to represent the iterative nature of the thesis.

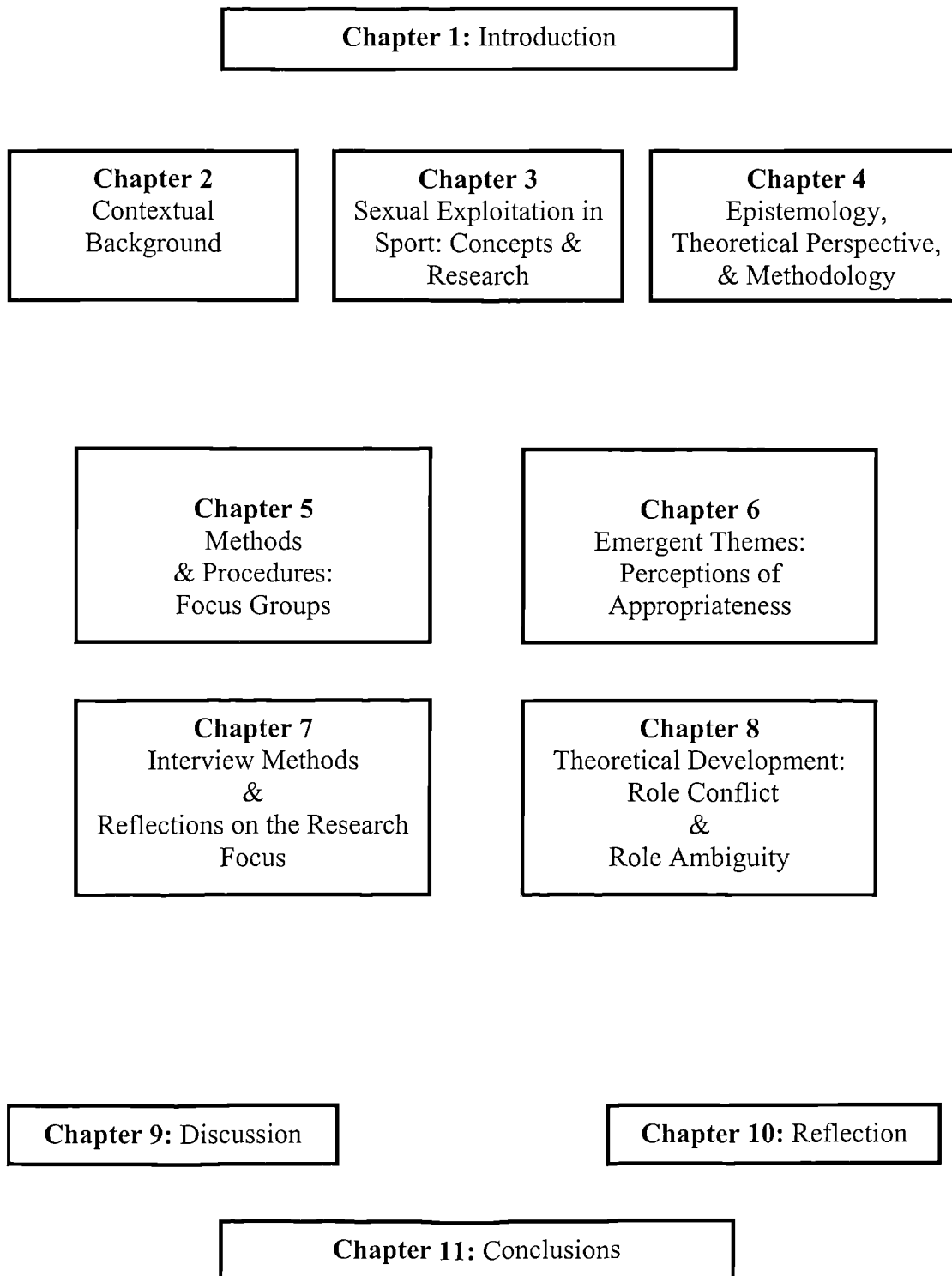


Figure 1.2. Structural diagram of the thesis.

The contents of chapters 2-11 are now briefly presented. Chapter 2 sets out the social context of child protection in sport. This chapter is included because it depicts the social milieu at the time of this study. This milieu is most certainly reflected in coaches' perceptions of appropriateness and in the way they perceive child protection measures to be affecting the role of the coach. The attention given to sexual abuse in sport in the United Kingdom makes it very unlikely that the results of this study would be replicated in another country, such as the United States, where there is, as yet, relatively little awareness on this topic. Situating this study in its social context is intended to allow readers in the future to judge the relevance of the study to their particular circumstances.

Chapter 3 provides a brief review of the many approaches to studying sexual harassment and abuse. First, definitions of abuse, harassment and exploitation are examined with special attention to the complexities of definitions. Next, the literature on sexual exploitation in sport is reviewed. Prevalence studies as well as in-depth qualitative studies are examined and linked to the purpose of the thesis.

Chapter 4 provides a rationale for the importance of declaring a research paradigm to the research consumers. The epistemological choices available in the current study are explored, and the reasons for choosing a constructivist epistemology are explained. This choice is situated within the current paradigms debate within sport science (Ingham, Blissmer, & Wells Davidson, 1999; Sparkes, 1998, 2001). A brief review of how qualitative methods have been used in sport psychology is followed by an explanation and critique of the chosen methodology, Grounded Theory. This chapter sets the stage for the next chapter on research design.

In chapter 5, I describe the methods and procedures for my first type of data collection: focus groups. Ethical implications of conducting research on sensitive topics are explored, as are strategies for reducing potential harm that may be caused by conducting such research. The ethical dilemmas and resulting decisions for this research are declared. The rationale for the design of the research is provided, followed by an overview of how the data are analysed. This is explained with examples from the data using QSR NVIVO, a computer software programme designed to assist in the organisation of qualitative data analysis. This chapter is

provided for transparency so that the reader can understand exactly how the themes presented in chapter 6 were developed.

The results from the exploratory investigation of male swimming coaches' perceptions of appropriateness of coach-athlete sexual relationships are presented in chapter 6. Sexual relationships with athletes under the age of 16 years old are unanimously considered to be inappropriate. With regard to sexual relationships with athletes *above* the age of consent for heterosexual sex, opinions range from "totally inappropriate" to "it's a question of civil liberties." These results are discussed in relation to how coaches have simultaneously adapted their own behaviours in the face of public scrutiny and are reluctant to restrict the rights of their fellow coaches.

In chapter 7, I detail the methods for the second type of data collection: individual interviews. This chapter includes a reflective account of how and why I change the focus of my analysis from constructions of appropriateness to role conflict and role ambiguity. Passages from my reflective journal are included to illustrate the personal struggle involved in the change of focus as well as providing a rationale for this decision. The chapter concludes with additional detail about the use of the paradigm model as an analytical tool in Grounded Theory.

Chapter 8 provides the results of the focus group and interview analysis that relate to role conflict and role ambiguity. Examples are provided from both the data and from analytical memos to justify the creation of themes and the links between categories. Role conflict and role ambiguity are defined, and the conditions, actions/interactions affecting experiences of conflict and ambiguity are discussed in detail.

The findings about perceptions of appropriateness and role conflict and role ambiguity are discussed together in chapter 9. Perceptions of appropriateness are discussed in relation to two other studies in sport that have examined coaches' perceptions of appropriateness. Role conflict and role ambiguity are discussed in relation to the literature on organisational psychology that examines these concepts. Specific references are made to coaching effectiveness, coach education, burnout from coaching and relevant theories.

Chapter 10 provides reflections on my research journey over the past three and a half years. My personal values and assumptions that influenced the construction of knowledge in this thesis are discussed openly in order to situate myself within the research context. Trials and tribulations of the research process, from grant writing to using Grounded Theory and researching a sensitive topic, are reflected upon. This chapter concludes with a short section on changes I would make if I were to start this thesis again with the knowledge and experience accumulated over the course of my studies.

Chapter 11 concludes this thesis with practical implications and recommendations for further research. Suggestions are offered on how individual coaches and coach educators may reduce role conflict and role ambiguity. The discussion about backlash, started in chapter 2, is continued here with specific advice for reducing the potential for a backlash to child protection measures in sport. Limitations of the research are examined before concluding with future research directions. The formatting of references and citations follows the fifth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA; American Psychological Association, 2001) which is the standard for publishing in the discipline of psychology.

Chapter 2: Contextual Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the contextual background of the child protection movement in sport, with particular reference to the prevention of sexual abuse and harassment. First, an historical overview of the child protection movement is presented. This is followed by a discussion of the social, political, and legal influences on child protection more generally, with special emphasis given to their influence on sport. The chapter concludes with a review of the backlash against, or opposition to, the child protection movement.

2.2 Historical and Cultural Context

From an historical perspective, practices that cause children physical and psychological harm are not new; what has changed is how these practices have been recognised and socially defined and evaluated over the centuries (Archard, 1998; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999). Children in Europe have been variously depicted in art and literature across the centuries, for example, as miniature adults, innocent angels, or corrupted by original sin (Aries, 1973). In the 19th Century public interest in the rearing of children increased (Aries, 1973; Steedman, 1990), and in 1889 the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) was founded in the United Kingdom. The NSPCC has long been one of the most influential voices for children through social work, fund-raising, and advocacy work to change public policy and reduce cruelty to children. Legislation in the 20th and 21st Centuries reflects this increase in public interest in protecting children from harm (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Key Events of the Child Protection and Sexual Harassment Movement in the UK and the USA

1880s - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children formed
1906 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incest Act of 1906 forbid penetrated sexual acts between immediate blood relations
1920- 1930s - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of Women, Children and Young Persons Act 1920 set minimum age for those working in industrial contexts • Children and Young Person Act, 1933 (amended by the Children (Protection at Work) Regulations in 1998) set maximum working hours for 13-15 yr olds
1950s - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Offences Act 1956 set the maximum punishment for sex with a girl under the age of 13 to life imprisonment
1960s - USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kempe et al.(1962) - Journal article describing signs and symptoms of child abuse
1970s - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurgence of sexual abuse awareness • Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
1980s - USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge Clarence Thomas accused of sexual harassment • Legal definition of sexual harassment established • Sexual harassment policy documents written for the workplace • Sexual harassment research increases
1980s - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children Act 1989 promoted child welfare and gave children the legal right to express their views about their upbringing • United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children have the right to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation

Awareness of child abuse has increased significantly since 1962 when it was identified by the medical profession (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, & Silver, 1962) and consequently became a research interest. The feminist movement also contributed to a decreased tolerance for child abuse as women gained a stronger voice in society (see, for example, Driver & Droisen, 1989). From a social constructionist perspective, something becomes a “social problem” as individuals and groups make claims against a condition which they perceive as unacceptable. The condition emerges as a “social problem” as the larger society supports the claims being made (Toch, 1971). The involvement of the state in what some consider ‘private’ matters, however, is still controversial today as evidenced by the recent debate over the physical discipline of children (e.g., Trumbull, 2000; Waterson, 2000). For example, the Scottish parliament is currently considering

legislation to ban corporal punishment of children under the age of 3 years but in England and Wales the parliament is not yet convinced of the need to withdraw the Victorian concept of “reasonable chastisement” (Hinsliff, 2002; Seenan, 2002).

The social construction of child abuse is further demonstrated by examining definitions of child sexual abuse. The legal age for consensual sex varies from country to country and has decreased several times in the last 50 years within the United Kingdom (see Table 2.2; Home Office, 2000b). Whether sexual exploration between children of a similar age is considered “natural” or “deviant” depends upon culturally-specific views of sexuality. Societal norms will always be challenged by one group or another as different groups have their own attitudes and beliefs about rights, responsibilities, and self-determination (Terry, Hogg, & White, 2000). Societal norms ultimately influence definitions of consent, child, harassment, and abuse (see also chapter 3).

Table 2.2 Changes in the Legal Age for Consensual Sex from 1956-2000

	1956	1967	1994	2000
England and Wales				
Heterosexual	18	16	16	16
Homosexual	illegal	21	18	16
Scotland				
Heterosexual			16	16
Homosexual			18	16
Northern Ireland				
Heterosexual			17	17
Homosexual			18	17

Sensationalised media reports of sexual victimisation have arguably raised public awareness and influenced the social construction of child sexual abuse. (See chapter 4 for a discussion of social constructionism.) A highly publicised story of Sarah Payne, an 8-year old girl who was kidnapped, sexually assaulted, and murdered in England during the summer of 2000 (Oliver, 2001), captured the indignation of most citizens and the resulting outcry could be described as “moral panic” (Bright, 2000; Kelner, 2001). Moral panic, as described by Brackenridge (2001, p. 11), is “a response to perceived threats to society, usually fuelled by media representations, leading to a rapid escalation of public concern.” In the aftermath of Sarah Payne’s

murder, a public debate took place about whether England and Wales should adopt a law similar to Megan's Law in the United States which "authorises the release of sex offender registration information to the public" (Lovell, 2001, p. 11).

One tabloid newspaper, in its "Name and Shame" campaign, published pictures and names of alleged paedophiles (Bright, 2000). Violent protests ensued in which toddlers were seen holding signs with slogans such as, "hang all paedophiles" and innocent misnamed individuals were targeted. One physician's home was attacked when a vigilante mistakenly understood *paediatrician* to mean *paedophile*. Such reactions illustrate the potential for social unrest when information about alleged and convicted paedophiles is made readily available to the public. On the other hand, it can be argued that individuals have the right to know if their children are in danger from neighbours with a history of child sexual abuse. Although it is an interesting social issue, the focus of this thesis is not on the rights of the individual versus the role of the state in protecting social order. The salience of this debate for this thesis is simply that media coverage of sexual abuse cases has increased general public awareness (sports coaches included) of childhood sexual abuse.

2.3 Legal Context

Legal parameters influence interpretations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by setting a minimum standard at a given time. This leaves considerable scope for engaging in behaviours that are legal, but not necessarily in the best interests of others. Thus, organisations (e.g., coaching unions) may enact codes of conduct holding their members to higher standards.

Legislation sometimes differs between England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. The following discussion on legislation focuses on England and Wales, because the coaches who participated in this study were working in England at the time of the study.

Legislation in England and Wales, where the age for sexual consent is 16, has recently been modified to reflect the vulnerability of 16 and 17 year olds to the power of someone who is in a position of trust over them. From 30 November 2000 it became "an offence for a person aged 18 or over to engage in sexual activity with

or directed towards a person under that age if he is in a position of trust in relation to that person” (Home Office, 2000b, Chapter 44, Section 1.) For the purpose of this Act, position of trust is defined as anyone providing regular care, training, supervision, or sole charge of a young person in one of four situations: mandated institutional detainment and care, state authorised residential care, hospital, or full-time education (see Appendix A for full definition). The legislation does not specifically define a sports coach as someone in a position of trust; however, earlier guidance issued by the government specifically advises sports coaches against entering into sexual relationships with 16 and 17 year olds and vulnerable adults (Home Office, 1999).

It could be argued that government is still reluctant to mandate and monitor such relationships in sport. As sport governing bodies are found to be failing in their abilities to self-police and are counting more on government funding, government intervention is likely to increase (Brackenridge, 2001). Currently, the government has only offered guidance against such relationships. In clearly defining sport in the guidance, but excluding it in the legislation, the government is potentially increasing confusion for coaches and others who are trying to comply with government recommendations. Also working against sport organisations is the mass of legislation regarding child protection, data protection, and employment rights in England and Wales. This has created an onerous task for those running a sports club in trying to determine what can be done legally to protect children. Lack of resources has further complicated the application of protection measures.

In the absence of legal clarity, many officials in sport place their faith in criminal record checks (also called police checks, background checks, or vetting) in order to screen out potential abusers in sport. The Protection of Children Act (POCA) 1999 was established with the aim of providing a central resource, applicable to multiple agencies, for identifying those people deemed unsuitable to work with children (Department of Health, 2000) and placing them on the newly developed POCA List. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB 2001), which became operational in March 2002, serves as a “one stop shop” for organisations to check prospective employees against the POCA List and List 99 (the Department of Education and Employment’s list of those banned from working with children).

Furthermore, it mandates child care organisations to refer those unsuitable to work with children to the Secretary of State for addition to the List, and it forbids child care organisations from employing anyone on the list to work with children. For sport, this Act, and the development of the CRB, facilitates police background checks being run on sports coaches, something which has been advocated in the past but which has been difficult to execute because of the number of agencies potentially involved, the voluntary status of many sports clubs, and the cost of checks.

2.4 Swimming Context

2.4.1 Awareness of Abuse in Swimming

Brackenridge (2001) argues that sport administrators have, for a long time, resisted any critical appraisal because of a general public perception that sport is inherently good. Sport psychologists and sport sociologists from the 1980s onwards challenged the popular notion that sport builds character and have shown that the sport participation can actually *encourage* maladaptive behaviours (e.g., disordered eating (Thompson & Sherman, 1993), drug abuse (Voy & Deeter, 1991), antisocial behaviours (Benedict, 1998; T. W. Crosset, Benedict, & McDonald, 1995), violent aggression (McKay et al., 2000b), and unfair play (Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995; C. Jones & McNamee, 2000)). Whilst it has become more acceptable to study the undesirable effects of sport, acceptance of research into sexual abuse in sport has been more gradual. Institutional resistance to examining sexual exploitation in sport was clearly demonstrated, when in the 1990s, Brackenridge had received approval to conduct a prevalence study of sexual exploitation of elite athletes in the United Kingdom and then was suddenly blocked from actually conducting the study (Brackenridge, 2001). With greater media coverage of sexual exploitation in sport, sport governing bodies are becoming more accepting of the need for research. Already, one of the main remits of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), launched in 2001 and funded by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Sport England, is to commission research (NSPCC, 2000).

It took at least one high profile case before the sport of swimming, and sport more generally, was willing to tackle child protection issues. A timeline of key events influencing the development of the child protection movement in swimming is shown in Table 2.3. This reactive approach is typical of organisations that adhere to the notion of sport being inherently good (Brackenridge, 2001). In September 1992, Paul Hickson, Great Britain swimming coach for the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games, was arrested under allegations of indecently assaulting female swimmers aged 11 to 19 years. He fled to France before his scheduled sentencing in 1993 and was re-arrested in December 1994, upon his return to England. In 1995, he was found guilty of rape and indecent assault, occurring between 1976 and 1991, and was sentenced to 17 years in prison. After this, the sport of swimming could no longer deny that sport was immune to sexual exploitation.

Prior to 1995, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) did not have a child protection policy and, despite concerns being raised about Hickson's behaviour prior to the 1988 Olympic Games, the ASA took no action on child protection. The social climate that relied on legal age of consent as the minimum standard for appropriateness in sexual relationships enabled the ASA to 'look the other way'. This attitude was reflected by the ASA Director of Swimming at the time of Hickson's conviction who said:

I distinctly remember asking the question of under-age sex - were any under age? - and they said no. Although it is not to be condoned, there is a big difference between what is illegal and what is not. They were categorical that there was nothing to do with under-age children. (Spencer, 1995)

This quote highlights the influence of legal parameters in defining appropriateness. The Director recognises that sex between coaches and swimmers should "not be condoned." Yet, by not counselling Hickson about his behaviour, the behaviour was condoned. Following the 1988 Olympic Games, Hickson was not re-appointed as Olympic coach, and no further action was taken by the ASA until his arrest in 1992.

Table 2.3 Key Events in Child Protection Development Within Sport (Focusing on Swimming)

1986 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Association of National Coaches (now Sports Coach UK) drafts first Code of Ethics and Conduct
1986-1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early descriptive research reporting survivors experiences of harassment and abuse in sport Code of Ethics and Conduct developed for national coaches in the UK
1992 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympic swimming coach, Paul Hickson, arrested (convicted in 1995) for sexual abuse against female teenage swimmers
1993 - Republic of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympic swimming coach George Gibney charged with 27 counts of indecent assault - case dropped on a legal technicality
1995 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) receives negative reactions from the public for its handling of the Hickson case and loses £1,000,000 in sponsorship ASA develops child protection policy in conjunction with NSPCC ASA makes constitutional changes allowing the executive board to dismiss accused coaches Sports Coach UK (formerly NCF) pilots first Good Practice and Child Protection course ASA establishes Child Protection Working Party to guide policy development
1996 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA launches new code of practice and child protection policies and procedures Changes in ASA law to accommodate child protection policies and procedures Sport England hold by-invitation only meeting to discuss action on sexual harassment and abuse and then commission Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education to host first national child protection in sport conference
1996 - Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence statistics first presented on sexual harassment experienced by Canadian National Team Athletes (Kirby & Greaves, 1996)
1997 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming coaches union expanded to include teachers and subsequently renamed British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA) The BSCTA joins forces with the Britain's General Union (GMB) Sports Coach UK launches child protection policy implementation workshops aimed at sport governing body leaders
1997 - Republic of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympic swimming coach Derry O'Rourke sentenced to 12 years in prison for unlawful carnal knowledge, indecent assault, and sexual assault of swimmers
1998 - Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-harassment in sport campaign starts
1998 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA turns down grant proposal for research student to examine child protection in swimming ASA launch Swimline a helpline linked to NSPCC's Childline
1998 - Republic of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government funding for swimming suspended for 16 months after the Murphy Report reveals that swimming officials had knowledge of O'Roarke's abuse and did nothing to stop it
1999 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA revises child protection policies and procedures Central Council for Physical Recreation seminar on child protection NSPCC seminar on child protection in sport Child Protection in Sport Task Force established and action plan produced proposing the development of the Child Protection in Sport Unit
2000 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA award a £15,000 grant for this project on swimming coaches
2001 - Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results from a prevalence study of childhood sexual abuse in sport first presented (Leahy et al., 2001)
2001 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA Child Protection Working Party creates a sub group, Child Protection Strategy Working Group, to meet more frequently and report back to the larger group National level coach, Mike Drew, convicted for indecent assault against teenage male swimmers Child Protection in Sport Unit launched (funded by NSPCC and Sport England) All national governing bodies receiving government funding required to have child protection policy and action plan
2002 - UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASA training regional and county level child protection officers

Two high profile cases of sexual allegations against Olympic coaches in the Republic of Ireland illustrate the reactive response taken to child protection. In 1993, George Gibney was charged with 27 counts of indecent assault but the case was dropped on a legal technicality. He resigned from swimming and fled the country after his alleged survivors told their story in the *Sunday Tribune*. In December 1997, Derry O'Rourke pleaded guilty to charges of unlawful carnal knowledge, indecent assault, and sexual assault of swimmers spanning from 1976 to 1992. O'Rourke was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Allegations that swimming officials knew about O'Rourke and Gibney's abuses, but did nothing to intervene, sparked a full investigation titled the *Murphy Report*. Government funding in Ireland, suspended from February 1998 to June 1999, was reinstated following a restructuring of the governing body for Irish swimming under the condition that the revised Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland be implemented.

Although the ASA's child protection policy was initially reactive, their continued investment in child protection was vindicated when Mike Drew was reported as a suspected abuser. Drew, a high ranking official within the British Swimming Coaches Association at the time of Hickson's conviction, spoke out against child sexual abuse, perhaps to take attention away from his own abusive behaviour. In the summer of 2001, he was convicted of sexually abusing male swimmers in his care. Drew's case exemplifies the advancement of child protection measures in the ASA and the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA, formerly BSCA) since Hickson's case. Both organisations developed child protection policies in the wake of the Hickson case. These reactive responses provided the structural system that allowed Drew to be apprehended. The BSCTA became aware that Drew may have been trying to conceal something when they realised they did not have an accurate residential address on file for him. He had always insisted that all correspondence be handled through the swimming club. It was also revealed that the address the ASA held for Drew, as stated on his child protection self-declaration form, was invalid. The police investigation was initiated when a concerned parent telephoned Swimline, a child protection help line established after the Hickson turmoil.

It is important to account for the social milieu at the time of this study because it certainly affected the attitudes of the coaches in the study towards the issues of sexual relationships and child protection in sport. The case of Sarah Payne was on the front pages of the newspapers at the beginning of the data collection period; some of the participants even referred to the moral panic resulting from the 'Name and Shame' campaign associated with the Sarah Payne case. A year later, when some of the individual research interviews were being conducted, an episode of the television programme 'Brass Eye' attempted to satirise the media's portrayal of child sexual abuse and to demonstrate that celebrities should research topics before publicly advocating certain views. The attempt failed and many people, including the ministers for Education and Employment, Culture, Media, and Sport, denounced the show as providing support for paedophiles. Although none of the research participants mentioned this particular programme, the public debate surrounding it is likely to have influenced their awareness and perhaps also some of their responses. The Sarah Payne case has, arguably, been one of the more sensationalised cases in the United Kingdom media to date.

Over the past 10 years, greater public awareness of child sexual abuse in sport has moved the issue to the forefront of policy makers. Swimming in England has progressed from having no child protection policies at all, to the ASA being one of the sport governing bodies leading the way in child protection policy development and implementation. The intended purpose of child protection policies is to create a safer environment in which children can enjoy sport.

2.4.2 Governing Body Regulations

The politics of sport more generally, and of swimming specifically, are important conditions that influence how coaches respond to child protection measures. Reflecting more modern and professional organisations, sport governing bodies are becoming increasingly more accountable to their members and to the government (Brackenridge, 2001). The onset of Lottery funding for sport has allowed standards to be raised through the setting of conditions for funding. Through this incentive method the government, in control of lottery monies, has

also increased its control over the voluntary sport sector. At the governing body level there is now an increasing emphasis on ethics in sport, as demonstrated by the amount of funding aimed at reducing illegitimate drug use in sport. This section specifically examines the impact of policy development, code of conduct investigations, public scrutiny, and professional development as conditions related to role conflict and role ambiguity in coaching.

Although the ASA was highly criticised for not acting on information it allegedly held about Hickson before his arrest, the organisation has since become a leader in child protection measures for sport. David Sparkes, the Chief Executive for the ASA, took a personal interest committing resources to child protection policy development and training. With over 250,000 members in the year 2000, of whom 90% were under 16 years old (Gray, 2000), the ASA could not afford to neglect child protection measures. The Hickson case also resulted in a loss of £1,000,000 in sponsorship funding. From a business perspective, the ASA needed to assure parents and sponsors that swimming was a safe sport for children.

In 1996, a year after Hickson's conviction, the ASA (with assistance from the NSPCC) published its first child protection documents. Since the introduction of the first policy document in 1996, the ASA has been working to develop better procedures to help fulfil its responsibility for promoting the welfare of children within swimming. Using the code of ethics for the Industry Lead Body for Sport and Recreation as a template, the ASA first published its own code of ethics in 1996, aimed at swimming teachers, coaches, officials, and other people involved in the sport. With a code of ethics in place, the ASA had established a set of standards for its members and, for the first time, members could raise a complaint under ASA Law against any member who allegedly violated the code. At the same time, changes were made to ASA Law which gave the executive committee powers of dismissal and withdrawal of ASA qualifications (e.g., coaching, officiating). To increase compliance with ASA child protection procedures, ASA Law 63.5 mandated that affiliated clubs must adopt the ASA child protection procedures and that club members must comply with them.

In addition to the child protection procedures, the ASA designed a database for all swimming coaches and helpers who, by virtue of their position, might have

one-to-one private contact with a child, or opportunities for physical contact, handling, or support of children. This database, called the ASA Child Protection List, was designed as a central resource for advising clubs about individuals who, because of criminal conviction or other such complaints, were not suitable to work with children. Critically, this list, and others like it, only protected children from individuals who *already* had convictions. Hickson and Drew both perpetrated abuse for 15 to 30 years before being apprehended. Although the database of abusers will not prevent those without convictions from coaching, it is likely to discourage some potential abusers from choosing swimming as an activity for gaining access to young people. Unfortunately, this strategy encourages people to focus on abusers infiltrating sport, rather than recognising and eradicating abusive practices within sport.

To cope with the task of developing its initial child protection policies and procedures, the ASA set up a Child Protection Working Party. At first, this comprised swimming club members with a background in child welfare, together with representatives from the ASA Legal Affairs office and ASA Customer Services Department. It was broadened in subsequent years to include a representative from the swimming coaches and teachers trade union, BSCTA, and the Institute of Swimming Teachers and Coaches (ISTC; the teaching organisation associated with the ASA), together with an independent child protection officer. The members had backgrounds from social work, law, police, education, and swimming teaching and coaching. The working party was refined over the years, and meets twice a year. As of May 2001, a smaller Child Protection Strategy Working Group was developed as an additional committee that could meet more frequently and report back to the larger group.

In addition to providing guidance on policy, the Child Protection Working Party helped to establish other practical measures to assist the ASA in child protection. For example, in 1998 the ASA launched Swimline, a free help line that anyone with concerns can ring and they are then either connected immediately to the NSPCC help line or can choose to wait for a return call from a trained counsellor in swimming. The working party discussed and issued guidance on emerging concerns such as video and zoom photography of children and publication

of children's photographs on swimming web sites. In collaboration with the NSPCC, the working party created and published an information pack titled 'Safe Sport Away' to assist members from any sport in organising trips (ASA/NSPCC, 2001). These practical measures demonstrate the ASA's commitment to making sport safe for children. For coaches, these measures are a constant reminder that the ASA is interested in protecting the welfare of children.

The ASA has also served as a leader to other sport organisations that have only recently begun to consider child protection in sport. Representatives from the ASA have spoken at child protection seminars such as one sponsored by Sport England in October 2000 (Gray, 2000), and have openly invited representatives from other sport governing bodies to observe the Child Protection Working Party meetings. Such openness has allowed individuals in charge of child protection from sports such as cricket, canoeing, and athletics to learn from the ASA's experience and openly share good practice information.

Whilst the ASA is seen mainly as an organisation for the development of swimming and swimmers, the British Swimming Coaches Association (BSCA) was developed in 1965 specifically to support swimming coaches, and subsequently swimming teachers, when it became the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA) in 1997. In the same year, the coaches association gained significant representation and power when it joined the Britain's General Union (GMB). Joining the GMB meant that the BSCTA would be better funded, able to provide legal support for members, and employ a full-time trained representative to deal with employment disputes in swimming.

One role for the BSCTA has been to offer guidance to coaches on how to protect themselves from false accusations of abuse or wrongdoing. After the Hickson case, and following unfounded allegations against a member, the coaches union offered the following practical advice to coaches (BSCA, n.d.):

- be professional in your approach to parents and swimmers
- be careful in what you say and how you dress, some young coaches may work in swimwear, this can be misconstrued or be offensive
- try not to put yourself in a position where you are left alone with swimmers

- try not to put yourself in vulnerable positions; personal tuition and lifts can be misconstrued by those wishing it to be - seek parental approval and keep your club aware if you do either

If accused:

- seek legal support immediately, the BSCA can provide assistance to its members
- keep a written record of anything said to you
- keep a copy of any correspondence regarding the case
- do not go into hiding; seek support from those around you; people do not always think that you wish to talk, but it is the best way to think straight

Like the ASA, the BSCA rushed to develop a Code of Ethics and Conduct in the wake of Hickson's conviction. In 1996, the BSCA first published its code which was aimed at protecting both swimmers and coaches. With respect to sexual exploitation, the code of ethics specifically forbids sexual relationships with any minor (child under 18) and sexual misconduct with any swimmer. Sexual misconduct is defined as "any comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature that are unwanted by the recipient. It is especially important to note that this applies equally to colleagues as it does to swimmers" (BSCA, 1996, Section 3.3). In its Introduction, the Code explicitly states that it should be voluntarily adopted by individuals and, more importantly in relation to social construction and compliance to social norms, that it should be reinforced by peer and public opinion: only when necessary should the disciplinary proceedings be invoked. This self-policing attitude is likely to influence coaches' perceptions about appropriateness.

During investigations by the ASA, the BSCTA played an important role in protecting the rights of coaches. With knowledge of the laws regarding proceedings in employment disputes, the BSCTA was able to put pressure on the ASA when fair procedures were not followed. This is not to say, however, that they always support the coach. The BSCTA recognises that it has a responsibility to not only individual coaches but also the wider profession. Thus, the BSCTA states that it will not knowingly support coaches who have admitted their guilt in cases of sexual abuse, nor offer legal support in a criminal case when the coach has a greater than 50% chance of being convicted (personal communication, Brian McGuinness, 26 June 2000).

The BSCTA has actively worked towards the development of coach education in swimming. Following the recent conviction of Mike Drew, the BSCTA national representative arranged a meeting with the detectives from the case to discuss how future abuse could be prevented. In an effort to raise coaches' awareness of child abuse and protection further, the detectives spoke to swimming coaches at the annual meeting of the BSCTA in January 2002. This illustrates how salient the issue child protection has become for swimming coaches.

2.5 Backlash and Critique

There is no social consensus on child protection, either in wider society or in sport. Competing claims and vested interests mean that conflict and critique often hinder the progress of child protection. In the case of swimming, the way in which allegations have been investigated has been heavily criticised by swimming coaches. In its haste to develop child protection policies and to investigate any allegations, the ASA has come under attack for improperly handling investigations and, in some cases, allegedly violating civil rights. The purpose of this section is not to investigate the truth of these claims but, rather, to highlight some of the issues that contribute to coaches' perceptions of the ASA and of child protection in swimming.

Soon after the ASA published its Code of Ethics, a national level coach was suspended from his coaching position and had his coaching licence immediately suspended by the ASA due to allegations of abuse. In this instance, and in similar investigations, the BSCTA alleges that the ASA wrongly withheld the nature and origin of the allegation from the accused. The media has also contributed to the defamation of coaches by indicating that accusations were of a sexual nature, when in fact they were not. Coaches' anonymity is further compromised during investigations when potential witnesses are interviewed and then disclose details of the confidential investigation to club members, amongst others. In a close knit community, such as swimming, rumours spread quickly, deepening coaches' mistrust of ASA investigations of child abuse allegations. Coaches' awareness of

mishandled cases is very likely to influence their perceptions about child protection measures in sport.

In the case above, the social services and the police dismissed the charges, but the employer dismissed the coach after a district tribunal. The BSCTA assisted the coach in filing a wrongful dismissal claim against the employer and won the case a year and half later. This case was highly publicised amongst the BSCTA ranks and, subsequently, members became acutely aware of the potential detrimental outcome of spurious allegations.

After another swimming coach was cleared of misconduct under the ASA Code of Ethics, the BSCTA distributed a statement from him in an effort to clear his name and to warn other coaches. In this statement, he clearly indicated his frustration with the ASA:

It was only through the Hickson affair that I was prepared to back a code of ethics, but having experienced how the system operates, for obvious reason, I have very serious doubts as to its effectiveness, authenticity, fairness, and above all, its equality. (Straight, n.d., p. 6)

The message that swimming coaches received was that, even if they were innocent, and even with the BSCTA, they could be out of a job for many months during an investigation, risking financial security. Swimming coaches thus began to perceive themselves as victims of the ASA's policy which privileged the interests of the child over those of the coach. Arguably, this added to a culture of mistrust.

Establishing normative behaviour within the sport is important for defining abuse in sport but is sometimes overlooked during investigations. (Normative swimming coaching practices and training methods that were interpreted as abusive complicated both cases discussed above.) Sport governing bodies can even be guilty of presumptuously accusing coaches of abusive behaviours if the investigative team does not first consult current coaching recommendations.

Backlash is a sociological term used to define a reactive resistance to a social movement, in this case, child protection (Finkelhor, 1994; J. E. B. Myers, 1994a). The backlash against child protection has been led by parents who have fallen victim to mishandled investigations, parents who have been falsely accused after divorce cases or by grown children, lawyers who realise that challenging

public opinion through a backlash can benefit the outcome of their cases, the media, and some politicians who suggest that child abuse claims are wildly exaggerated (Finkelhor, 1984). It is important to note here that opposition groups and countermovements are generally opposed to the method in which child abuse is investigated, rather than arguing against the need to protect children (Finkelhor, 1984). Whilst there is evidence to support a backlash against the child protection movement, Finkelhor (1994) argues that currently the backlash is not significant enough to derail its progress.

This thesis is one of the first studies in sport to examine the impact of child protection policies on coaching practice. It was not designed specifically to examine whether or not there is a backlash against child protection policies within sport, however. What is presented here, and in chapter 11, is simply an analysis of the current trends in child protection in sport presented through Finkelhor's analysis of backlash.

The child protection movement in sport has emerged slowly over the past 15 years with media reports being supported by a few seminal research studies. The movement, especially in swimming, gained momentum after the conviction of Hickson. It is likely that initial policy development received support from coaches, swimmers, and parents who were motivated to keep abusers out of swimming. The movement was strengthened through coalition with NSPCC, and later, the Sport England requirement that all governing bodies receiving lottery funding must implement a child protection policy. According to Finkelhor (1994) grassroots support developed over time, coalition with powerful allies, and professional and political support are core elements of a strong social movement that is likely to withstand most opposition. If a backlash occurs in sport it is likely to result more from policies surrounding emotional and physical abuse and neglect than sexual abuse because there is widespread support for measures to prevent sexual abuse of children in sport.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the social context underpinning the areas studied in this thesis because this is important for understanding the swimming coaches' responses to the issue of child protection. The development of child protection law and advocacy, both in mainstream society and in sport, has been reviewed. Definitions of sexual harassment and abuse are provided in the next chapter along with a review of the research examining sexual harassment and abuse in sport.

Chapter 3: Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport - Concepts and Research

3.1 Introduction

Despite legislation for sex equity (e.g., Title IX in the United States in 1971, the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain in 1975, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act 1982, in Canada) sexual exploitation in sport still affects the participation of many athletes (Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting et al., 2000; Kirby et al., 2000). Extensive research has investigated the causes and effects of sexual harassment in school and the workplace (Stockdale, 1996) but research in sport began only in the mid 1980s. One feature of this type of research is its multidisciplinary nature. Researchers have entered the field from different practical and advocacy perspectives such as anti-violence, gender equity, clinical, therapeutic, and policy development. They have also adopted different theoretical and disciplinary perspectives such as feminist (Brackenridge, 1997b; Lenskyj, 1992b), pro-feminist (Donnelly, 1999), psychological (Leahy et al., 2001), sociological (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997; Volkwein et al., 1997), health (Fasting et al., 2000; Jaques & Brackenridge, 1999) and ethical (Brackenridge, 2001). A separate body of work has examined the characteristics of male athletes and the male sporting cultures that encourage abuse of females outside sport (Benedict, 1998; Curry, 1991; Sabo, Gray, & Moore, 2000).

Policy changes and educational programmes in sport are indicators of the growing awareness that sexual harassment and abuse is a problem for both male and female athletes. To date, most of the research in sport has focused on abuse and harassment perpetrated by males against females. Women can and do perpetrate sexual abuse outside sport (Saradjian & Hanks, 1996), and there is evidence that women sexually harass and abuse inside sport (Bowker, 1998; Fasting et al., 2000). For example, 15% of elite female athletes in one study (Fasting et al., 2000) experienced sexual harassment from another female. Nevertheless, this compares with 45% in the same study who reported being sexually harassed by a male. The

current focus on males as perpetrators is based on the evidence that males dominate coaching positions at the high school (Lackey, 1990), university (Acosta & Carpenter, 1990, 2000, 2002), and elite levels (Kirby et al., 2000; West & Brackenridge, 1990). Furthermore, the majority of reported sexual abuse in society is by male perpetrators (Fergusson & Mullen, 1999; Grubin, 1998). This does not mean, of course, that abuse perpetrated by females is any less serious or traumatic. Future research needs to examine females as harassers or abusers. The impact of harassment and abuse in sport perpetrated against males by both male and female perpetrators is still unknown and thus requires attention from researchers.

Evidence currently available suggests that abuse is most often perpetrated by coaches (Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting et al., 2000; Kirby et al., 2000) but it should also be noted that other authority figures in sport may also abuse (e.g., sports medicine professionals, sport psychologists, and officials). Athletes also experience harassment and abuse from their own teammates (sometimes disguised as initiation rituals (Kirby & Wintrup, 2001)), from opponents and from other sporting peers (Fasting et al., 2000; Holman, 1994; Kirby et al., 2000). There is some evidence that harassment can occur from those in lower positions of power in the workplace (Grauerholz, 1989). Following this, it is probable that some athletes may sexually harass their coaches. The research presented here relates to able-bodied athletes but may equally be applied to disabled athletes who may face additional risks for sexual exploitation (Kerr, 1999).

3.2 Concepts

3.2.1 Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

The terms sexual abuse and sexual harassment have sometimes been used interchangeably in the sport literature. In this thesis they are treated as two concepts that are closely linked. Whilst a few authors have provided operational definitions for the terms, no universal definitions exist. One of the difficulties in defining sexual abuse and sexual harassment is that they are both socially constructed terms. As such, they are likely to be influenced by the author's politics, ethics, values, and

interests (Burbules, 1986). This is not only an issue faced by sport researchers but also by those conducting research into sexual abuse and harassment in broader society. More importantly, definitions influence criminal law, prevalence and incidence reporting and, ultimately, the power to define a social problem. This section will first provide a review of how terms are used in law, research, and politics. It concludes with a summary of how the terms are used in the thesis then moves on to review how sport research has addressed sexual harassment and abuse.

One of the greatest difficulties in establishing definitions is the ever-changing historical context, cultural, and social values (Cawson, Wattam, Brooker, & Kelly, 2000; Wurtele & Miller-Perrin, 1992). There are, however, some key elements in most legal or research definitions. For sexual abuse, these include: intra and extra-familial abuse, contact and noncontact sexual activities (e.g., pornography), use of adult power to achieve a sexual outcome with a child, and maturational differences between perpetrator and victim (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999). Most definitions of sexual harassment include an element of unwanted attention, behaviours that create a hostile environment, and coercion on the basis of sex. Brackenridge (2001, p. 32) summarises harassment as “invasion without consent.” The review of definitions below focuses on definitions used in England and Wales (as England was the focus of this study) but occasionally other international definitions will be drawn upon to illustrate other conceptualisations.

3.2.2 Consent

Consent is at the centre of definitions of harassment and abuse. Legally, consent is based on age, age-difference, mental ability, and power. By definition, children cannot consent to sex (Kelly, Wingfield, Burton, & Regan, 1995). Some perpetrators might argue that the sexual behaviour was mutually desired but children are not developmentally capable of understanding the consequences of sexual interaction (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999). Furthermore, an adult’s power over a child may not allow for a child to freely decline sexual activity. As explained in chapter 2, recent changes to legislation have taken into account that young people and vulnerable adults are not able to consent to sex with teachers or other

individuals with a legal responsibility to care for them (Home Office, 2000b). Sport coaches are not specifically included in this legislation; however, earlier guidance issued on the abuse of trust specifically advised against coaches becoming sexually involved with athletes under the age of 18 (Home Office, 1999). A number of sport organisations are beginning to advise against sexual relationships with athletes of *any age* (Australian Sports Commission, 1998; Sports Coach UK, 2001; United States Olympic Committee, 1996). The difficulty for any governing body is to protect members from abuse without restricting too many individual freedoms of adults.

Entrapment (also called grooming) is the process an abuser may engage in to gain the trust of an intended victim (Gallagher, 2000). The process generally involves an increasing level of intimacy with the target so that the victim may feel responsible for the abuse, may not want to betray the abuser and, ultimately, is less likely to disclose abuse. In sport, abusers have been known to isolate the victim from their parents or others who might protect the victim or, conversely, to include the parents in the process of entrapment so that they will be incredulous of accusations that the coach is abusive (Brackenridge, 2001).

3.2.3 Unequal Power Between Children

Viewed within definitions of unequal power, children may also be perpetrators of child sexual abuse. It is estimated that young offenders now make up a third of all sexual assaults against young people (Grubin, 1998). This is an increasing area of concern for those responsible for treating sex offenders. In the past, researchers have often used an age difference of five years or more as the criterion for establishing child sexual abuse between two children (e.g., American Psychological Association, 1994); however, more recent research revealing sexual abuse between similar aged children (e.g., Grubin, 1998) suggests that a five year gap is misleading. In recording prevalence rates, it is difficult to distinguish abusive behaviour from “exploratory” behaviour between similar aged children (Cawson et al., 2000). Making this distinction requires a reliable assessment of consent, coercion, and resulting harm. All three of these, however, are problematic. As

previously stated, children are not capable of consenting to sexual acts. Coercion may be so subtle that children may believe they were willing participants and therefore not report the sexual act. Finally, definitions based on harm overlook the fact that damage may not be apparent until many years after the abuse occurred and that there may be intervening variables that help children to cope with abuse.

In addition to age difference, some definitions include both physical and cognitive developmental inequalities. That is, a younger child could be a perpetrator of child sexual abuse if he or she was to engage in sexual activity with an older but physically weaker, mentally disabled, or lower social status child. Again, these definitions preclude abusive sexual behaviour between two children, holding similar power.

3.2.4 Legal Age of Consent

Ultimately, the legal definition for sexual consent influences the parameters of socially acceptable behaviour (T. Thomas & Roberts, 2000; Viinikka, 1989), thus studies examining perceptions of harassment and abuse must also account for the current legal context. The term “child sexual abuse” is meant to apply directly to children but, again, much ambiguity exists in the definition. The first problem is that there is no universal definition of a child. Generally, a child is not legally able to vote, give legal consent, nor consent to sex. However, the definition of age of consent varies from country to country and sometimes by sexual preference (see Table 2.2). For example in England and Wales, it was not until 2000 that the legal age for male homosexual sex was lowered from 18 to 16 years old to be congruent with the legal age for heterosexual sex (Home Office, 2000b). Offences vary according to the age of the child (i.e., abuse against a child under the age of 13 is treated more seriously than that against a child under 16 years old; T. Thomas & Roberts, 2000). These laws are meant to protect children and young people who might agree to sex but are not mentally mature enough to give consent. It is a difficult task to mandate legal and appropriate social behaviour based on chronological age when the behaviours become more socially acceptable with mental maturity. Although it is illegal to engage in sexual acts with someone under

the age of 16, adolescents under the age of 16 engaging in consensual sex with each other are generally not prosecuted. One political reason for not prosecuting is to not discourage adolescents from using contraception (T. Thomas & Roberts, 2000).

Sexual harassment can also apply to children, generally when they harass each other (American Association of University Women, 1993; Cohan, Hergenrother, Johnson, Mandel, & Sawyer, 1996). In defining sexual abuse, some sport researchers have used age, rather than the criterion of unwanted attention, as the defining line between harassment and abuse. For example, if children (anyone under the legal age of consent) are involved, Donnelly (1999) argued that the term sexual abuse, rather than harassment, should be used because there is stronger legal recourse for sexual abuse. Yorganci (1993) proposed an even more conservative view and suggested that any word or deed relating to sex, directed at females below a given age should be defined as sexual abuse. This would thus include verbal harassment. Whilst this definition is meant to protect the young and innocent, it does not give any direction as to what specific ages should be included, and it overlooks males as victims of sexual abuse. Furthermore, broad definitions of sexual abuse may desensitise people to the occurrence of sexual abuse, thus making it a less abhorrent offence (and by inference more socially acceptable; Archard, 1998).

3.2.5 Intra- and Extra- Familial Abuse

Where consent appears to have been given, it is important to examine the relationship between the victim and perpetrator to determine if the relationship is abusive. Definitions of child sexual abuse are meant to include instances of both intra-family and extra-familial abuse (e.g., by anyone outside the family.) Legal definitions, however, often give special treatment to incest. Historically, incest has been taboo because of the negative effects of inbreeding on health. The dictionary definition is “sexual intercourse between persons regarded as too closely related to marry each other” (Tulloch, 1997, p. 760). In England and Wales, the law only classifies vaginal intercourse and immediate blood relatives under this definition, thus excluding abuse against boys and abuse by step-parents, live-in partners, and

other configurations of the modern family. Thomas and Roberts (2000, p. 5) further problematise the use of the word incest as it suggests “that the victim is complicit and, therefore, that sexual activity is not necessarily abusive.”

The recent legislative changes only recognise four formal situations in defining a position of trust (institutional care, residential care, hospital care, or full-time education), whereby it is illegal for a person over the age of 18 responsible for the care or education of a person under the age of 18 to engage in sexual acts with that person (Home Office, 2000b). By ignoring abuse by those in “informal” positions of trust (e.g., sports coaches, step-parents, live-in partners), these definitions ignore the damage caused by abuse of trust and thus contribute to a socially constructed definition of abuse that does not necessarily recognise abuses of power. Although legal definitions contribute to how a problem is socially defined, they do not always define the problem in such a way that sufficiently protects people from abuse.

3.2.6 Invasion

Invasion is another criterion used to distinguish between definitions of abuse, harassment, and acceptable behaviour. Invasion may be visual, verbal, physical, or emotional. Showing pornography to a child and using children for pornographic purposes are offences under the law (Crouch, 1998; Kelly, Wingfield et al., 1995) regardless of whether or not the child appears to be consenting. Pornography and sexual jokes are also often included in definitions of sexual harassment, even when they are not directed at a particular person. The distinction here is that it creates a hostile environment for at least one person, and it is with this distinction that definitions move toward the subjective interpretation of the receiver. It is important to decide what constitutes “normal” touching and decide at what point non-contact behaviours become sexual.

In some instances, it would be useful to define sexual abuse according to the perpetrator’s intentions. For example, one might ask was the sports coach trying to massage an injury or to sexually stimulate himself? From a practical standpoint, intention is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately measure. The Explanatory

Notes to the Sexual Offences Act (Amendment) 2000 reflect the practical difficulties in measuring intent and specifically exclude charges of abuse of trust that require knowledge of intent.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would only regard as sexual activity if he was aware of the parties' intentions, motives or feelings is specifically excluded. Thus, behaviour which is non-sexual in nature, for example a sports trainer tackling a pupil on a rugby pitch, may not be challenged because of alleged hidden motives. (Home Office, 2000a, point 14)

The above clarification focuses on a normative definition of "appropriate" and dismisses the subjective experiences of the individual. Politically, this approach minimises the experience of the victim.

3.2.7 Terminology Describing Those Who Perpetrate Abuse and Harassment

A number of different terms have been used to describe people who perpetrate sexual harassment and sexual abuse. These include perpetrator, abuser, harasser, rapist, sexual offender, and paedophile. Criteria for meeting the clinical definition of paedophilia generally include being over the age of 16 and being sexually aroused by prepubescent children (e.g, American Psychological Association, 1994). This definition is problematic on several levels. First, it precludes children from perpetrating abuse. Second, by focusing on sexual arousal, offenders can absolve themselves of responsibility by claiming to give in to uncontrollable urges. Third, as with other labels for offenders, it becomes easy to stigmatise those with such labels and to distance them from "normal" people. This process of distancing oneself from another type of person is also called "othering" (Brackenridge, 2001) and is similar to the social psychology concept of distinguishing "in-group" members and norms from "out-group" members and norms (Aronson, 1995). Researchers estimate that only 25-40% of those committing sexual offences against children would fit the criteria for a paedophile (Grubin, 1998). By "othering" it is easy to focus on inherent psychological deficiencies and to ignore social psychological influences. Furthermore, "othering" results in the misperception that offenders can be easily identified by a pathology. In this thesis

the terms offender, perpetrator, and abuser are used interchangeably and are not intended to suggest that abusers are inherently different from those who do not abuse or harass. The terms are simply used to describe a person who has abused or harassed.

3.2.8 Legal, Research, and Political Definitions

A common theme throughout these definitions is that they vary according to whether their purpose is legal, research based, or political. These are not discrete categories, and definitions in one category influence definitions in another. Legal definitions are generally couched in behavioural terms and require evidence to determine whether or not a crime has been committed. They therefore emphasise consent, chronological age, blood relatives, and penetration. Research definitions are generally influenced by an objectivist epistemology (see chapter 4) and attempt to define behaviours according to norms. For example, some sexualised behaviour is “normal” amongst children (Friedrich, Fisher, Broughton, Houston, & Shafran, 1998). Appropriate touch in sport is also a contentious area (e.g., Hassall et al., 2002; Volkwein et al., 1997; Yorganci, 1993) that has been examined more thoroughly in nursing in terms of location and purpose of touch (e.g., social zone, personal zone, erotic zone, and instrumental or expressive; Routasalo, 1996). When normal behaviours are identified, it is easier to identify potentially abusive behaviours. However, normative behaviour can be used to justify abusive behaviour. Conversely, abnormal behaviour may be unjustifiably labelled as abusive. Definitions which are based on absolutes assist in identifying abusive behaviours but at the same time negate individual situations that may make an action abusive. Similarly, absolute definitions of abuse may negate a victim’s interpretation of an event as abusive. The varying interests of researchers, practitioners, legislators, survivors, and abusers will continue to make definitions of abuse and harassment enigmatic.

Definitions are often advanced for political reasons. For example, using an umbrella term of sexual violence (Brackenridge, 2001; Kelly, Wingfield et al., 1995) to include non-contact, coercive, and grooming behaviours moves the focus

of previous definitions of violence from the act to the experience of the survivor. Therefore, rather than only including acts that measurably physically injure the survivor, an umbrella term of sexual violence takes into account the often long term psychological (and as a result often physiological) harm that is caused by non-contact, coercive, or grooming behaviours. The danger in broadening definitions in this way is that the general public will dismiss high prevalence rates reported from studies where behaviours are included that are not generally defined as abusive. But without pressure to change legal, research, and social definitions, the horrific experiences of many survivors are minimised when their experiences are not easily classified into established definitions.

3.2.9 Definitions Adopted in this Thesis

In summary, there are many reference points for defining harassment and abuse. For example, some have differentiated harassment and abuse according to the actual act, others do so in terms of the relationship between the offender and the victim. Perhaps the most succinct method for differentiating abuses is to locate them on an institutional-to-personal continuum starting with sex discrimination, then sexual harassment, and finally sexual abuse (see Figure 3.1; Brackenridge, 1997b). Institutional abuse is that which is perpetrated by institutional policies which create a *chilly climate* (Lenskyj, 1992b) based on sex. Sexual harassment on this continuum includes all behaviours that the receiver would define as *unwanted attention* based on one's sex. Sexual abuse may be more difficult to recognise because it often appears wanted, that is, the perpetrator has entrapped or alternatively coerced the victim (Brackenridge, 1997a). This definitional continuum for harassment and abuse is mostly based on the relationship between the perpetrator(s) and the victim; however, specific behaviours are also identified as a guide for recognising abuse. The term sexual exploitation is used by Brackenridge (2001) as an umbrella term encompassing both sexual harassment and abuse perpetrated against children and adults, males and females, individuals and society. This definition of sexual exploitation, along with the definitions set out in the continuum (Brackenridge, 1997a), is adopted for this thesis.

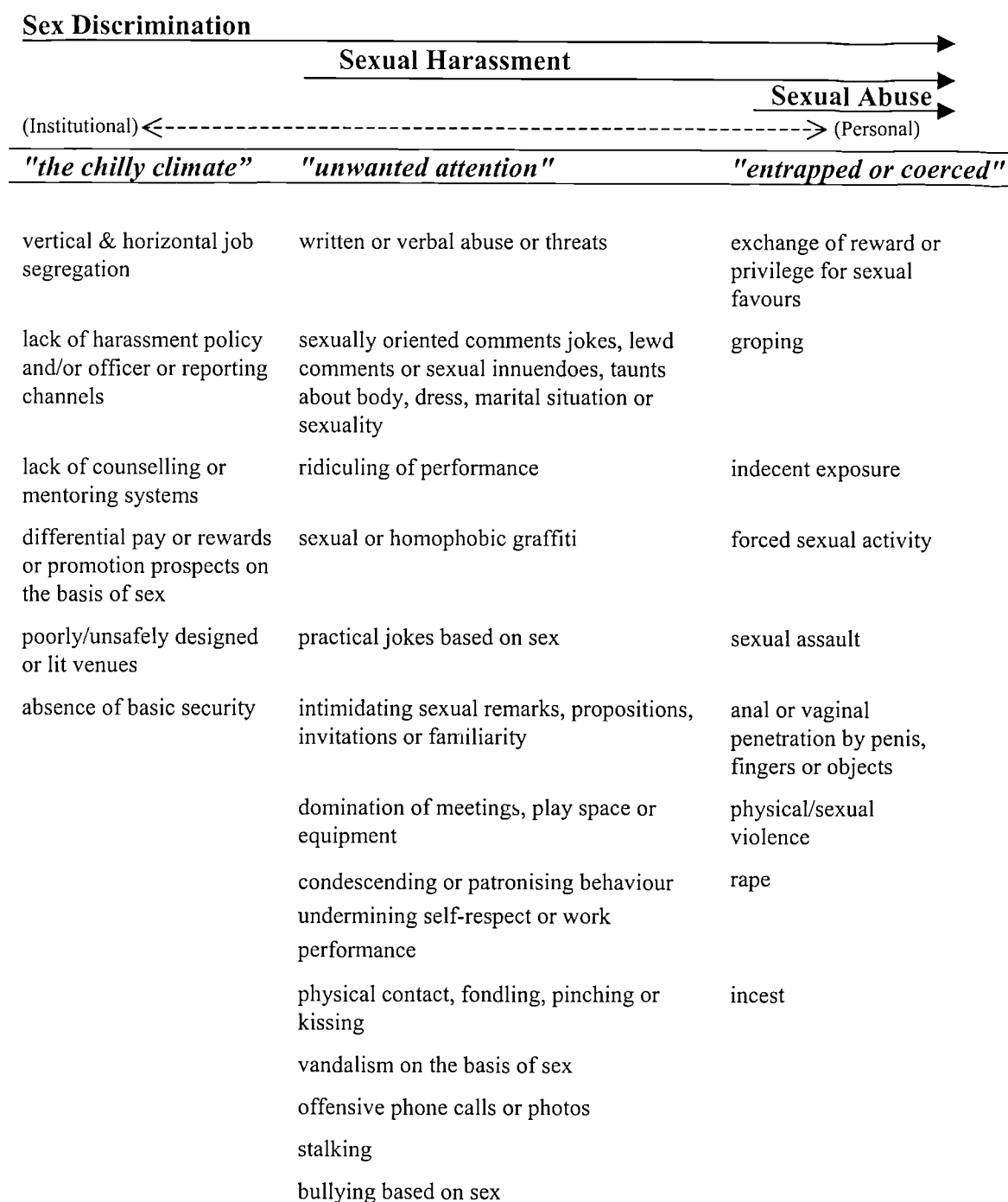


Figure 3.1. The sexual exploitation continuum.

Source: Adapted with permission from Brackenridge, C. H. (1997a) 'Researching sexual abuse and sexual harassment in sport', in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds) *Researching Women in Sport*, London: Macmillan.

3.3 Prevalence of Sexual Exploitation in Sport

3.3.1 Introduction to Prevalence Studies

Differences in definitions of abuse and harassment, research designs, ethical issues such as confidentiality and participant well-being, all contribute to the difficulty of accurately measuring and predicting incidence and prevalence rates. Some previous studies in sport (Bowker, 1998; Lackey, 1990; Volkwein et al., 1997) have been limited by using coaches as intermediaries to distribute surveys. In such circumstances, athletes may not feel that confidentiality is guaranteed and other coaches may simply not distribute the survey at all. Studies in this area are further complicated by research participants' different interpretations of behaviours, their tendency to self-blame for abuse, and low response rates in surveys (e.g., Hassall et al., 2002; Kirby et al., 2000). It is not surprising, therefore, that there are few prevalence studies of sexual exploitation in sport. Barriers to accessing research participants in sport further compound these difficulties. Often, studies are perceived as either critical of the sport establishment or irrelevant because "it doesn't happen here."

Research into the exploitation of women and children outside sport has increased significantly over the last 40 years as society has come to acknowledge the occurrence of abuse both inside and outside the family. As discussed in chapter 2, sport governing bodies have begun to accept the fact that they are not immune to the problems of society and that they, too, must examine practices within sport that allow sexual exploitation to occur. Research projects are increasingly being supported and the extent of sexual exploitation in sport is gradually being revealed.

Despite the increase in research, one of the major limitations in conducting prevalence studies on sexual exploitation in sport is that, for practical and ethical reasons, studies are conducted with current or recently retired adult athletes. Thus, data are collected only from those who have persevered in sport *despite* experiencing harassment and abuse (Fasting et al., 2001). Those who have left sport forever because of sexual exploitation are thus absent from research populations.

3.3.2 Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in Sport

Several studies have used questionnaires to examine prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse against female athletes, with instruments listing many of the items shown in Figure 3.2. The proportion of female athletes reporting having experienced sexually harassing behaviours ranged from 15% to 55% (Fasting et al., 2000; Kirby et al., 2000; Lackey, 1990; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001; Volkwein et al., 1997). A survey of 553 elite female athletes in Norway (Fasting et al., 2000) and a control group of non-athletes matched for age (516 respondents) revealed that the groups experienced comparable levels of sexual harassment from peers (37%). However, more athletes (15%) had experienced sexual harassment from a male authority figure in sport compared with non-athletes (9%) who experienced harassment from a male authority figure in the workplace or education. This indicates that harassment from authority figures is more normative in sport than it is outside sport. If this is so, then it would be expected that authority figures in sport would view these behaviours as more appropriate than authority figures in other domains.

Other researchers have analysed results in terms of the type of harassment experienced (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997; Volkwein et al., 1997). In 1996, 210 female athletes from universities in the United States completed the Sexual Harassment in Sport Questionnaire (Volkwein et al., 1997). Non-instructional/Potentially Threatening behaviours were reported by 20% of the athletes, 18% reported experiencing sexist comments and 2% verbal or physical advances.

These percentages are similar to those reported in a study of 143 female track and field athletes in Britain (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997). Verbal sexual harassment was reported by 15%, 17% experienced intrusive physical contact, and 6% verbal intrusion. In Denmark, nearly half of male and female student athletes retrospectively reporting their athletic experiences before the age of 18 had experienced sexually degrading remarks from a coach (48.1% of males, and 48.3% of females) (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001). Verbal abuse was also the most reported

type of abuse in a study asking female university students in Nebraska to recall their high school sporting experiences (Lackey, 1990). Twenty-five percent of the 266 respondents reported a coach directing profanity at athletes, and 21% reported demeaning language directed at athletes. Prevalence of unambiguous sexual harassment, in the form of verbal or physical advances such as sexual proposals and fondling, varied from 2% (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997; Volkwein et al., 1997), 3% (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001), 4% (Fasting et al., 2000), to 22% (Lackey, 1990).

3.3.3 Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in Sport

The pervasiveness of intimate relationships in sport was highlighted by just over a fifth of the 266 respondents in a survey of male and female athletes on the Canadian National Team (Kirby et al., 2000) who reported engaging in sexual intercourse with an authority figure in sport. For 15 (11 female, and 4 male) of these athletes there were clear indications of a coercive relationship, in that the authority figure also verbally bullied or physically assaulted them. For five of these athletes (2 female, and 3 males) the forced sexual intercourse occurred when they were under the age of 16 years. In the study of athletes in Nebraska, 12 athletes had engaged in sexual intercourse with the coach (Lackey, 1990). Ten of these were “with consent.” However, depending on the age of the athlete at the time of the encounter, some of these were likely to have met the legal classification for statutory rape.

Despite the power differential and potential for abuse of power in sport, some coaches consider sexual relationships between adult athletes and coaches as acceptable. Two-thirds of 172 male and female coaches responding to the survey in Denmark (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001) rated sexual relationships with athletes over the age of 18 years old as acceptable and 41 coaches reported having engaged in such a relationship. One aim of this thesis is to expand upon these results and examine coaches’ reasons for classifying such relationships as appropriate.

3.3.4 Critique of Prevalence Studies

The information from the above studies provides a useful starting point for examining sexual exploitation in sport; however, the studies are not without limitation. A theoretically developed and psychometrically sound measure of sexual harassment and abuse has still yet to be developed in sport. Definitional and ethical debates, as discussed in the beginning of this chapter, have impeded questionnaire development. Researchers have often selected questions for their questionnaires without a clear theoretical basis. Existing questionnaires have been restructured so that cross study comparisons are difficult at best (e.g., Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997; Volkwein et al., 1997). In the case of the Danish study different questionnaires were used for athletes and coaches, thus diminishing the possibility for role comparisons (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001). Hassall (2002) and her colleagues used factor analysis to create statistically sound subcategories of their questionnaire, but the questionnaire was flawed in its directions to respondents which did not specify the age or gender of the athlete or coach. Some studies have asked simply if a specified behaviour occurred, or whether the behaviour was distressing, or if a hypothetical behaviour would be appropriate. All of these questionnaires leave out important contextual information that may influence a response. The questionnaires have also been analysed in various manners, using total scores, subcategory scores, simple percentages and comparison, or in some cases more sophisticated statistics. Again, comparisons across studies are made difficult through the lack of consistency in definition, design, and analysis. In addition to questionnaire design and analysis, the quantitative studies have been limited by low response rates, the inability to reach athletes who have discontinued participation in sport (perhaps due to exploitation), and the inability to examine what factors beyond age and sport role may influence perceptions of, and prevalence of, sexual exploitation.

3.4 Qualitative Research on Survivors' Experiences

3.4.1 Introduction to Qualitative Studies of Sexual Exploitation in Sport

The limitations of quantitative studies have led several researchers to use qualitative methods or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to research survivors' experiences (Bowker, 1998; Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense, 1997; Donnelly et al., 1993; Fasting et al., 2001; Leahy et al., 2001; Lenskyj, 1992b). This approach requires participants to be willing to talk about their experiences and to label them as abusive. One respondent in Lenskyj's (1992b, p. 22) study said, "the process of describing an experience of sexual harassment often feels like reliving it, and that is obviously something that most women want to avoid." Studies that have succeeded in accessing survivors have contacted them following a larger screening measure (Fasting et al., 2001; Leahy et al., 2001), encouraged open-ended responses on anonymous written surveys (Bowker, 1998; Kirby et al., 2000) or used a snowball method (Brackenridge, 1997b) in which athletes refer peers to the researchers (Brackenridge, 1997a; T. Crosset, 1988). The information presented below is based on qualitative research with survivors of sexual exploitation.

3.4.2 Process of Abuse and Entrapment

Sexual abuse in sport is usually perpetrated by those outside the athlete's family. However, Brackenridge (1997a) argued that the sport group represents a surrogate family and so abuse in sport resembles intra-familial abuse. The process of entrapment, or grooming someone for sexual abuse, involves slowly gaining the trust of a child before systematically breaking down interpersonal barriers. This process has been well described in several studies (Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense, 1997; Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting et al., 2001; Leahy et al., 2001). Entrapment begins relatively innocently with the coach perhaps offering additional practice time, rides home or special privileges. The coach may develop an atmosphere where the athlete is reliant on the coach for information about sporting competence. Often this includes isolating the player from teammates, family, and

friends. One athlete described her dedication to her coach, "...by then I was absolutely dependent upon him -- he was God.... From 15-19 he owned me basically" (female survivor quoted in Brackenridge, 1997a, p. 123).

Innocent behaviours transgress into ambiguous behaviours that can easily be dismissed or explained away as 'medical treatment,' a 'slip of the hand' during massage or instruction, 'fitness measures,' or athlete-desired rewards. Compliance with abuse is assured by using threats of cutting (dropping) the athlete from the team, giving or withholding privileges, confirmation of the 'love' shared between the two, guilt regarding the amount of time invested in the athlete's development, and/or blaming the victim. The athlete's commitment to the sport and loyalty to the coach often means that physical force (although sometimes threatened) is rarely used to guarantee compliance (Brackenridge, 2001). The subtly coercive nature of the abuse is illustrated by this survivor, "... he didn't force anything, but he always knew how to put it, so that you'd just do it. After all, he was one of the few to pay attention to me" (female survivor quoted in Cense & Brackenridge, 2001, p. 67). Although these studies provide important information about the process of entrapment, they have been unable to offer information that might help parents, athletes, and other coaches distinguish between entrapment and a generous well-intentioned coach. Qualitative, comparative studies are needed to compare the actions of an offending coach towards an athlete targeted for abuse, and one not targeted for abuse. Similarly, it would be useful to compare the actions of an abusive coach to those of a coach not known to be abusive. (There will always be the limitation that a coach not known to be abusing may be *actually* abusing.)

3.4.3 Risk Factors Associated with Sexual Exploitation in Sport

There are insufficient studies in this area to report statistically significant predictors of sexual harassment and abuse in sport. A number of pathologically-based models from biology, psychology, and sociology have been proposed to explain sexual abuse (see reviews in Finkelhor, 1984; Morrison et al., 1994). These models are often critiqued for being unidimensional and absolving perpetrator responsibility (Finkelhor, 1984; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). One exception is

Finkelhor's (1984) model, which incorporates situational and cultural influences (see Figure 1.1, p. 4). It suggests that sexual abuse occurs when perpetrators are, first, motivated to sexually abuse, secondly overcome internal and external inhibitors, and finally overcome resistance from the victim. Whilst this model is a useful heuristic device, Finkelhor (1984) and others (Brackenridge, 2001; Fisher, 1994) acknowledge that theory development is still needed, especially concerning perpetrators. No published research has focused explicitly on coaches as perpetrators. Therefore, little is known about the motivation of perpetrators in sport and the processes by which they overcome their internal inhibitions to abuse.

Using in-depth, inductive interviews with survivors, researchers in sport have been able to identify clusters of variables that may make athletes more susceptible to abuse (Brackenridge, 1997a, 2001; Cense, 1997; Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting et al., 2001; Fasting et al., 2000; Leahy et al., 2001). The potential risk factors presented below are subdivided into two of the sections from Finkelhor's (1984) model: External Inhibitors and Victim Characteristics. It is important to remember, however, that these findings are from initial exploratory studies and thus do not indicate causality or even statistical relationships. Furthermore, the studies are descriptive and are not theoretically grounded nor underpinned by any particular methodological framework (e.g., Grounded Theory, ethnography, discourse analysis).

Parents, other athletes and coaches, officials, medical personnel, police, social services, and codes of conduct are a few of the external inhibitors that a potentially abusive coach may face. Yet, the power of the coach and the structure of sport often help to erode the strength of external inhibitors. For example, coaches who are authoritative and ban parents from practice sessions create an environment in which exploitative behaviours are less likely to become noticed. When the coach is well respected and has a reputation for coaching elite level athletes, parents and authority figures are less likely to believe allegations against him. This power is illustrated by one female survivor of sexual abuse, "You don't ask him to coach you, he selects you. You are somebody if you're coached by him...because he coaches the best people in the country no-one questions him" (as cited in Brackenridge, 1997a, p. 122). Some coaches enhance their control over athletes by

exerting influence over diet, dress, and social life (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997). They further cross the boundary into the athlete's personal life by inquiring about menstruation and sex life, all under the guise of facilitating disciplined training for peak performance.

Abusers are more likely to remain undetected when sport governing bodies and clubs lack clear policies and procedures on child protection and sexual harassment. Guidelines on coach behaviour should clarify what is acceptable in situations such as legitimate instruction-based touching, training sessions, team trips, back rooms at the training centre, and private vehicles, all of which have served as the context for sexual abuse (e.g., Brackenridge, 1997a, 2001; Burton Nelson, 1994; Fasting et al., in press; Kirby et al., 2000). Consumption of alcohol has also led to abusive situations as both the coach's and the athlete's inhibitions are lowered (Brackenridge, 2001; Kirby et al., 2000; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001).

To date there are no clear indicators that those participating in individual versus team sports, sports requiring physical support, or sports with scant clothing are more prone to abuse than other sports. Indeed, contrary to popular belief, initial research indicated that athletes in sports that required more clothing experienced greater levels of sexual harassment (Fasting et al., 2000). Initial research also suggests that elite level athletes are at greater risk for sexual abuse perpetrated within sport compared with recreational athletes (Leahy et al., 2001). However, it would be irresponsible to suggest that some sports 'don't have a problem.' Abuse may happen in *any* sport where an authority figure has unrestricted access to and power over athletes (Brackenridge, 2001).

Abusers are more likely to target athletes who are already vulnerable (Brackenridge, 1997a; Cense & Brackenridge, 2001). For example, those with low self-esteem, few friends, or a poor relationship with their parents. Success in sport does not, however, always relate to a high global self-esteem (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996). Successful athletes, as demonstrated by Leahy and her colleagues (2002), are *not* immune to abuse. Initial research has supported the hypothesis by Brackenridge and Kirby (1997) that athletes within the 'Stage of Imminent Achievement' (high level athletes just prior to the cusp of elite performance) may be most vulnerable to sexual advances, especially when this coincides with puberty. These athletes have

invested a great deal of time, energy, and money and may be more willing to comply with the demands of an ill-intentioned coach than to forfeit their investment. Research has also shown that abusers in sport are generally older, by as much as 20-30 years, than athlete victims (Brackenridge, 2001; Kirby et al., 2000).

Establishing risk factors, such as age difference between abuser and victim, can be extremely problematic when only using descriptive data. The number of years that both Paul Hickson and Mike Drew were offending before being reported, suggests that they were both abusing in their 20s. It is estimated that about a third of child sexual offenders develop interest in child sexual abuse before the age of 18 (Grubin, 1998; Kelly, Wingfield et al., 1995; Marshall, Anderson, & Champagne, 1997). What is more probable is that some abusers may not be reported or charged for their offences until they reach an age in which society cannot excuse their sexual behaviour as youthful experimentation or romance between a coach and a “mature” adolescent athlete.

Sexual exploitation in sport occurs not just because some individuals are motivated to harass but because the culture of sport allows it. The unquestioned power and dominance of the coach and the single-minded pursuit of excellence allow bullying behaviours to flourish. Even some violent behaviours deemed illegal in wider society are legitimised within the rules of sport (Lenskyj, 1992b). Training with injuries, unnatural changes to body size, restriction of diet and social life are often encouraged as part of the discipline needed to excel in sport (Donnelly et al., 1993). Athletes learn to subject themselves to anything that might assist them in the pursuit of medals. Parents may encourage a ‘win at all cost’ mentality, especially when winning enhances the child’s opportunity of earning a university scholarship or entering a career as a professional athlete. Athletes may come to perceive that the only way to gain acceptance from their parents or peers is through sporting excellence (Coakley, 1992). Ultimately, these behaviours contribute to an environment that normalises abuse and disempowers athletes.

There is confusion over ambiguous sexual behaviours in sport and reluctance to label abusive behaviours as such. It is not surprising, therefore, that some coaches have succeeded in abusing athletes for over 20 years without being reported (Downes, 2002). In one study (Kirby et al., 2000), incidences of

harassment and abuse perpetrated by coaches were less often reported as complaints or charges against the coach than incidents perpetrated by ancillary staff (e.g., athletic trainers, physiotherapists, massage therapists). This differential illustrates the dynamics of abuse in sport and the loyalties that even abused athletes feel towards their coach.

Arguably, the desire to maintain the good image of sport discourages critical evaluation. Kirby and her colleagues aptly describe the organisational structure that allow abuse to thrive in sport:

Structurally, high performance sport is essentially an unregulated workplace where athletes are expected to devote themselves to the goal and to demonstrate a strong work ethic. Yet they remain ill-protected by regulations, laws and policies that normally offer workers rights and avenues of redress. This disempowering structure sets the stage for exploitation and silence. (Kirby et al., 2000, p. 27)

Sport governing bodies, participants, parents, and supporters often prefer to turn a blind eye than to bring their sport into disrepute. One study (Brackenridge, 1998) revealed that parents ($N = 103$) of elite female athletes (13-19 yrs old) often uncritically trust coaches. Just under 45% of these parents knew what qualifications their daughter's coach held and nearly 80% were unaware whether the coach was bound by a code of ethics or not. There are numerous accounts of sexual abuse in sport, including of child sexual abuse, continuing despite other athletes, coaches, or parents being somewhat aware of the abuse (Brackenridge, 2001; Burton Nelson, 1994; Kirby et al., 2000). This is particularly alarming given the findings from one study in sport (Leahy et al., 2001) that indicate trauma to survivors is increased when the survivors are aware that someone knew about the abuse but did nothing to stop it. A bystander who is aware of abuse is someone who can provide further information to the victim about the appropriateness of the abuser's behaviour. If the victim perceives the bystander to be unresponsive, then the victim is likely to interpret the abusive behaviour as "normal." It is also acknowledged that attitudes of non-abusing authority figures can influence the likelihood of abuse being reported (Green, 2001). In such an unsupportive environment, athletes have learned that sexual harassment is "part of the game" and something "you just put up with" (Kirby et al., 2000).

Education and policy development in some countries is bringing slow changes. Prior to June 1999, for example, fewer than half of government funded sport governing bodies in England had adopted child protection policies (C. A. White, personal communication, June, 1999) but by March 2001 there was total compliance (Sport England, 2001a, 2001b). Government incentives have encouraged more governing bodies to develop and implement child protection policies and awareness training for coaches. The United States Olympic Committee in their Coaches Code of Ethics (United States Olympic Committee, 1996), for example, has followed the American Psychological Association (1992) (who forbid practitioner-client sexual relationships) by setting a clear policy statement forbidding sexual relationships between athletes and coaches.

3.5 Summary

Sexual exploitation is a problem in sport with devastating effects for the victims ranging from the cessation of sport participation to severe depression and the inability to form healthy relationships. Responsibility for reducing the incidence of sexual exploitation in sport lies with many stakeholders including, coaches, athletes, governing bodies, parents, police, social services, sport support staff and medical providers. Understanding the view of coaches is paramount for understanding sexual exploitation in sport. Beyond being potential perpetrators of abuse, coaches can regulate the potentially abusive behaviour of fellow coaches. In positions of trust and authority, coaches also have the ability to influence what children learn as “acceptable” coach/athlete interactions.

To be successful in preventing abuse, researchers must move beyond designing atheoretical studies. This recommendation does not negate qualitative research or exploratory studies. It is, however, recommended that qualitative studies be conducted within methodological frameworks that support theory development. The purpose of this study is to explore coaches’ perceptions of appropriateness with regard to coach/athlete sexual relationships in a manner that will facilitate theory development. The next chapter sets the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological framework for my research.

Chapter 4: Epistemology, Theoretical Perspective, and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets forth the epistemological assumptions, theoretical perspectives, and methodological debates that were considered in the design of the current study. Examples of how this thesis might have progressed from different epistemological underpinnings are presented as a contrast to the chosen constructivist methodology of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 1995, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). (Grounded Theory is treated as a proper noun throughout this thesis to distinguish it from other forms of theory generation that are grounded.) The origins of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and epistemological debates about Grounded Theory are reviewed in addition to criteria for evaluating qualitative research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the use of computers to assist in the analysis of qualitative data.

4.2 Epistemology

4.2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Denzin and Lincoln (2000b; see also Guba, 1990) refer to paradigms as the basic principles and values encompassed in the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions. Similarly, Kuhn (1970) defined paradigms as the shared values and knowledge of a particular scientific community. The basic paradigms listed by Lincoln and Guba (2000) are: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory. An explanation is given for the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of each. Crotty (1998) prefers the term "theoretical perspective" to paradigm and includes positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism, and postmodernism in an incomplete list of theoretical perspectives. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to

“perspectives” as being similar to paradigms but more malleable. The word “paradigm” has also been used to describe a model of a solution to a problem and thus can be mistaken for its other meaning (Kuhn, 1970). I have chosen to use Crotty’s term “theoretical perspective” instead of “paradigm,” because I interpret theoretical perspective to be a more precise term than paradigm. As defined by Crotty (1998, p. 66), theoretical perspective is the “philosophical stance lying behind a methodology.”

Terms such as epistemology, ontology, theoretical perspective, and even methodology, are often absent from scientific journal articles in psychology and sport psychology because a common epistemological and ontological stance is assumed. Yet, it is one’s prior experience and beliefs along with the current cultural context that influence scientific questions and thus scientific development (Barnes, 1982; Kuhn, 1970). Science, as traditionally taught in the 20th Century western civilisation, is a way of knowing based on objective, systematic inquiry through the testing and rejecting of hypotheses. The assumed epistemological stance, or relationship between the researcher and that being studied, is objective, detached, and unbiased. The goal is to develop universal laws or grand theories through observation and measurement. Ontology, or how reality is defined, is understood in this definition of science to be singular, or a single reality, as opposed to relativism which defines multiple realities. The traditional scientific paradigm or theoretical perspective, derived from an objective epistemology, is positivism.

4.2.2 Two Objectivist Perspectives: Positivism and Postpositivism

Positivism is an objective approach whereby observed findings are assumed to be unbiased, accepted as “truth” and regarded as reflecting the laws of nature. Martens (1979) referred to this as orthodoxy in his critique of laboratory oriented sport psychology studies. He argued that controlled studies in the laboratory lacked external validity and that coaches and athletes needed to be studied in their natural environment. Whilst his critique was effective in promoting the debate about how sport psychologists should do research, it was a debate about the methodology not epistemology (Dewar & Horn, 1992). Martens’ view was one that helped the field

of sport and exercise psychology to move from a positivist perspective to a postpositivist perspective. Postpositivism, derived from positivism, is based on an objectivist framework but acknowledges the impossibility of isolating and controlling all of the necessary independent variables that may affect the dependent variable when conducting research with humans.

A positivist approach to studying coaches' perceptions of appropriateness would be conducted under controlled conditions and would therefore lack ecological validity. That is, the results would not be related to coaches' perceptions when they are in their natural environment. Thus, when examining factors influencing perceptions of sexual abuse and harassment in society researchers have generally taken a postpositivist approach (e.g., Baker, Terpstra, & Larntz, 1990; Frazier, Cochran, & Olson, 1995; Malovich & Statke, 1990; Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Stockdale & Hope, 1997; Whaley & Tucker, 1998) as have researchers examining exploitation in sport (Hassall et al., 2002; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001; Volkwein et al., 1997). Because it is impossible to control for every experience that might influence attitudes and behaviours, it is not surprising that these studies report conflicting and inconclusive results. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 3, varying definitions of sexual abuse and sexual harassment contribute to the discrepant results. The wording of questionnaires can also influence response patterns, for example, when a participant has experienced a behaviour but has not labelled it as exploitative (e.g., Kirby et al., 2000). These studies have, however, been successful in bringing issues of sexual abuse and harassment onto the research agenda and have provided some consensus about what constitutes sexual harassment (Frazier et al., 1995). A caveat in the knowledge produced from these studies (as is the case with many psychology studies) is that the majority of the participants are white undergraduate university students. Arguably, their perceptions may be very different from non-university students and people from different racial and cultural backgrounds.

4.2.3 The Importance of Stating Epistemological Assumptions

Because scientists traditionally share an objectivist epistemological and theoretical perspective, many researchers have deemed it unnecessary to explicitly state their underlying epistemological perspective. However, as the critique of detachment and objectivity is accepted (Dewar & Horn, 1992), other epistemological perspectives, such as constructionism and subjectivism are being adopted.

As constructionism and subjectivism gain credibility, in terms of what is accepted as knowledge, it becomes more important for researchers to explain the epistemological basis of their research. Researchers need to state explicitly the paradigm that informs their theoretical perspective which, in turn, informs the research design and is reflected in the choice of methods for data collection and data analysis. This allows readers fully to assess the research, whether it be for validity and reliability, or credibility, authenticity, and overall contribution to knowledge.

A researcher's paradigm, and accompanying epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions, will influence their approach to research. The researcher must make these assumptions clear in order that the research can be evaluated within that perspective. Figure 4.1 (after Crotty, 1998, p. 4-5) illustrates the potential pathways from three different epistemologies through to methods. The shaded area reflects the position adopted in this thesis. This figure is not an exhaustive list of research approaches; boundaries are drawn as discrete for illustrative purposes only. In practice the boundaries are sometimes blurred. A clear distinction is not made between methods for analysis (e.g., theme identification, pattern analysis, discourse analysis) and data collection because this model is deliberately drawn to reflect the focus of this thesis on the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory.

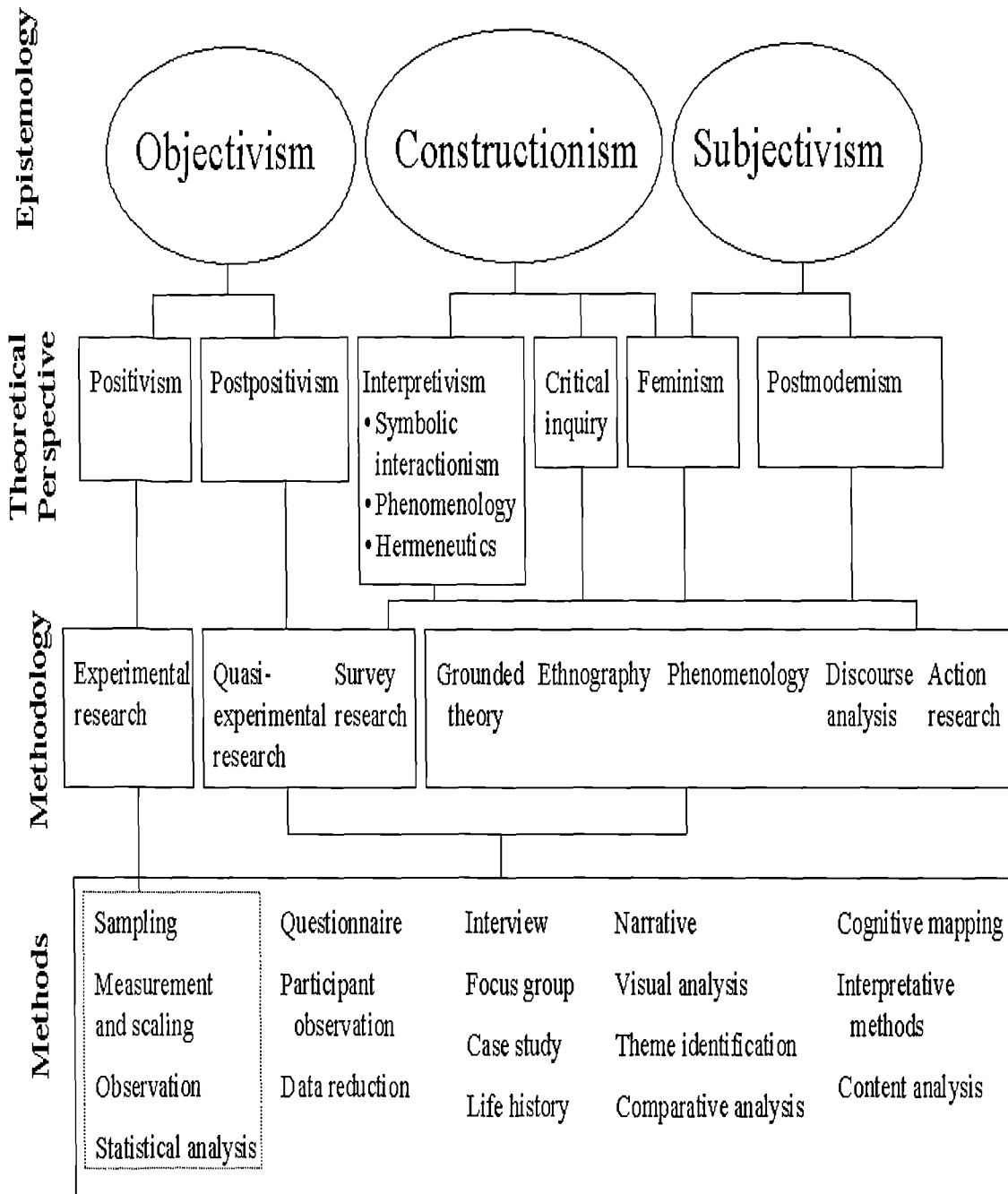


Figure 4.1. The relationship between epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods with shading representing those used in this thesis. (After Crotty, 1998, pp. 4 - 5).

4.2.4 Objectivism, Constructionism, and Subjectivism

The ensuing description of my epistemological, theoretical, and methodological choices begins with a brief description of an objectivist and

subjectivist approach to this thesis. After dismissing these two as inappropriate for answering the research question, three interpretivist theoretical perspectives from the constructivist epistemology are reviewed. This section concludes with a detailed analysis of my selected methodology, Grounded Theory.

As suggested in the previous section, research about a coach's role in sexual abuse and harassment from an objectivist epistemology would require measurable, testable, pre-defined hypotheses. This could be undertaken using existing psychological measures to examine cognitive distortions towards abuse and emotional congruence with children (Fisher et al., 1999). However, this assumes that knowledge is based in a single reality and devoid of social influence and individual interpretation. This perspective would not answer questions about what influences coaches' perceptions of appropriateness. The exploratory nature of the question requires a more flexible research approach than that required by logical-deductive science.

Subjectivism, the opposite epistemological extreme from objectivism, is knowledge based only on the knowledge-seekers' subjective understanding of the object in question (Crotty, 1998). Reality, according to this view, only exists in the eye of the beholder and an understanding of the object exists without interaction. A subjective approach to understanding the coach's role in sexual harassment and abuse could be created without ever engaging with or observing coaches. Again, this approach is insufficient for answering the question of what influences coaches' perceptions of appropriateness. This approach also contradicts the tenets of Grounded Theory by which the specific focus of the research problem should emerge *from* the researcher's interaction with participants and the researcher's interpretation of the data (see Section 4.4, this chapter).

Constructionism joins the epistemological extremes, objectivism and subjectivism (Crotty, 1998). In constructionism, it is acknowledged that the object cannot be conceived and named without an observer, who can never fully be detached from culture and past experience when giving meaning to the object (Burr, 1995). One of the limitations of the dominant objectivist epistemology in sport and exercise psychology is that it has ignored the importance of the culture of sport and society which is crucial to understanding many of the concepts (e.g., motivation)

studied in this discipline (Dewar & Horn, 1992). My main research objective is to examine the issue of sexual abuse and harassment, not from the survivor's perspective but from that of another key stakeholder, the sports coach. This objective is consistent with one of the central issues of constructionism, that "valid knowledge -- arises from the relationship between members of some stakeholding community" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 177). That is, knowledge and meaning are constructed and understood through interaction. The constructivist approach is best suited for answering questions about how coaches construct perceptions of sexual abuse and harassment and how social norms influence these definitions and understandings. Developing the analysis in this way should facilitate evidenced-based practice in coach education and should also help to guide future research in this area.

4.2.5 Theoretical Perspectives within Constructionism

Several theoretical approaches are especially coherent with the epistemology of constructionism. These include, but are not necessarily limited to: interpretivism (including symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics) critical inquiry, and feminism. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss each of these perspectives in detail (see Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000c for a more thorough discussion); therefore, only the perspectives related to the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000), including the interpretivist approach, will be addressed here. The interpretivist approach "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective grounded in the belief that understanding must come from adopting the perspective of the person or culture being studied (Mead, 1934, 1967). This can be achieved by taking the role of the person or persons being studied (as in ethnography or participant observation) or through interacting with those being studied. Symbolic interactionism originated from the pragmatic philosophy of social psychologist George Herbert Mead in the early 1900s. This perspective is underpinned by the assumption that behaviour is

based on the negotiated and flexible, socially constructed meaning (e.g., symbolism) given to objects or situations. An underpinning value of symbolic interactionism is that research should have practical application and thus have meaning and applicability within the context from which it was derived. This theoretical perspective underpins the current study and meets my research objective of examining the issue of sexual abuse and harassment in sport from the coaches' perspective, to explore how they construct definitions of harassment and abuse in a specific cultural context.

Of the three interpretivist perspectives rooted in a constructionist epistemology I have chosen to ground this project in the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. The chosen methodology for this project is the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), a process designed for systematic theoretical development where substantive theory does not exist. Theory, in Grounded Theory, is not intended as an all-encompassing grand theory, rather it a methodology to assist in the development of an explanatory model grounded in empirical data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory is examined in more detail after a discussion of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis.

4.3 The Fallacy of the Qualitative/Quantitative Divide

The increasing popularity of qualitative methods, and the paradigms that underpin them, has also challenged what is accepted as knowledge. Without the transparency of a researcher's epistemological and methodological decisions, it is easy to make a false association between positivistic paradigms and quantitative methods on the one hand and non-positivistic paradigms and qualitative methods on the other. Quantitative methods are those that rely on measurement. In psychology this includes quantifying attitudes and behaviours. Qualitative methods focus on the qualities, rather than quantity of what is being studied. This type of simplistic definition of quantitative and qualitative methods presented in introductory sport science research methods books (e.g., J. R. Thomas & Nelson, 1996) and used by many sport psychology researchers (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995;

Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1989) incorrectly suggests that they are discrete categories. Qualitative methods can, however, be analysed in a quantitative manner (e.g., frequency counts of what themes emerge from the data). The method by which data are collected does not necessarily prescribe the epistemological assumptions or the method of analysis. Furthermore, the use of computers is expanding the possibilities for mixed-method data collection and mixed-method data analysis (Bazeley, 2002). Thus, the fallacy of the quantitative/positivistic versus qualitative/non-positivistic divide is becoming more evident.

In traditional social science inquiry, researchers tried to emulate the objective, unbiased approach of the natural sciences in an attempt to gain credibility for their research to be classified as “science.” Researchers in social science who follow the objectivist epistemology do so under the assumption that the human being and the social system follow the laws of homeostasis, just like animals. Thus, research in sport psychology has generally been positivistic and had adopted quantitative methods. For example, until the 1970s methods in sport psychology were predominantly based on laboratory experiments in which researchers manipulated independent variables in an effort to predict behaviour (Martens, 1979, 1987). The dominant quantitative approach is highlighted by examining a book titled, “Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish” published by the American Psychological Association (Cone & Foster, 1993). The chapters on literature review, methodology, measurement, statistics, and analysis all make reference to positivistic/postpositivistic and quantitative approaches to research. No advice is offered to the student who wishes to conduct a study from a different perspective or with a qualitative approach. Strict boundaries between qualitative and quantitative and sport psychology and sport sociology are arguably counterproductive to the advancement of knowledge (Ingham et al., 1999).

Martens (1987) urged sport psychology researchers to develop methods and paradigms in sport psychology that value the perspectives and experiences of the researcher and the research participants. Qualitative methods are indeed gaining acceptance within sport and exercise psychology (e.g., Eccles, Walsh, & Ingledew, 2002; Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996; Sparkes, 1998; Woodman & Hardy, 2001). It is

important to note, however, that this move towards qualitative methods has generally been within the dominant postpositivist paradigm thus continuing to minimise the contribution of ways of knowing that acknowledge that the world is not value-free (Dewar & Horn, 1992). More often than not, research is described not from an epistemological perspective, but simply described as a “quantitative” or a “qualitative study.” One recent exception to this trend is a Grounded Theory study conducted by Eccles and his colleagues (2002) in which the researchers acknowledged their preconceptions about the research topic and more thoroughly described their analysis techniques as compared with other researchers (e.g., Woodman & Hardy, 2001) claiming to use Grounded Theory methods.

When describing such studies as “qualitative” researchers use such words as “rich thick description” and use methods such as participant observation, focus groups and structured, unstructured, or semi-structured in-depth interviews. It is becoming more recognised that the dichotomous split of research methods into two discrete categories of quantitative and qualitative is misleading (e.g., Crotty, 1998; Hardy et al., 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). It is also often assumed that a quantitative project is based in a positivistic paradigm and is deductive, whereas a qualitative project is inductive. However, this is not always the case. Describing a research project as qualitative or quantitative is not a substitute for declaring epistemological and theoretical assumptions: these must be understood in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the chosen methodology and methods. “Qualitative” in this thesis is used to describe the type of data collected (focus group and interview) and that the analysis was based on examining the qualities of the research area of interest. The epistemological underpinnings of the study are discussed in more detail below under the heading of Grounded Theory.

Students examining qualitative research and theoretical underpinnings for the first time can become quickly confused by the inability to place perspectives into discrete categories (see also my reflections in chapter 10). This confusion stems from researchers (e.g., Woodman & Hardy, 2001) selecting components from different perspectives as they see fit for a particular project (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Although the permeation of the boundaries between perspectives may confuse the new researcher, Denzin and Lincoln (2000a, p. 162) assert that this marks the

“emancipation” of researchers from the restrictions of the dominant single theoretical perspective of the past, that is positivism.

4.4 Grounded Theory Methodology

4.4.1 Methodological Assumptions Influencing Analysis

Epistemological assumptions within texts on Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) are generally implied, rather than explicitly stated. One of the consequences of this is that Grounded Theory has been used to answer questions within different epistemological frameworks from disciplines such as psychology and sociology and within industries such as nursing and health. This, in and of itself, is not problematic but not stating the underlying epistemological assumptions adds to methodological confusion. Benoliel (1996), among others, has criticised researchers claiming to use Grounded Theory as merely adopting some of the methods of Grounded Theory analysis while ignoring the value of social influences inherent in Grounded Theory’s symbolic interactionism roots. Rather than focusing on what is the “correct” use of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992), Charmaz (2000) posits that Grounded Theory is a methodology offering utility to many different disciplines and epistemological backgrounds. It is this perspective that I follow in my thesis. In conjunction with Charmaz’s perspective and the growing acceptance of different epistemologies it is imperative to state explicitly the assumptions underlying a Grounded Theory study. Before describing how Grounded Theory fits with my epistemological and theoretical perspective, and how I used it in the development and analysis of this study, I first will review the history of Grounded Theory and how it has become a tool within several different epistemologies.

4.4.2 The Development of Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as a response to the growing focus on positivistic inquiry in sociology which neglected the value of inductive, qualitative methods in developing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser earned his Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at Columbia University which, at the time, was well known for quantitative methodologies aimed at theory development in sociology. Strauss, on the other hand, received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago where the sociology department was well known for qualitative methods aimed at application. The development of Grounded Theory, as published in their first book “The Discovery of Grounded Theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), advocated bridging the gap between theory and empirical research. Glaser (1992, p. 16) defined the Grounded Theory approach as a “general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area.”

As noted earlier, “theory” in Grounded Theory should not be confused with a “grand theory,” or an all encompassing theory. Rather, the theory that is sought through the development of Grounded Theory is designed to eventually meet five main outcomes of sociological theory: (a) to predict and explain behaviour, (b) to advance theory, (c) to be applicable outside the domain of research, (d) to provide a perspective for examining data, and (e) to act as a guide for researching a particular topic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The first aim of prediction is not meant to imply prediction in the strict objectivist sense. It is, instead, an indication of providing a plausible explanation of the area under study. The ultimate goal is to have a grounded theory which supports “relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1).

How to achieve “grounded theory” became the research debate of the 1990s (Annells, 1996; Becker, 1993; Charmaz, 1995; Glaser, 1992; Melia, 1996; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). Much of this debate was about epistemological and theoretical assumptions. Perhaps this debate could have been avoided if Glaser and Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and later Strauss with Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), had made their epistemological assumptions clear. Instead, these

assumptions were left to the interpretations of later researchers to disentangle from the implicit assumptions in the original texts. In the 1990s the debate of how to achieve grounded theory returned to the founders with Glaser (1992) vehemently disagreeing with Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) first text explaining Grounded Theory provided students and researchers with a clear set of written guidelines for conducting qualitative research, a task that had previously been generally passed down orally from supervisor to student (Charmaz, 1995). However, this first text has also been criticised as being too abstract, especially for novice practitioners of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000). Strauss and Corbin's book (1990) was written with this critique in mind. Their aim was to provide an introductory level text for novice users of Grounded Theory. Glaser (1992) wrote a scathing reply to Strauss and Corbin's 1990 text, critiquing Strauss and Corbin for describing a method for "full conceptual description" and trying to pass it off as Grounded Theory. Glaser's (1992) greatest objection to Strauss and Corbin's (1990) book was that it was too prescriptive and thus *forced* theory to *emerge*. Stern (1994) argued that students who learned Grounded Theory from a book, rather than a mentor, further "eroded" the underlying principles of Grounded Theory. This concern echoed a broader concern in the research community that the introduction of computer analysis programmes (for both quantitative and qualitative data) allowed users to do complex analyses without understanding the underlying principles of the analysis (see chapter 7). Underlying Glaser's (1992) critique of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) book that it was too prescriptive were his ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Authors who have tried to locate the epistemological roots of Grounded Theory vary in their explanations. Most, however, agree that Grounded Theory was influenced by symbolic interactionism (e.g., Annells, 1996; Benoliel, 1996; Chamberlain, 1999; Charmaz, 2000), probably from Strauss' training under George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer at the University of Chicago. Blumer further developed Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism around the idea that meanings are developed through social interactions; these meanings influence actions, and meanings are modified through interpretation and interaction (Annells, 1996).

Ontologically, this implies the existence of separate realities for the social and natural worlds, both of which could be known, although not perfectly (Annells, 1996). The social world (or human interactions) can be known through interaction with others to develop shared meanings. The natural world, is known through interaction with the objects of nature. Excerpts from Glaser (1992) clearly demonstrate a focus on reality and true meaning grounded in data. Charmaz (2000, p. 510) thus identifies Glaser's version of Grounded Theory as positivistic, "Glaser's (1978, 1992) position often comes close to traditional positivism, with its assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionist inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data." This view is demonstrated best in Glaser's (1992) assertions that the researcher should not impose experience on the data and that the theory should be allowed to emerge from the data. According to Glaser (1992), the validity of such theory is implicit and the task of actually verifying it is left to other researchers. Glaser varied from the orthodox positivist perspective in that he valued participants' contribution to the development of social meaning. I agree with Annells (1996) who suggested that the epistemological base of Glaser's Grounded Theory was postpositivistic.

Annells (1996) cited Strauss and Corbin (1990) as bringing a relativist perspective to Grounded Theory, focused on an interpreted reality. Strauss and Corbin (1990) explicitly instruct researchers to use experience and discipline knowledge as another tool in interrogating the data. Contrary to Guba and Lincoln's (1994) and Charmaz's (2000) classification of Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory within a postpositivist perspective, Annells (1996) suggested that Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory, as indicated by the role of the researcher in constructing theory, fits best within a constructivist perspective. Admittedly, Charmaz (2000) separates the constructivist perspective as a third perspective, and the one that she follows, for Grounded Theory. Similarly, Benoliel (1996) placed Grounded Theory within an interpretivist epistemology which he based on Grounded Theory's roots in symbolic interactionism. Attempting to resolve the debate, Chamberlain explained some of the epistemological confusion:

Henwood and Pedgeon (1994) go on to argue that the contextualist position is conflicted by a tension within grounded theory between realism and constructivism, a feature of grounded theory which also has been noted by others (Annells, 1996; Charmaz, 1990). Grounded Theory attempts to be realist in reflecting participant accounts and contexts, but is constructivist at least in demanding that theory should emerge (be constructed) from data. (1999, p. 191)

Regardless of Grounded Theory's original ontological and epistemological assumptions, it is clear that Grounded Theory methods can fit with a constructivist epistemology. Annells concluded that

The classic grounded theory method is philosophically critical realist and modified objectivist in perspective, with a resultant slant toward theory generation that is postpositivist in inquiry paradigm. However, when it is relativist, subjectivist, and dialectical, grounded theory method has an evolving fit to the constructivist paradigm of inquiry. (1996, p. 391)

The epistemological debate within Grounded Theory was reviewed above to highlight the different ways in which Grounded Theory has been conceptualised. These varying epistemological assumptions ultimately influence how Grounded Theory is conducted and how results should be interpreted. I followed the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) in examining swimming coaches' perceptions of appropriateness. What this means in practice is discussed in the analysis section of chapter 5.

4.5 Evaluating Research

As stated earlier, one of the central reasons for making a researcher's epistemological stance transparent is to enable the reader to accurately evaluate the research. In describing different forms of inquiry, Lincoln and Guba (2000) examine researcher values as a way of differentiating between positivistic and constructivist methods of inquiry. A researcher's values will ultimately influence the choice of research question, theoretical framework, methods, and even dissemination of results. Lincoln and Guba (2000, p. 169) further suggest that axiology (the study of values) is inseparable from the basic assumptions of any

theoretical perspective. Whereas an objectivist epistemology requires research to exhibit internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, constructionism is judged for trustworthiness and authenticity. To judge whether research findings are trustworthy and authentic, the researcher's values must be stated and ethical issues considered (Seale, 1999). These issues are addressed in chapter 10 in a discussion of researcher reflexivity.

4.6 Quality in Qualitative Research

Quantitative studies are evaluated upon criteria such as reliability and validity. A representative sample large enough to compute normative statistics generalisable to the larger population is an important consideration in designing quantitative studies. In qualitative research, the aim is rarely nomothetic: most often it leans toward an ideographic understanding of individuals or specific experiences. The purpose of the current study was to develop a theory that related to the specific views and experiences of the research participants. The aim of this thesis was to develop, rather than to test a theory. It is therefore important to evaluate this study with criteria designed for evaluating qualitative research within Grounded Theory.

Researchers are still debating acceptable criteria and characteristics for quality (e.g., Kelle & Laurie, 1995; Sparkes, 1998, 2001; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) or what has also been termed methodological rigour in qualitative research (Hardy et al., 1996). Sparkes (2001) categorises the debate into four perspectives on the issue of validity: Replication, Parallel, Diversification, and Letting Go of Validity. Replication is the idea that quantitative and qualitative research is not inherently different and should be judged by the same criteria (e.g., reliability and validity). Silverman (1997) asserted that researchers who dismiss a universal set of criteria risk losing funding and will also desecrate the value of qualitative research. The parallel perspective is less rigid than the previous perspective but still seeks to emulate quantitative criteria. The parallel perspective is well represented in Table 4.1, in which corresponding criteria for qualitative research are sought from quantitative criteria. This perspective is often used by

researchers who use mixed methods (e.g., Caracelli & Greene, 1997; Gould, Tuffey et al., 1996; Hardy et al., 1996; Scanlan et al., 1989). The diversification perspective is held by researchers who value validity but view it as being relative and socially constructed. The replication and parallel perspectives best fit within objective epistemologies, thus rejecting any other form of knowledge. Whilst these perspectives limit what is valid knowledge, the diversification perspective is equally problematic in that, by adding a prefix to the word validity, anything can appear to have methodological rigour (Sparkes, 2001). The final perspective presented by Sparkes (2001) is letting go of validity and, instead, using criteria that fit the epistemological and methodological assumptions of the research project. Sparkes (2001) proposed that different criteria can co-exist and that researchers should continue openly to debate the merits of each, rather than blindly dismissing each others' approaches.

Table 4.1 A Comparison of Terms for Assessing Quality in Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Quantitative Term	Qualitative Term	Method for Achieving Criteria
Internal validity	Credibility	Prolonged engagement Persistent observation Triangulation Peer debriefing* Negative case analysis* Referential adequacy Member checking*
External validity	Transferability	Provide thick description* Database for reader to judge transferability
Reliability	Dependability (Trustworthiness)	Achieve credibility* Multiple methods* Stepwise replication Inquiry audit
Objectivity	Conceivability Confirmability Plausibility	Inquiry audit Audit trail*

Note. Modified from Lincoln and Guba (2000), Hardy, Jones, and Gould (1996), and Sparkes, (2001). The asterisks in the right column indicate methods that were used in this thesis.

Following Sparkes' (2001) recommendation that evaluative criteria for qualitative research should be commensurable with the aims, objectives, and epistemological assumptions of the research project, criteria for evaluating the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory are described here. Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness throughout their seminal description of developing a grounded theory. Reliability and external validity, however, are omitted as these are not the aims of Grounded Theory. They argued that a grounded theory should be assessed on the detailed description of the process of the theory generation, not its verification. This is based on the acknowledgement that verification is an unrealistic task when, unlike the fixed conditions of a laboratory, social phenomena are constantly changing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded Theory is generally intended for the development of a substantive theory, not a grand theory that one would expect to be generalisable. Substantive theory is defined as that, "developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32). The substantive theory should have enough detail and variance built in that it can be used to explain similar situations. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 267) stated that, "the real merit of a substantive theory lies in its ability to speak specifically for the populations from which it was derived and to apply back to them."

Specific criteria for evaluating research based on Grounded Theory can be divided into two elements: the research process and the research product. Issues of credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness are evident in both evaluations. The seven criteria presented by Strauss and Corbin for evaluating the research process focus on sampling and analysis. It is imperative that the research is described in sufficient detail to enable evaluation of decisions about sampling, emerging categories, relationships between categories, theoretical sampling, negative cases, and the emergence of the core category. Strauss and Corbin offered eight criteria for evaluating the product, or the grounding of the research. Concepts should be

generated from the data and systematically related to create categories. Variation should be built into the theory with the conditions for variation well explained. The theory should account for process, or how the problems under study (and solutions) develop. The theory should have relevance for the research participants and, ultimately, should “become part of the discussions and ideas exchanged among relevant social and professional groups” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 272). As a caveat, Strauss and Corbin reminded readers that the above criteria are guidelines, not rules.

Wilson and Hutchinson (1996) outlined a number of common methodological mistakes that researchers make when purporting to follow Grounded Theory. These included premature closure (not moving beyond description into making conceptual links between categories that then form the basis for developing theory) (e.g., Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993; Johnston & Carroll, 1998; Scanlan et al., 1989), being overly generic and reducing the phenomena to a few stages, imposing theoretical concepts on the data (e.g., Woodman & Hardy, 2001), and using terminology that is not congruent with the epistemological roots of Grounded Theory. Glaser and Strauss recommend the following criteria that will reduce the above mistakes and will assist in recognising when a project is ready for closure:

When the researcher is convinced that his [*sic*] conceptual framework forms a systematic theory, that it is a reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied, that it is couched in a form possible for others to use in studying a similar area, and that he can publish his results with confidence, then he is near the end of his research. (1967, pp. 223-225).

Researchers who avoid these common methodological mistakes also carefully describe (e.g., Eccles et al., 2002) and provide examples of their analytical process (Côté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995b) as well as their research assumptions (e.g., Eccles et al., 2002).

4.7 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

In their recently revised guidelines for the training of graduate students, the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) advised that students should have skill in the use of qualitative data analysis software packages (ESRC, 2001). The guidelines are aimed at a number of disciplines, including psychology. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) was used in this thesis. Therefore, this section examines the benefits and potential pitfalls of using computers to assist with qualitative data analysis.

With the development of CAQDAS has come debate about the appropriateness of using computers to analyse qualitative data (see for example, Catterall & Maclaran, 1997; Dohan & Sanchez-Jankowski, 1998; Evans, 2000; Kelle, 1995; Kelle & Laurie, 1995; L. Richards, 1998; T. Richards & Richards, 1995; Seidel & Kelle, 1995; Weitzman, 2000). The key issue being debated is whether CAQDAS changes the way analysis is conducted and to what extent it enhances or detracts from the quality of qualitative research.

One critique of CAQDAS is that it has the potential to transform qualitative research into a rigid, automated analysis of text that, in actuality, requires human interpretation (Kelle, 1995). This fear has an historical grounding in that the first computer programmes for textual analysis, developed in the 1960s, were designed for quantitative content analysis (Kelle, 1995). Some researchers are, indeed, using modern CAQDAS to automatically code text for quick frequency counts (e.g., Woodman & Hardy, 2001) and ignoring pertinent interpretations of the rich data (see L. Richards, 1999, for a detailed discussion of data richness). Quantifying data is an appropriate use of the software; however, it becomes problematic when researchers misrepresent their analysis (e.g., claiming qualitative analysis), do not state their epistemological and theoretical assumptions, or cite the particular computer programme in an attempt to validate their findings. The use of CAQDAS in such circumstances can then lead to a negative reputation. Whilst the computer may make it easier to conduct quantitative analysis of qualitative data, it is important to note that this can also be done using manual methods. If

misrepresentation occurs, fault must lay with the researcher not CAQDAS. Blaming CAQDAS for the failings of the user is analogous to bringing criminal charges against a household tool used as a murder weapon instead of prosecuting the murderer. The good qualitative researcher must still interpret, conceptualise, examine relationships, document decisions, and develop theory. The computer can assist in these tasks but by no means does the computer analyse qualitative data. And as Lyn Richards, the co-originator of NVIVO, cogently reminds students, “it doesn’t write the thesis either” (personal communication, 1 February, 2002).

Another concern of CAQDAS critics is that researchers may choose their theoretical perspectives and analysis techniques based on the capabilities of CAQDAS rather than adopting a theoretical perspective appropriate for exploring the research question (Lonkila, 1995). Lonkila (1995) argues that programmes such as Atlas/ti or NUD*IST (and now NVIVO) were designed to facilitate Grounded Theory analysis and have the potential to encourage the growth of this methodology at the possible expense of other equally viable options. To a certain extent the programming behind CAQDAS does influence manuscript preparation, coding, retrieval, and the development of analysis (e.g., cyclical versus linear and static versus dynamic) (L. Richards, 1999). In NVIVO there are many options for document preparation (plain text, some rich text, rich text with sections, audio clips, pictures), coding (e.g., inductive or deductive, in vivo or researcher defined, manual or automated), retrieval (e.g., by node, by document, text searchers, matrix searches, refined by attributes), dynamic links to memos, documents, and nodes, and visual representations (e.g., coding stripes, models). Arguably, the choices available in NVIVO return the power of analysis to the researcher who must choose wisely amongst a set of tools and is by no means required to use them all. In the current project, Grounded Theory was chosen as a methodology appropriate to developing relevant theory in a substantive area. NVIVO was chosen because it supported the different techniques used in Grounded Theory from the beginning of the project (writing preliminary memos) through coding and analysis to the final model. Following one of the canons of scientific research, the research question should guide the use of methods and analysis tools, not the reverse.

A false expectation of CAQDAS is that it will enhance rigour and make analysis more systematic (Weitzman, 2000). These expectations are only met if the researcher is conscientious and makes use of the tools in CAQDAS that facilitate organisation, consistency checks (is text being coded consistently with the definition of the category), record keeping, comparison of categories, and examination of relationships (Weitzman, 2000). One distinct advantage of CAQDAS over manual methods is the ability to organise data and analysis efficiently. Security passwords can also be programmed and multiple backups made to protect the data and analysis from theft or loss. Making an entire backup of the hard copy used in manual methods is possible but is comparatively very time consuming. Clerical tasks such as photocopying and labelling bits of text so they can be traced back to their original documents are automated in CAQDAS. This provides quicker access for coding and retrieving data and increases the capacity of data that can be handled (L. Richards & Richards, 2000).

One caveat, however, is that the technology does not decrease the amount of time needed for the brain to read, conceptualise, and analyse data. If researchers are persuaded into thinking that CAQDAS will allow them to analyse more data, they are likely to become “overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information that becomes available when using computer technology” (Kelle & Laurie, 1995). One common fear is that the computer might distance the researcher from the data too much (Weitzman, 2000). The opposite could, however, be argued in that the automation of clerical tasks allows the researcher more time to spend on analysis. Another advantage of CAQDAS is that it facilitates complex Boolean (e.g., and, or, less, not) searches that would be extremely complicated, if not impossible, using manual methods (L. Richards & Richards, 2000). As a powerful organisation tool CAQDAS is invaluable (Côté et al., 1993). Furthermore, the built-in tools for recording decisions, conceptual and theoretical thinking, and links between memos, documents, nodes, and models assists in the development of a dynamic audit trail to meet the criteria of transparency.

In conclusion, a good researcher will use the computer as a tool to aid quality analysis. The decision of the ESRC to endorse training in CAQDAS combined with Miles and Huberman’s (1994, pp. 43-33) comment that “the

researcher who does not use software beyond a word processor will be hampered in comparison to those who do” clearly indicates that CAQDAS has been accepted as beneficial to qualitative analysis (L. Richards & Richards, 2000). Ultimately, however, this is with the caveat that the benefits of CAQDAS are dependent upon the skills of the researcher, how the researcher chooses to use available tools, and how CAQDAS is taught (Pat Bazeley and Lyn Richards, personal communication, 2002).

Chapter 5: Methods and Procedures: Focus Groups

5.1 Introduction to the Iterative Process of Grounded Theory

As discussed in chapter 4, Grounded Theory is an iterative process that starts inductively with the collection of the data (e.g., one focus group or interview) followed by data analysis and moves toward a deductive analysis as ideas are formed and explored through each subsequent data collection and analysis. Collection and analysis are not completed in discrete stages. In this thesis, the analysis from the previous data collection guided the prompts used in the next data collection. Likewise, the analysis of the latter data collection informed the data analysis of the prior data collection. Figure 5.1 illustrates the iterative process of this thesis (adapted from Johnston, Corban, & Clarke, 1999).

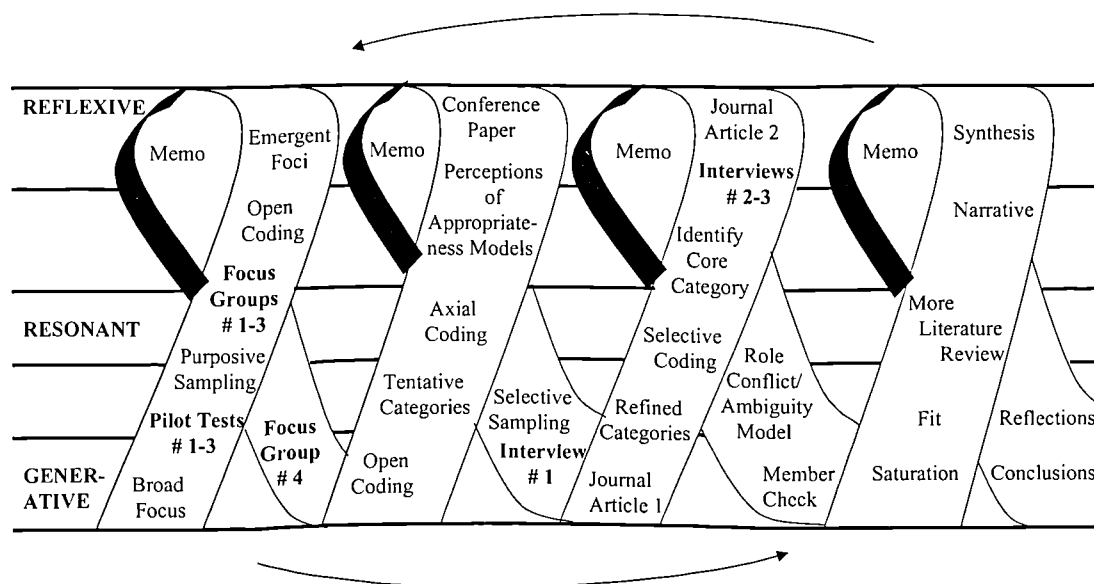


Figure 5.1. Data collection and analysis for this thesis, as depicted within the iterative process of Grounded Theory (adapted from Johnston et al., 1999).

The pilot testing phase and the four major data collection points, which occurred over 18 months, are illustrated with bold font in Figure 5.1. These included focus groups and individual interviews. In between data collection periods, my interpretation of the data was facilitated by using the analytic methods of Grounded Theory (open coding, axial coding, writing memos, identifying the core category, etc.), preparing and presenting conference papers about my findings, writing two journal articles for publication, discussing my preliminary results with coaches, and developing models. This iterative process is difficult to describe within the linear confines of a manuscript. Therefore, this chapter contains only the design and the analytical approach used for the first phase of the project in which focus groups were used to examine coaches' perceptions of appropriateness with regards to coach/swimmer sexual relationships. The design of the interview phase of the project and its analysis are described in chapter 7. The results from the data analysis are discussed in two main chapters. Coaches' perceptions of appropriateness (from the focus group data only) are examined in chapter 6, and role conflict and role ambiguity (from the focus group and interview data) are examined in chapter 8.

5.2 Focus Group Participants

Nineteen male swimming coaches participated in the focus groups. Males, rather than females, were selected for this study not only because they are over represented in coaching at the high school (Lackey, 1990), university (Acosta & Carpenter, 2000, 2002), and elite levels (Kirby et al., 2000; West & Brackenridge, 1990) but also because the majority of reported sexual abuse is by male perpetrators (Fergusson & Mullen, 1999; Grubin, 1998). Brackenridge and Kirby (1997) have hypothesised that athletes within the 'stage of imminent achievement' (SIA; high level athletes who have the potential to, but have not yet earned elite honours) may be most vulnerable to coaches who groom them for sexual abuse. Therefore, males coaching swimmers within the range of SIA for swimming (about 13-17 years old) at international, national, and developmental levels were selected for this study.

The coaches ranged in age from 27 to 67 years old, had been coaching for an average of 17 years, and spent on average 22 hours a week coaching swimming. Nineteen coaches, who were available to meet at a common time and location, participated in the focus groups.

5.3 Design

Focus groups were selected as the initial method of data collection for this study for their ability to meet four criteria described here. First, an exploratory method was desired because there is a dearth of empirical research focusing on sexual abuse in sport from the perspective of the coach. Secondly, as this thesis is structured around the methodology of the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), an open ended, rather than deductive or prescriptive approach to data collection was required. Thirdly, because one of the research aims was to examine coaches' attitudes about socially constructed norms, it was important to choose a method that would allow for group discussion. Finally, it was important to not only examine *what* attitudes coaches held about sexual and intimate coach/athlete relationships, but also to examine *why* they held these attitudes and what underlying constructs related to these attitudes. In considering these four main issues, it was decided that the best approach would be to start with focus groups. The design of the focus groups is described in more detail in section 5.4.3.

5.4 Procedures

5.4.1 Recruitment

Participants were selected with the assistance of administrative officials from the ASA and the swimming coaches' trade union (BSCTA). Coaches (n = 70) who were identified as meeting the selection criteria, as described above, were sent a joint letter of introduction from the ASA, BSCTA, and Institute of Swimming Teachers and Coaches (ISTC) which voiced organisational support for myself and

the study (see Appendix B). At a national competition, a national representative for the BSCTA introduced the lead researcher to a number of these coaches, all of whom then agreed to be contacted for the study. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, coaches with former allegations of abuse were specifically excluded from this phase of the research and were invited to participate instead in individual interviews. All 70 coaches who received initial information about the study agreed to participate. However, due to scheduling difficulties, only 19 coaches eventually participated in focus groups. Participants were not paid for their participation but they were informed that refreshments would be provided during the focus groups.

5.4.2 Ethics

The recruitment, data collection, and data storage procedures adopted for this study all adhered to the Data Protection Act of 1998, and to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society. Audio recordings of the focus groups were kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office when not in use and will be erased at the completion of this thesis. I transcribed all of the tapes myself and used alias names to replace identifying information in the transcripts. When data are presented in this thesis, alias names are used and identifying information is obscured to protect coach anonymity. Electronic versions of the transcripts were stored in a software programme that could only be accessed by password. Backups were password protected and stored on Zip discs in a locked filing cabinet.

The University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Sub-Committee expressed concerns about issues of confidentiality and guilty knowledge, which I responded to (see Appendix C). Before commencing this study, my proposal was formally approved by the Research Ethics Sub-Committee. Once participation was confirmed, participants completed a consent form, confidentiality statement, and demographics questionnaire (samples in Appendix D). Upon completion of the focus groups, coaches received a debrief form which included contact information for counselling services and concerns about abuse (see Appendix E).

Before entering into research which has the potential to reveal abusive relationships, ethical issues must be considered. The primary issue to be considered in this study is what action would be taken if information was revealed which indicated a child was in danger of sexual abuse from a coach in the study. Secondly, coaches in this study could have named and accused a coach not present in the study. The issue of mandated reporting is complicated because it results in a breach of researcher confidentiality.

Even though I lead child protection workshops for sports coaches, I do not feel that I am qualified to make professional judgements about when it is in the best interest of the child *not* to report suspicions of abuse. After reviewing literature about the benefits and limitations of researchers reporting suspected abuse (see Appendix F for a more thorough discussion of mandated reporting), I made the decision to report any suspicions of abuse. I explicitly stated in the informed consent forms that any illegal activity divulged would be reported. I also reminded all participants of my intentions to report before the start of focus groups. If participants still wished to discuss illegal situations, they were instructed to use alias names to maintain the confidentiality of the individuals involved. As mentioned in Appendix C, it was expected that the use of alias names would prevent me from acquiring any knowledge about specific abuse. However, if suspicions or allegations of child abuse had arisen, I agreed with my supervisors to report the situation immediately after the focus group to my first supervisor who would then use the ASA's confidential Swimline to report the situation. (No such situations arose.)

It could be argued that asking coaches to use alias names when speaking of illegal activities so that reporting would not be possible is avoiding my ethical responsibility to the safety of the children involved. However, my intent was to give the coaches an opportunity to speak about these activities if they felt it was relevant to the discussion. By asking them not to reveal the full details, they were in control over what would happen to the knowledge they were sharing. The coaches did, in fact, use the alias names, which had the added benefit of encouraging the coaches to talk candidly without being unprofessional.

In designing the focus groups for this study, recommendations from other researchers of sensitive topics were taken into account (e.g., Morgan & Krueger,

1993; Rospenda, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998). The concerns of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee, as mentioned previously, were focused on the fact that in focus group data collection, confidentiality standards are not met by normal precautions for data confidentiality. Confidentiality becomes a special concern because the researcher does not have direct control over what participants may disclose about the research outside the focus group (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). In the focus groups used to examine sexual harassment in the workplace, the moderator told participants that, "...though we recognise that we can't control what happens outside of the discussion group all participants in the room have signed consent forms agreeing to keep what we discuss today confidential" (K. M. Rospenda, personal communication, 26 August, 1999). Following Rospenda, and after consulting with the legal officer at University of Gloucestershire (Appendix C), it was decided to include a separate statement of confidentiality to be signed by all focus group participants which reminded participants that they were signing a legally binding agreement (Appendix D). Ultimately this protected the University and myself from legal liability if participants broke confidentiality. While the signed agreement constitutes reasonable precautions to protect the participants' confidentiality, participants are free agents and have the potential to violate the agreement. To further protect the participants, inappropriate disclosures were discouraged.

Encouraging appropriate disclosure while discouraging inappropriate disclosure is a skill needed by those moderating focus groups on sensitive topics (Zeller, 1993). One technique for encouraging a safe environment for disclosure is recognising the right of an individual to remain quiet. Therefore, several ground rules were established (see Appendix G) including, a statement read by the researcher: "whilst everyone is encouraged to share their experiences and perspectives, no one will be forced to speak." To discourage inappropriate disclosure, which might stifle the discussion and increase risk to the discloser in the event of a participant breach of confidentiality, participants were reminded not to share information deemed "too personal" or concerning personal illegal behaviour.

A quality assurance questionnaire was designed to assess coaches' satisfaction with the study (see Appendix J). Coaches were asked to quantify their satisfaction with how they were contacted for the study, and how satisfied they were

with the way the study was conducted. They were also invited to make any further comments that they did not raise during the focus group. The decision to include the feedback form was based on discussion with another doctoral student about ways to reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and participants, demonstrate respect for the participants, and to ensure quality (S. Hill, personal communication, January 2000). The decision was also influenced by Kitzinger's (1999) recommendation that participants have the opportunity to share private comments with the facilitator at the completion of the focus group. Responses from the feedback form are discussed in the reflective chapter (chapter 11).

5.4.3 Focus Group Format

Decisions about the format of the focus group were based on advice from the academic literature and three pilot focus group sessions (see Appendix I). The discussion presented here includes the best way to introduce the focus group to the participants.

When describing the purpose of the focus group to participants, the summary statement "finding out their attitudes and opinions" can be limiting (Morgan, 1988). Morgan suggested the statement, "learning about participants' experiences and perspectives" (p. 25) because this has a broader connotation than attitudes or opinions. Focusing on experiences rather than attitudes, according to Morgan (1988), discourages bland discussion of opinions which may not relate to behaviour, whereas encouraging discussion of experiences will lead to a better understanding of key factors influencing one's attitudes and opinions. Additionally, Morgan (1988) asserted that individuals will more readily discuss different experiences than they will challenge others' opinions. The specific use of the word "experience" in relation to a topic that includes sexual abuse could prove problematic. It was decided to use the term "experience" but, as mentioned previously, I verbally reminded participants not to reveal any experiences that they considered too personal. Finally, participants were provided with a list of alias names to use when discussing specific situations.

Despite attention to confidentiality and encouraging a safe environment for appropriate disclosure, internalisation may occur. Internalisations are deeply ingrained personal opinions which, when faced with opposing group members, one may be reluctant to divulge (Albrecht, Johnson, & Walther, 1993). It is important to consider individual characteristics when creating an environment where everybody feels safe expressing their opinions.

Morgan (1988) has suggested that the main criteria for deciding whether to run separate or mixed groups according to background variables (e.g., sex, age, occupation) should be based on whether the participants realistically would have an opinion on the topic and if they would feel comfortable discussing the topic in front of each other. Yet he also notes that, when considering background variables, the goal is “not homogeneity in attitudes” (Morgan, 1988, p. 46) which could result in little discussion. The cost of running focus groups and the practical consideration of co-ordinating a sufficient number of coaches with similar backgrounds to meet in one place require the least amount of recruitment restrictions possible whilst maintaining a fruitful discussion environment. Knowing what criteria may inhibit discussion can be difficult to ascertain before actually conducting the focus group. Thus three pilot focus group sessions were conducted to examine the best participant structure for the focus groups and the best content design. A summary of the pilot focus groups is provided in Appendix H. A detailed discussion about the history of focus groups and design options is in Appendix I.

The main issue about coaching background that arose from the pilot tests was that a coach with less experience felt intimidated by the more experienced coaches in his group. This was successfully resolved in the next focus group by having the coaches complete a demographic questionnaire rather than publicly disclosing their experience and qualifications. Further decisions about group separation were made after consulting with administrative officials from the ASA and the BSCTA. It was decided that, for logistical reasons and to discourage large power differentials, international and national (elite/sub-elite) level coaches would be placed in separate focus groups from those who only coached at the development level.

5.4.4 Vignettes

Pilot testing revealed the difficulties of focusing the discussion while maintaining an inductive approach. Other researchers (e.g., Kitzinger, 1999; Leonard, 1999) have overcome these difficulties through the use of vignettes, a strategy that was successful in the final pilot test. Vignettes, or brief scenarios of several sentences long, have been used in both quantitative and qualitative research, generally with three main objectives: (a) to explore the influence of context, (b) to clarify judgements, and (c) to provide concrete examples that enable sensitive topics to be explored without being personally threatening. (For examples of vignettes used in child abuse and harassment literature, see Barter & Renold, 2000; Carlson, 1999; Leonard, 1999; Maynard & Wiederman, 1997; Miller-Perrin, 1998). A number of researchers have used vignettes in postpositivistic, quantitative studies to examine the influence of gender, age, presence of alcohol, use of force and other similar variables on the appropriateness of situations that might be construed as sexually abusive or harassing (e.g., Bethke & DeJoy, 1993; Carlson, 1999; Cartar, Hicks, & Slane, 1996; Felmler, 1999; Katz, Hannon, & Whitten, 1996; Mellott, Wagner, & Broussard, 1997; Williams & Cyr, 1992). In qualitative research, vignettes have been used to explore sensitive topics, general attitudes, beliefs, and ethical frameworks; to compare perceptions of different groups; to get participants talking; to close an interview; and in conjunction with other methods such as focus groups (Barter & Renold, 1999). The use of vignettes with sensitive topics and within focus groups is examined in more detail in Appendix I.

Seven coach-athlete intimate/sexual relationship vignettes were created for use in this study (see Appendix K.) It was important that the vignettes be not only plausible but also ambiguous enough to leave room for discussion. The vignettes were derived from real scenarios as reported in the media but which were amalgamated and anonymised. The seven scenarios depicted: a flirtatious athlete; a coach admitting being attracted to swimmers but not acting on his feelings; a coach engaging a swimmer in long discussions about non-swimming topics on the drive home; a coach and retired swimmer moving in together as intimate partners; a coach and swimmer getting married; a coach rationalising his sexual relationship with a 15

year old swimmer as “love;” and a coach convicted of sexual misconduct with an under-age swimmer.

5.4.5 Focus Group Procedures

In addition to the pilot tests, four focus groups were conducted, one with international level coaches, two with national level coaches, and one with regional level coaches. I moderated all of the focus group discussions, which lasted about 1 hour each and included 3 to 7 coaches per group. One hour was decided as a reasonable time period in which I could expect the coaches to stay focused on the topic. The elite and two national focus groups took place during breaks at a national competition. The regional level focus group took place 4 months later in a meeting room familiar to the participating coaches. Sandwiches, fruit, and soft drinks were made available for the participants before, during, and after the focus groups.

I introduced myself and reminded the coaches of the purpose of the study. Coaches were asked to sign consent and confidentiality forms in my presence before I started the focus groups. The demographic questionnaire was generally completed before the focus group but, due to time constraints, in a few cases it was completed afterwards. I reminded coaches of my responsibility to report abuse and provided them with alias names in the event that they wished to discuss real cases of coach/athlete relationships. In addition to acquiring written consent to audio-record, I asked oral permission to audio-record the focus groups before switching on the recorder. The seven coach athlete intimate/sexual relationship scenarios were introduced as an ice-breaker to facilitate the group discussion (Kitzinger, 1999). Participants were asked collectively to rate the scenarios from the most appropriate to the least appropriate and thoroughly to discuss the reasons for their rankings. Summary and reflective prompts (see Appendix L) were used as needed to enhance the discussion; in some situations I purposely did not intervene and instead used silence to generate deeper discussion. As far as possible, the prompts were void of leading questions and I did not use topic-specific prompts such as “age difference” unless the participants introduced them first. The exact length of the focus group

depended on the commitments of the group. After 60 minutes, I informed the group of the time and invited them to conclude the discussion or continue for 15 more minutes. Two groups continued for approximately 15 more minutes. Upon completion of the discussion, I thanked coaches asked them to complete the Quality Assurance Questionnaire and gave them each a copy of the Debrief Statement.

5.5 Analysis

5.5.1 Introduction

All of the focus groups were conducted, transcribed, and analysed by myself. The focus groups and interviews were transcribed verbatim. A transcription guide (Easton, McComish, & Greenberg, 2000) was created to increase consistency in transcription notes (e.g., what to do when a statement was difficult to understand; see Appendix M). After completing the transcript, the entire recording was listened to again and the transcript examined for accuracy.

This following section on analysis is included in the thesis to give transparency to the data analysis process and provide an audit trail. Criteria for quality in qualitative research presented in the previous chapter are referred to throughout this section. The main purpose of this section is to explain the process of a Grounded Theory analysis and how and why the software programme QSR NVIVO (herein after referred to as NVIVO) was used. Detailed examples of each analysis technique are illustrated through examples of how NVIVO was used. Many of the terms used in the following section are specific to the language of Grounded Theory and NVIVO. Definitions for these terms can be found in the glossary (located at the beginning of this thesis).

5.5.2 Introduction to QSR NVIVO

Qualitative Research Solutions, International (QSR) has developed two product lines for qualitative data analysis. The original programme, NUD*IST,

which stands for Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching, and Theorising, was first created by Professors Lyn and Tom Richards in the early 1980s when the former was looking for more efficient ways to manage her data than the messy task of photocopying, cutting, highlighting, and filing interviews and coding by hand. It is also difficult to conduct complex searches of the data without the assistance of a computer. Tom Richards, a computer scientist, created the answer to her problem by creating NUD*IST, a programme that was easy to use, organised data, allowed for links between the data, allowed for detailed memos to be added to the documents or coding, and enabled complex searching of the text and coding. QSR NUD*IST VIVO (NVIVO's less commonly used full name) was first produced in 1999 and was designed to provide the same services as NUD*IST but in a much more refined way. It was named for 'in vivo' coding, that is, naming a category directly from a participant's own words. The programme facilitates naming in this way but does not require it.

5.5.3 The Iterative Process of Grounded Theory and NVIVO

The software programme NVIVO facilitated the iterative process of Grounded Theory in a number of ways. I started my project in NVIVO before collecting any data so that I could record initial thoughts in memos and my research journal. As the data were integrated into the project, memos were attached to focus group documents and coding categories. The programme allows for open coding, axial coding (making links between codes), hyperlinks to non-textual data such as audio-clips or photographs, coding according to demographic information, and the exploring of ideas visually with a modeller. Rather than requiring that all of the data are collected before analysis can start, the programme has been intentionally designed to encourage researchers to analyse data as they are collected (Lyn Richards, personal communication, 1 February 2002). The organisational power of the programme allows for text searches, ideas to be linked, data coded and searched, and models explored much more easily than with manual methods. However, this does not imply that the computer is doing the analysis. I asked the questions, interpreted the data, decided what was coded and simply used the computer

programme to maximise efficiency in these processes, much in the same way that using a word processor makes writing a thesis more efficient but by no means automated. As mentioned at the start of the chapter, the iterative, interconnected nature of data collection and data analysis is difficult to describe in the linear structure of a written paper. For clarity, however, the data analysis process is described here in a linear style.

5.5.4 Computer Specifications

The current project was conducted on a Dell Inspiron 7000 laptop, running Microsoft Windows 98, with a Pentium II, 300 MHz processor, and 128 megabytes (MB) of random access memory (RAM). The completed project occupied 21 MB of hard drive space. Backup copies of the NVIVO project were kept on Zip disks and CD ROMS in two different secure locations.

5.5.5 Starting a Grounded Theory Project in NVIVO

Empirical data are not required to start working in an NVIVO project. The current project started on 18 August, 1999 with the imported Microsoft Word document which was an annotated bibliography of 51 academic articles that had been read during the first six months of my doctoral studies. Importing the literature review document into NVIVO served two purposes: to help learn the functions of NVIVO and to be able to code the literature review notes in a way that would facilitate easy retrieval by key categories (e.g., author, year, sample size, method, findings) for writing the literature review or theoretically expanding categories (di Gregorio, 2000). Figure 5.2 illustrates the document explorer as of 24 October, 2000. The left pane displays the different folders and all of the documents inside the selected folder 'All Documents.' Bolded titles indicate that the document has some coding. The right pane displays the details of the documents from the selected folder in the left pane. The other documents displayed in Figure 5.2 include notes on academic papers that were read after the first import and research journal entries (see section 5.5.6).

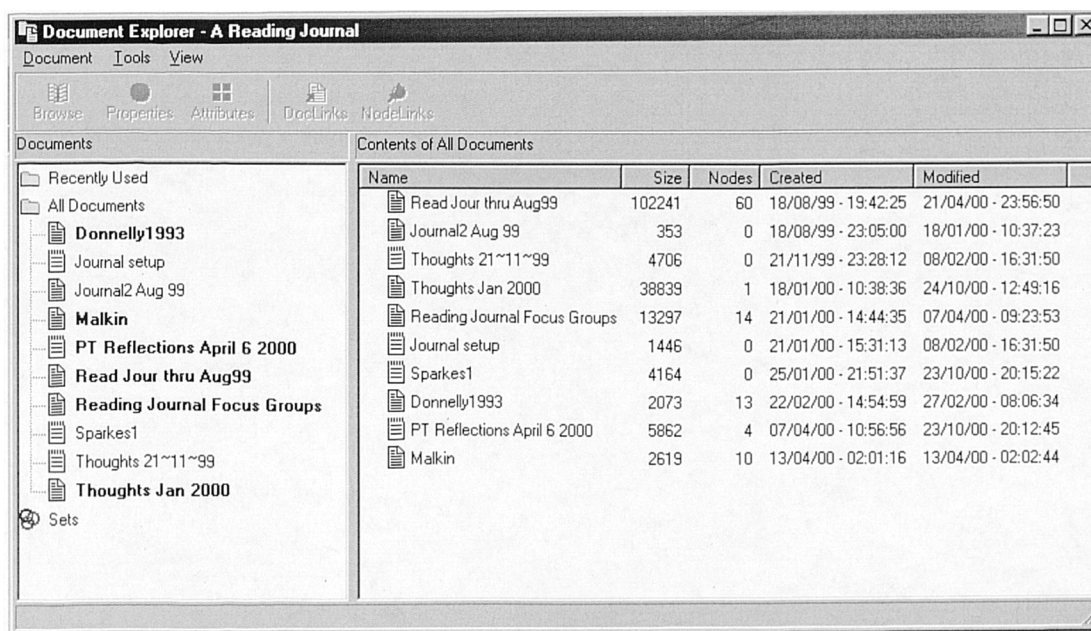


Figure 5.2. The NVIVO document explorer for this project as of 24 October, 2000.

One of the main reasons for importing the literature review notes was to facilitate the easy retrieval of the notes. Figure 5.3 illustrates the node (categories) explorer from 24 October, 2000 and the coding categories for the reading notes. The left panel shows the reading subheads (e.g., Reference, Keywords, Research Aim, Main Findings, Methods) and the right panel shows the individual nodes of the Reference node which is selected (although not visibly so) in the left column. Notes on Horn's (1992) article could easily be viewed by selecting the Horn title and clicking the browse button. Alternatively, a search could be conducted for all of the articles containing a particular method, such as focus groups. The reading notes document was automatically coded into these different nodes by using a coding function called "Code by Section." Up to nine levels of headers (in Microsoft Word or NVIVO) can be used to indicate sections for automated coding. The reading notes here contained two headers. The top level header referred to the cited reference and the remaining reading subheads were second level headers. Keeping literature review notes in NVIVO allowed me to search them, code them, or link

them to other documents (e.g., memos, research journals), thus integrating the literature more closely with the research process.

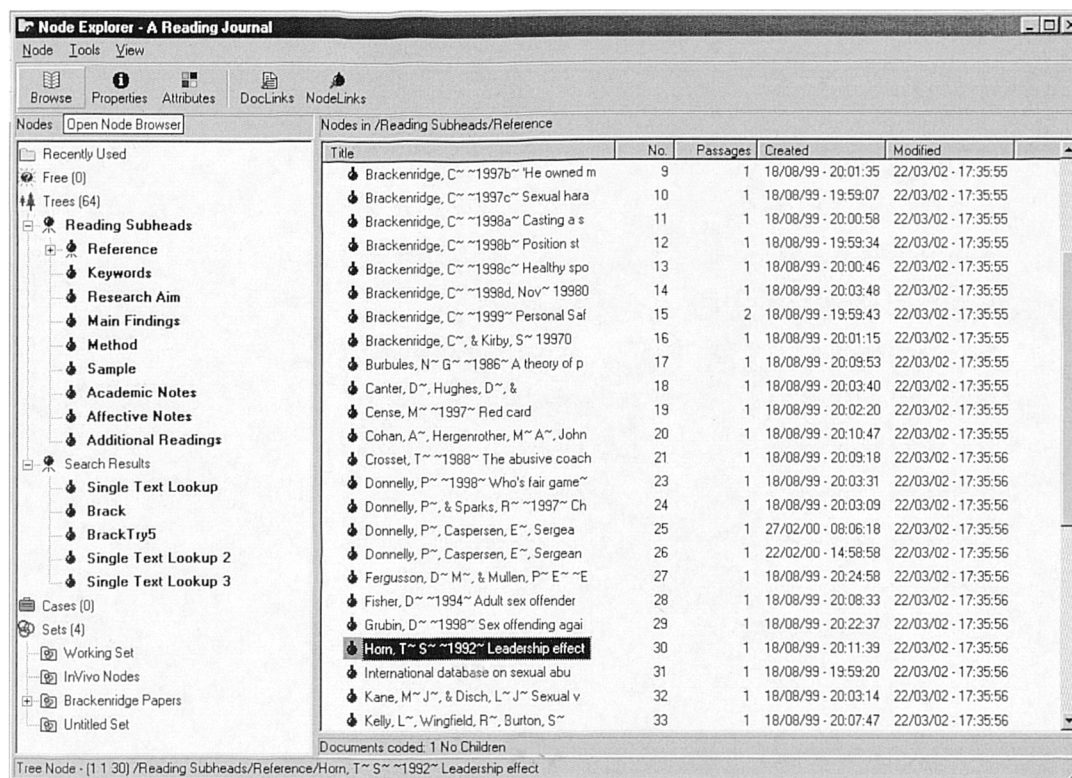


Figure 5.3. The NVIVO node explorer for reading notes as of 24 October 2000.

5.5.6 Prior Knowledge in a Grounded Theory Project

One of the main tenets of Grounded Theory is that coding should emerge from the data. That is, any concept in the analysis should be supported from the data, rather than from preconceived models, theories, or hypotheses. This has repercussions for conducting and writing a detailed literature review before collecting data. Depending on which thread of Grounded Theory is followed, the use of prior knowledge has different applications. Strauss and Corbin (1998) encouraged the use of discipline-based knowledge as long as the knowledge fits the data and is not inappropriately applied to it. Glaser agreed that:

The analyst's assumptions, experiences and knowledge are not necessarily bad in and of themselves. They are helpful in developing alertness or sensitivity to what is going on in the observational-interview data, but they are not the subject's perspective. (1992, p. 49)

He, however, advocated a more objective perspective when he advised, "these sources of theoretical sensitivity must be put aside. Indeed, the analyst should just not know as he approaches the data, so he does not even have to waste time correcting his preconceptions" (Glaser, 1992, p. 50). I followed the interpretivist perspective in which it is not necessary for researchers to set aside their specific interests, but it *is* important to be self-aware. Where, Glaser (1992) accused Strauss and Corbin (1990) of forcing data, Charmaz acknowledged that with the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory she "*generates* data by investigating aspects of life that the research participant takes for granted" (1995, p. 36).

Glaser (1992), Strauss and Corbin (1998) agreed that writing the literature review too early in a Grounded Theory study may unduly influence the data collection and analysis and may prove a waste of time if the data lead the analyst in a different direction. However, Strauss and Corbin (1998) are more pragmatic with their admission that it may be impossible to delay the literature review completely. As was the case in the current study, researchers are often required to present research proposals to funding boards, supervisors, research degree committees, and ethics committees before any data are collected. When an academic degree requires a unique contribution to knowledge, an initial review of the literature is also necessary in selecting a topic area and preliminary research question. Strauss and Corbin (1998) advised that, whilst some literature review is necessary, an exhaustive literature review might be inhibiting. In the current study, the literature review pertaining to sexual harassment and abuse in sport was written early in the project. Because there is a paucity of research in this area and it would be required in the final thesis, writing this segment early did not constitute a wasted effort. This review did not unduly bias my interpretation of the analysis as demonstrated by the themes that emerged (presented in chapters 6 and 8). The first drafts of the epistemology, methodology, and methods chapters were also written early in the project. I read widely in other academic areas such as criminal psychology, sex offender theories, sexual harassment theories, and child sexual abuse. I took notes

on these articles but the integration of these into a literature review was delayed, allowing the data analysis to guide the focus of the thesis.

Using NVIVO in the early stages of a research project does not need to be restricted to keeping notes on academic articles; it may also be used for the research journal. On 9 March, 1999 I started a research journal for this project in which to record personal thoughts, theoretical ideas, and any concerns relating to the research project. The research journal is an important tool for reflection on the research process including the reciprocal influence of the research on the researcher. This is especially important when researching sensitive topics like sexual abuse (Brackenridge, 1999). The research journal was a source both for cathartic output and for confidence as I could look back and see personal growth over the course of the project.

One advantage of keeping the journal in NVIVO, as opposed to in a Microsoft Word document or in a hardbound book, was that it allowed for links to be created to relevant documents, nodes, or even external files such as web pages or electronic photographs. Headers for each entry allowed for easily searching the journal for a particular entry (see Figure 5.4, the document explorer on the left side). A third advantage was the ability to code the document. I coded the journal for theoretical notes for further examination, ideas to discuss with supervisors, and personal issues (see Figure 5.4, the node explorer on the right side). This coding was used to send questions directly to my research supervisors and to pull out sections for the reflective chapter.

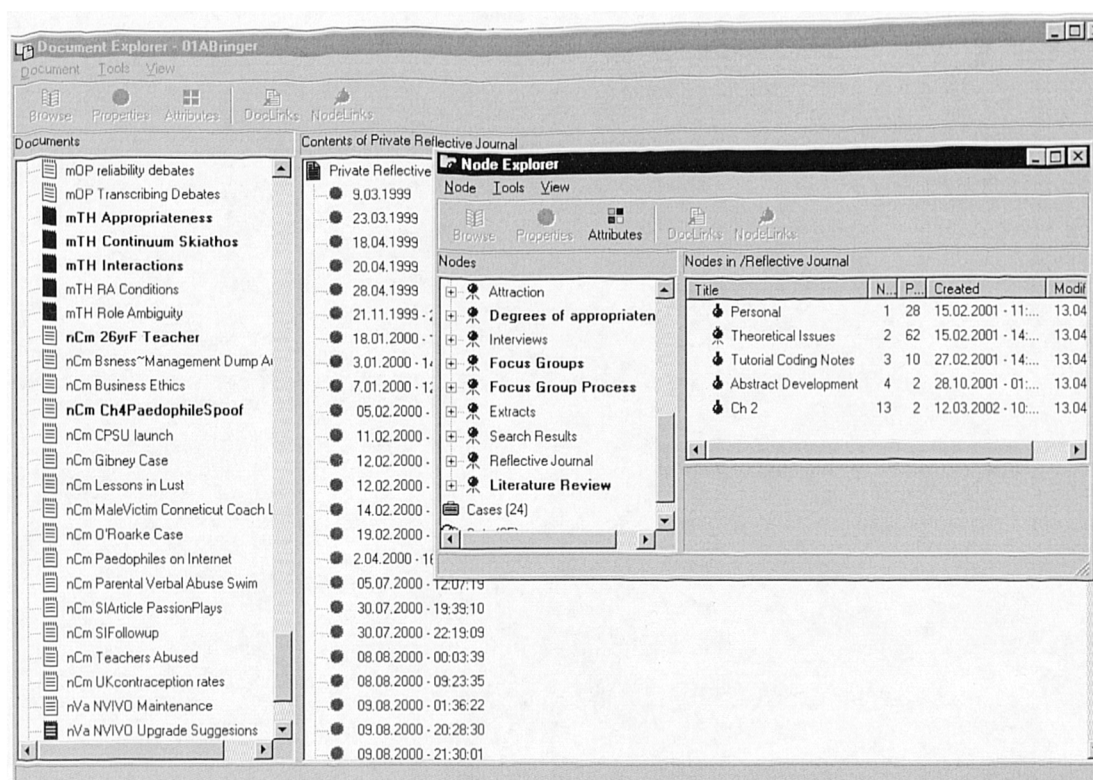


Figure 5.4. Research journal viewed from the document and node explorer in NVIVO.

The research journal could have also been used for bracketing before each focus group. In this study some bracketing occurs in the research journal and bracketing material specific to the focus groups is located in separate memos (for example, see Figure 5.5). The purpose of bracketing is to assist the researcher in recognising and acknowledging one's own assumptions that might influence the data (Ahern, 1999). Bracketing assists the researcher in becoming more objective. Objectivity in this instance is used to describe being more open to emergent data; it is acknowledged that true objectivity in qualitative analysis can never be reached (Ahern, 1999). Continued reflexivity should assist the researcher in recognising bias during the research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting phases. Ahern (1999) recommended a number of areas to include in bracketing, such as: identifying power, access, personal value systems, role conflicts, interests of the funding body, signs of non-neutrality, data saturation, solutions to having access blocked, and reflection on decisions about which quotes and literature to use in

dissemination. I wrote the bracketing memo in Figure 5.5 to record my reflections on the proposed prompts for the focus groups. Bracketing was especially useful in setting aside assumptions about coaches with whom I had prior knowledge of their situations.

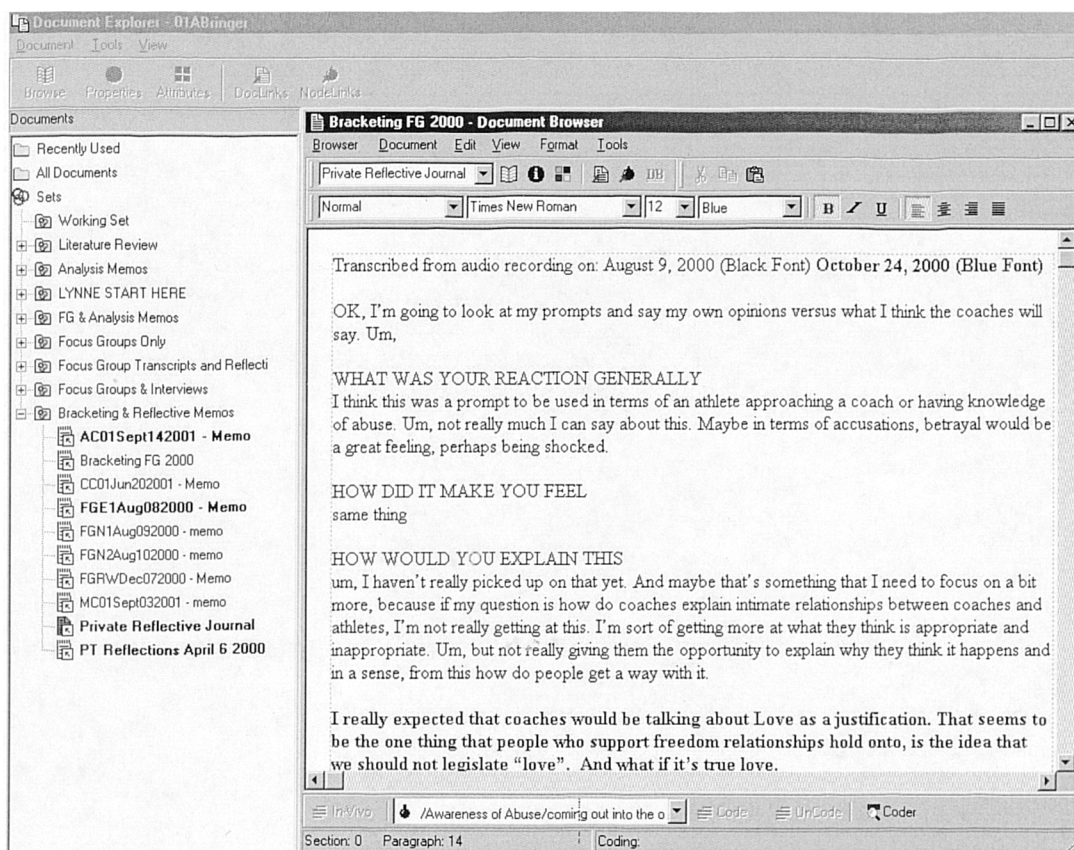


Figure 5.5. Memo showing my reflections on the focus group prompts.

Grounded Theory is aimed at creating theory based in reality, not a social vacuum. It is therefore important to note the social milieu at the time of a focus group, interview, or analysis. Media reports are one reflection of the social context. When child abuse or sexual harassment cases were reported in the media these were imported into NVIVO as memos. In cases of electronic newspaper reports the entire article was imported, otherwise a summary memo was written. The detail from some of these news reports contributed to the description of the overall contextual background to understanding sexual abuse in sport and is presented in chapter 2.

Recording these notes also allowed me to reflect on the situation at the time of the data collection and to not allow the reports to unduly influence the data analysis.

5.5.7 Data Documents in Grounded Theory and NVIVO

As the researcher enters the field decisions need to be made regarding what type of data to collect. Any types of data that may be useful in developing theory are considered legitimate within the Grounded Theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The initial inductive nature of Grounded Theory usually leads researchers to select qualitative sources of data. Focus groups and interviews were the main sources of data used in this research project. Newspaper clippings (e.g., about child abuse; romantic relationships with work colleagues), ASA meeting minutes, and policy documents also influenced the analysis and were noted in document memos. Inductive analysis of the focus group data informed the purposive selection of coaches for individual interviews (see chapter 7). Because the initial analysis in Grounded Theory informs further data collection, it might seem that the starting point for data collection is crucial when what emerges from the first round of data collection informs further data collection. This assumption is based on Grounded Theory being a linear process but, rather, it is cyclical. If a concept central to the area of study does not emerge from the data gathered in the first data collection round, then it should emerge in another data collection.

There are three ways of incorporating documents into NVIVO: typing directly into NVIVO's word processor, importing a rich text file (RTF) or a text only document, or creating a hyperlink to an external document. In addition to the different methods of including files in NVIVO, the programme also allows for documents to be created as documents, memos, or proxy documents. In this study, memos are generally related to a specific document or a node. For example, each time a node was created, a corresponding memo was created to include the node definition and record any thoughts about the node in an effort to push the analysis beyond description. The only differences between documents and memos are the icons used to represent them and that memos can easily be separated by documents

through the use of a prefabricated memo set. Classifying the media reports as memos allowed them to be easily distinguished from the interviews and focus groups, which were classified as documents. Proxy documents were not used in this project but could have been used to represent videos, textbooks, or any other document that could not be physically kept in NVIVO. Documents, memos, and proxy documents can all be coded, edited, and searched.

An advantage of using a computer programme like NVIVO is the ability to bring the data to life in a way that makes coding interesting and relationships between categories more visible (L. Richards, 1999). Two types of “DataBites”, internal annotations and external files, can be attached to any piece of text in a document to record referential information that may be important for context but which would interrupt the flow if placed as bracketed text in a transcript. Internal annotations tend to be a few lines of text and are conceptually similar to sticking a Post-It note on a transcript. For example, when a coach referred to Gary Glitter, an internal annotation was used to note who Gary Glitter is and why he was significant to the conversation. (In 1999, Glitter, a flamboyant rock star, was sentenced to 4 months in prison after pleading guilty to a number of child pornography charges. He had already been acquitted of charges of alleged underage sex with a 14-year-old fan.) External files can be attached in a similar manner as internal annotations but are intended for larger files. These might include pictures, audio files, video clips, or web pages. Audio clips from the focus groups were inserted as external files when it was unclear what was being said. Often, after re-reading the transcript several times and listening to the clip, the audio clip was deciphered. Textual contextual information can also be linked to the document text in the form of a NVIVO document or memo. Unlike internal annotations and external files, linked documents and memos can be coded. Compound interlinking documents were created using colour, formatting, and linking DataBites, memos, documents, and nodes. Bringing the data to life in this manner resulted in a more conceptual and abstract analysis (L. Richards, 1998, 1999).

Following a constructivist epistemology, it is just as important to reflect on the research process, recording thoughts and relevant events as the project evolves. NVIVO facilitates these tasks. Before I collected any empirical data for this study, I

was already using NVIVO to store and analyse data in the form of the research journal, literature review, and contextually important media reports. Now that the document types for Grounded Theory and NVIVO have been reviewed, the next step is to discuss the analysis.

5.5.8 Grounded Theory Data Analysis in NVIVO

Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed their method of analysis as an alternative to the two approaches often taken with qualitative data analysis, that is to code everything and then analyse the coding or to avoid coding altogether and just analyse. The first method has been used by sport psychology researchers in conducting inductive content analysis to examine concepts such as sources of enjoyment in ice skating (Scanlan et al., 1989) and burnout in junior tennis players (Gould, Tuffey et al., 1996). One criticism of this method is that analysis does not occur until all the data are coded, thus the result tends to be a thick description rather than an explanatory model. The second approach, of reporting analysis without explicitly creating codes, is sometimes used in ethnography. Analysis in Grounded Theory is a combination of coding and analysing that takes advantage of “the explicit coding procedure of the first approach and the style of theory development of the second” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 102). In summary, Grounded Theory analysis is a systematic approach to developing theory.

The analyst following Grounded Theory is encouraged to oscillate between open coding, writing memos, axial coding, and modelling. Just as NVIVO facilitates the overall iterative process of data collection, analysis, and theorising, the programme is well designed to facilitate iterations within data coding and analysis. I was able to move quickly from open coding to more focused coding of building out properties and categories, and back again to open coding as necessary, all the while writing conceptual and theoretical memos. Creating links between nodes, memos, and documents in NVIVO facilitated this iterative process as I developed the analysis interwoven from data and ideas (L. Richards, 1999).

Bazeley and Richards (2000) emphasised the analytical and organisational functions of coding as they describe the process of coding in NVIVO. The

organisational step is the systematic process of coding that Glaser and Strauss (1967) referred to as a necessary process in reaching the more abstract goal of analysis. Organisational tools within NVIVO also facilitated the continual oscillation between coding and analysis. These tools included non-hierarchical organisation of categories (free nodes), hierarchical organisation of categories (tree nodes), memos, models, and search tools.

Mechanically, coding is the process of examining data segments, labelling the segments, and putting all of the identically labelled segments together. The approach taken to coding will vary according to the focus of the analysis. A post-positivistic project would approach coding deductively by predefining categories and then organising the data segments according to these. Following the Grounded Theory process for this thesis, I started coding inductively with no preconceived categories.

The coding processes in Grounded Theory starts with open coding or dissecting the data into discrete parts, examining the data for similarities and differences, and grouping together conceptually similar data to form categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Some computer programmes (e.g., NUD*IST 4 and 5) require data to be fractured into a priori units, such as a line, a paragraph, or a sentence. An advantage of NVIVO is that the size of coded text is as short or as long as it needs to be (e.g., one character) and can vary for each data unit. This allows the researcher to code naturally, rather than to fracture the data artificially. In this study, coded segments varied from one word to several pages (e.g., coding all of the discussion about a particular vignette together).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe conceptualising, or giving a conceptual name to categories, as the first step in theorising. When possible, code names were active to encourage me to think about processes rather than mere description.

Rigour in coding is facilitated by two functions in NVIVO, one that records the researcher-defined description of a node and one that allows the researcher to attach a memo directly to the node. Both functions were used in this project. Short descriptions were written for every node in the node property box (see Figure 5.6). Although this was tedious at first it was valued when 62 nodes had been created and I needed to verify what the label given to a particular node meant. The programme

is designed to create a list of nodes and their descriptions, similar to a codebook (Bazeley & Richards, 2000), that can be printed at any stage in the analysis. These descriptions, along with the node memos, enabled consistent use of the nodes.

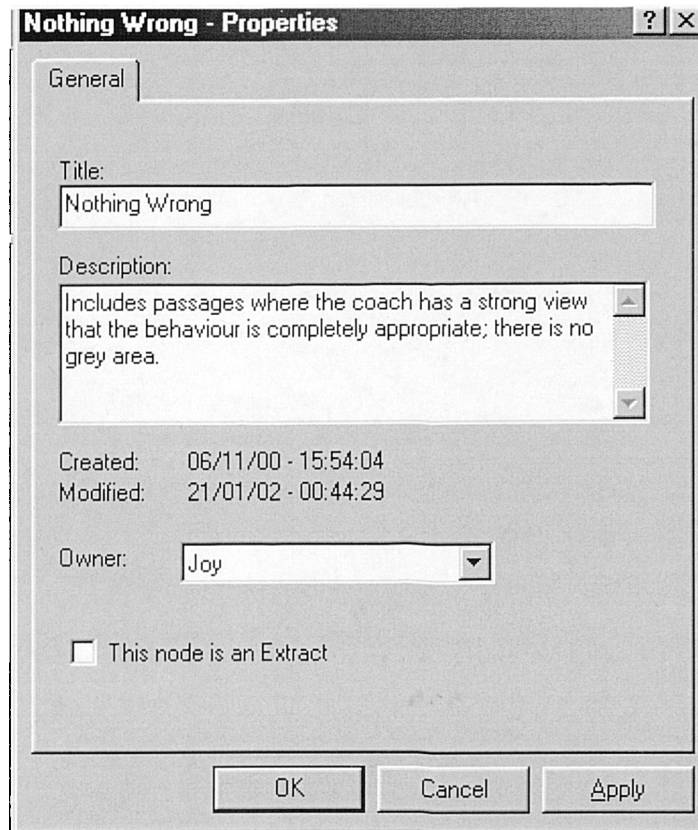


Figure 5.6. Node properties box in NVIVO.

Through writing memos, I moved from a descriptive mode of placing conceptually similar passages together to thinking analytically about the emerging concepts. In Grounded Theory, memos are essential to the development of theory. Following recommendations by Strauss and Corbin, different types of memos were created to facilitate thinking at different levels. The memo name began with the memo type prefix so that the memos were automatically sorted in NVIVO's document browser. The seven memo types, their prefix, number written, and their purposes are described in Table 5.1. Memos corresponding to each focus group were named after the transcript name and linked directly to the transcript. Writing memos is so important to the development of a grounded theory that a whole

chapter is devoted to memos in each of two books on Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Table 5.1 Memo Types Used in This Thesis

Prefix	Type and number	Purpose
mCN	Code note memos (n = 110)	Define the node and record analytical thinking about the node; include links to other nodes and memos
mTH	Theoretical memos (n = 5)	Higher order memos for evolving theory at a more abstract level; summary memos and thoughts about selective sampling
mOP	Operational memos (n = 4)	Notes about procedures, what questions to ask in the next interview
(no prefix; electronic drawings are stored in NVIVO's modeller, hand drawings are in a folder)	Diagrams (n = 40)	Visual representations of relationships among categories
nCm	News, contextual memos (n = 15)	News articles (or memos on reports) that influence, or illustrate, the context of child abuse and sexual harassment
nVa	NVIVO memos (n = 3)	Technical notes about using NVIVO
mEM	Executive meetings (n = 2)	Notes from meetings with ASA officials to discuss thesis results

Memos serve multiple purposes within a Grounded Theory project including clarification, category saturation, theoretical development, and transparency. Memos in this project were used to justify the selection of a passage and the naming of a code. Thus, the category name was clarified, passages compared, and categories renamed, merged, or dropped accordingly. The properties and dimensions of a category start to develop in the writing of memos as the researcher examines the different elements of a node. Strauss (1987) encouraged researchers to discuss ideas

conceptually in memos, rather than the actions of individual participants, thus pushing the researcher to think more broadly about possible properties and dimensions (see chapter 6).

Because writing within memos is less structured than for a formal document, there is space for ideas to develop freely without the constraints of rigid conformity to sentence structure. Some of these ideas will rightly be dismissed upon later reflection but other ideas become the seed for a well-conceptualised theory. To develop higher order categories and investigate links between categories, memos were physically sorted into similar categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In NVIVO, sets of memos can be created for this purpose. However, for this study, I found it easier to print memos for sorting. I used this method to start integrating the numerous concepts in conjunction with diagrams, matrices, and the paradigm model (see also section 5.5.10 and chapter 7). Memos also provided a record of how the project developed. Without memos a project is likely to “lack conceptual density and integration” and transparency is minimised (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 218). In summary, memos contributed to the overall audit trail and provided a method for achieving consistency, analytical distance, and empirical grounding.

Analytical techniques such as questioning, detailed word by word, or line by line analysis, comparing extreme examples or examples from outside the area of focus, and being aware of implicit assumptions are a few tools suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) that were used to move the analyst from mere description to developing theory. Glaser (1992) suggested that these methods are too prescriptive and that the constant comparative method of incidences within concepts, and concepts to concepts, is all that is necessary. For this study, Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) methods were followed.

According to Charmaz (1995) focused coding can take place after codes start to continually reappear in the coding. Focused coding allowed me to concentrate on one area and thus to analyse data more quickly. This inaccurately suggests that the frequency of emerging codes is positively related to relevance. Often, qualitative research studies in sport psychology report frequency statistics for the categories. However, as Scanlan and her colleagues (1989) correctly stated, frequency does not necessarily relate to importance. Analytic techniques used in

Grounded Theory are designed to avoid the false assumption that frequency implies importance. NVIVO can be used for frequency counts but it also has design features that assist the researcher in recognising gaps in coding and bringing recognition to the salient but perhaps less voiced view point.

Coding can also be automated through the use of sections, as was done to code each coach's text into a single code. Having a node for each speaker enabled me to use attributes to attach demographic information to the speaker's text. Thus, for example, coaches who have had no child protection training could be compared with those who have had child protection training. Admittedly, this is a more deductive approach to the data but it is one that can help to explain variation within a category. Coding can also be automated by using the search facility and saving the results as a node that can be further coded and analysed.

Seventeen different search operations are available to assist the researcher in examining the data in NVIVO (Fraser, 1999). These include the ability to search for text and combinations of text, refine a search to a node, a document, an attribute or even proximally-coded items. In later stages of the project, the search tool was used to run matrix searches to examine potential links between categories. In the early stages of coding, the search tool was only used minimally. For example, the text tool was used to search quickly for the instances of a recently developed node in transcripts that were coded before the development of the node. This allowed me to ascertain quickly if there were instances of the node in the early transcripts that could add to the understanding of the newly developed node. The text tool was not relied on extensively because participants do not always use the same words to speak about a concept.

In addition to focused coding, I "coded-on" (Bazeley & Richards, 2000) from a category as a method of developing dense categories and exploring links to other categories. This is achieved by viewing all of the text in a category and coding it into additional categories. If coding by hand by using different containers to store the bits of text in a category, the coding-on would require photocopying all of the text, marking it to reference it as part of the original category, and then distributing the bits of text into other relevant categories. This time consuming process is made easier in NVIVO, as all of the referencing is automated by the computer and the

researcher can code the node in the same fashion as the original transcript was coded. The results of such coding can be viewed or searched at any time to examine links between categories.

As is discussed in the next section, it is important in Grounded Theory to be able to view and review coding. Through the examination of coding, I was able to recognise when an incident did not fit with the rest of the category. In such cases, the text was re-coded. In a few cases, categories were merged when it was discovered that the categories were essentially the same. A major advantage of using NVIVO, compared with doing the analysis by hand, is the ability to immediately view the text in its original context. I could choose to see the enclosing paragraph, section, a set number of lines, or even jump back to the original document. A node can be viewed separately but what is more interesting is to view nodes in comparison with each other. A feature in NVIVO called coding stripes facilitates the task of comparing categories. Coding stripes show, in the right-hand pane of a node or a document, what text is coded at what node.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe the analysis within Grounded Theory as the constant comparative method. The constant comparisons occurred throughout the development of a grounded theory and included comparing incidents within each category, comparing categories to each other, clarifying the developing theory, and writing a coherent theory. In the initial stages of open-coding incidences within a category were compared with each other. This served to provide a form of trustworthiness in that I was constantly re-affirming the meaning of the category. More importantly, comparing the incidences allowed me to notice minute differences that resulted in developing the properties and dimensions of the categories. It is important to reiterate here that the analysis does not actually occur in discrete stages; it is an iterative process whereby I returned to open coding throughout the research project.

Making comparisons between nodes is made easier when the nodes are organised in an hierarchical structure (T. Richards & Richards, 1995). In Grounded Theory the structure develops inductively and is not an end in itself. The tree structure seen in Figure 5.7 was developed to assist in analysis and searching and is not meant to be a model of emerging ideas. The tree structure is an infrastructure

that is designed to help interrogate, not to represent, the data. This structure evolved throughout the analysis process from the initial 62 free nodes into a more ordered structure of nodes. The modeller in NVIVO was one tool used in the early

The screenshot shows the Node Explorer interface with a tree view on the left and a table on the right. The tree view shows a hierarchy of nodes, with 'roles in coaching' highlighted. The table on the right lists the following data:

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
motivating swimmers	1	18	02/03/01 ...	20/01/02 ...
socialising	2	34	02/02/01 ...	05/02/02 ...
Counsellor	3	49	02/04/01 ...	21/01/02 ...
discipline	4	12	28/04/01 ...	20/01/02 ...
they make the choice	5	7	22/10/01 ...	21/01/02 ...
swimming is just the v...	6	11	22/10/01 ...	21/01/02 ...
Lifts	7	21	12/11/01 ...	21/01/02 ...
Developing Rapport	8	29	18/01/02 ...	22/03/02 ...
Protective	12	6	01/04/01 ...	21/01/02 ...

Below the table, the interface shows 'Documents coded: 3 Children: 9' and a text area containing 'references to the different roles adopted in coaching - the demands of coaching - psychol...

conceptual development of the hierarchical structure.

Figure 5.7. Node explorer illustrating the tree structure as of March 2002.

The modeller was designed to facilitate the exploration of ideas in a visual format without changing the database of the project (Bazeley & Richards, 2000). In an attempt to make sense of the 62 free nodes that were created in the early stage of the project, with one click of the mouse I imported all 62 nodes into the modeller.

The nodes were moved around the screen into related clusters. When it was necessary to review the node, the node could be browsed simply by right clicking on the relevant node icon and selecting browse. I could thus oscillate between being close to the data and gaining distance for analytical purposes. A partial view of the ordering of the 62 nodes is seen in Figure 5.8. The left pane shows the different models that have been created for this project. The model itself is represented in the right pane. Each dot represents a node. The rectangular boxes were added to represent the general feature of the cluster and the lines indicate different types of hypothesised links. In addition to viewing nodes, links to documents and memos can also be added to models. The visual clarity offered in the modeller, combined with the direct links to memos and the data documents, makes the modeller a very effective way of presenting findings at conferences or in meetings with clients (Lyn Richards, personal communication 1 February 2002). In this project the modeller was used to develop a conceptual model for the core category (see chapter 9), to help design the overall chapter structure for the thesis and, as illustrated in Figure 5.8, to add structure to the abundance of emerging nodes.

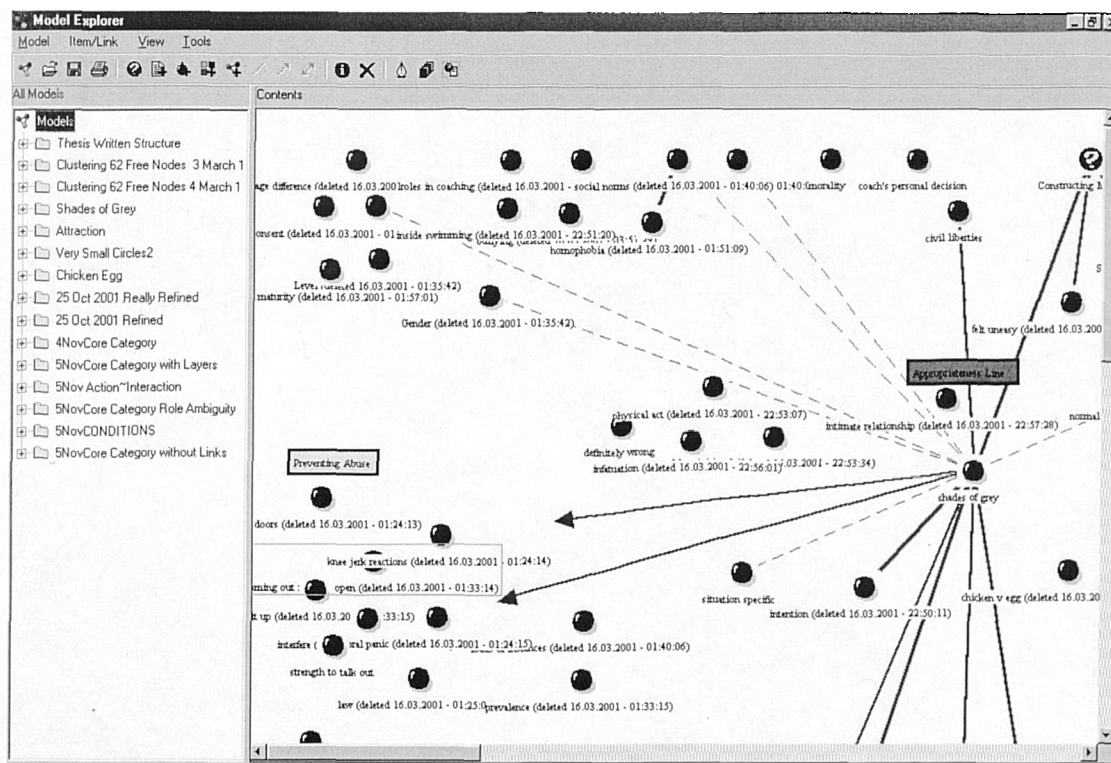


Figure 5.8. An example of a model created in NVIVO.

Hierarchical structures are designed to make finding nodes easier (it is faster to search down through 10 trees than through 110 individual nodes), to display the properties and dimensions of a category, to view categories in relation to other categories, to facilitate complex matrix searches, and to assist in generic higher order coding (T. Richards & Richards, 1995). Higher order categories are known as parent nodes, and their descendants, or lower order categories, are child nodes (T. Richards & Richards, 1995). The following principles are designed to guide researchers in developing succinct hierarchical categories:

1. The children of a category should be cases *in the same sense* of the parent.
2. The description of a given category should apply to all the categories in the sub-tree below it. The subcategories in a tree should not switch part-way down: that is, they must remain generic with respect to the higher categories.
3. One topic or idea should occur in only one place in the index system (T. Richards & Richards, 1995, p. 87-89).

In this thesis, these principles were not followed rigidly as it was not my aim to run complex searches on the data, as the majority of theorising developed in memos and diagrams. However, using these principles to guide the development of categories assisted me in designing a better-organised tree structure which, in turn, facilitated exploring links between categories during axial coding.

Making comparisons at the category and subcategory level is what Strauss and Corbin refer to as axial coding. This is where the analysis moved from thick description to explaining the phenomenon of interest. As previously discussed, coding stripes were instrumental in developing links between categories. These links developed into the explanation of perceptions of appropriateness presented in chapter 6.

As a researcher develops concepts within the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory, the analyst is encouraged to examine more general life concepts and how these might contribute to the research area under study (Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This requires more academic reading. For example, as the process of providing support, but maintaining boundaries between the coach and athlete emerged, I examined literature in counselling psychology about processes of

creating and maintaining boundaries (e.g., Andersen, 2000; K. Thomas, 1996). Strauss and Corbin (1998) called this technique “theoretical comparisons.”

5.5.9 Attributes

Exploring demographic information may lead to a preliminary explanatory understanding of the relationship between categories. The aim is not to provide statistically relevant predictions but rather to explore preliminary relationships. Demographic information is stored as “attributes” in NVIVO and can be used to search data and compare responses. Attributes can also be used in projects that seek to combine quantitative survey results with qualitative data (see Bazeley, 2002 for a thorough discussion).

Attributes can be attached to documents or nodes, depending on the structure of the project. Generally, demographic information for the interview participants would be recorded as document attributes, thus attaching the participant’s information to his entire interview. This strategy does not make sense for focus group transcripts, however, because there are multiple participants in each document. If, instead, all of what John said is recorded in a node called John and all of what Elliot said coded to his own node, then it is possible to attach the attributes to the nodes. This enables the researcher to search, for example, for all of the references to civil liberties by coaches with no child protection training. During transcription, each speaker’s name was set at heading level one, and the speaker’s words remained as normal text. This divided the documents into sections by speaker and allowed the text to be auto-coded by section into the respective nodes. These nodes are visually set apart from the analysis nodes by storing them as case nodes. Similar to tree nodes, case nodes can have children. Each focus group participant was a child of his focus group parent node. If there had been theoretical reasons for doing so, I could have easily compared responses between focus groups. Attributes can be imported from spreadsheets such as SPSS and Excel, or they can be created directly in NVIVO.

Figure 5.9 illustrates in three windows how cases and their attributes are displayed in NVIVO. The tree structure of the case nodes is seen in the left pane.

Clicking on each individual case will reveal all of the text for that particular coach. The middle window is a partial view of the node attribute explorer with attributes for child protection training, highest level of education, ethnicity, age of oldest swimmer among other variables viewed as column headers. Each row is a case and represents one coach. The third window, in the lower right pane, illustrates how attributes are selected for use in searches. In this instance, the attribute for child protection training was selected with the values 'yes' and 'no.' Although the purpose of Grounded Theory is not to test hypotheses and create generalisations based on demographic responses, this type of tool can assist in developing categories and exploring relationships between categories.

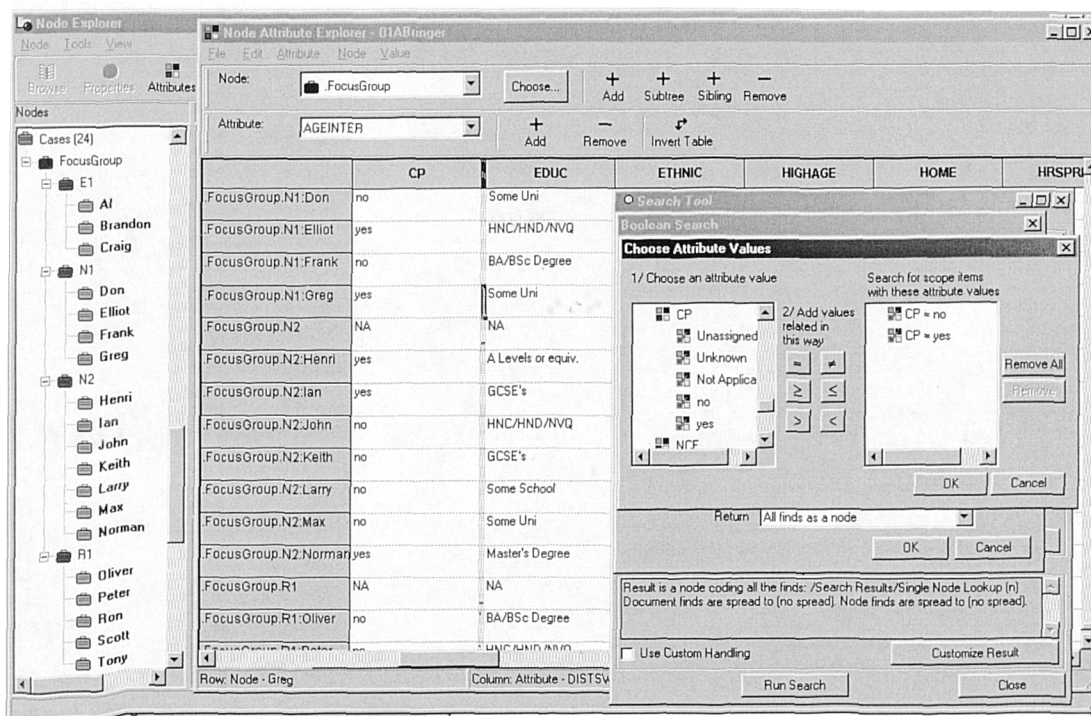


Figure 5.9. Viewing and searching participant attributes in NVIVO.

5.5.10 Moving from Describing to Theorising

Matrices and paradigms were two further Grounded Theory tools (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that were used during axial coding to explore the relationships

between categories. Both tools are heuristic devices to assist the researcher in discovering the conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences of the core category. The core category is the central theme or problem of interest that emerges from the data as the central theme relating the different categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A detailed discussion of the emergence of the core category is presented in chapter 7. Conditions are the contextual and predisposing factors in which the core category occurs. Actions/interactions are the responses that are taken to the core problem. It is important to note that actions/interactions are not static, rather they “evolve over time as persons define or give meanings to situations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 134). Consequences are the result of the actions/interactions with the core category. The matrix and the paradigm model were used throughout the analysis phase to assist in structuring the data in a more systematic manner.

The conditional/consequential matrix was used to explore “relationships between macro and micro conditions/consequences both to each other and to process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 181). This tool was first used in this project in April 2001 to explain differences in perceptions of appropriateness. It evolved over two months as categories were compared to each other using matrix searches in NVIVO and other models were drawn to explore category relationships, actions/interactions and consequences. This stage was marked by frustration as I struggled to make sense of the data. About 15 different models and matrices were sketched before any coherent results were evident. Two models were presented at two different research seminars, and the audience gave constructive feedback before the two more succinct models that are presented in chapter 6 were developed. The original plotting of micro and macro conditions became the basis for the conditions discussed in chapter 2.

The paradigm model was used predominantly to explore the relationships with the core category and is thus discussed in more detail in chapter 7. Where the matrix focuses attention on conditions and consequences, the paradigm has a broader focus that includes actions/interactions.

5.5.11 Analysis Summary

This section on analysis was included in the thesis to provide transparency to the data analysis by explaining how Grounded Theory was applied to the analysis and how this was facilitated by the use of NVIVO. The process of using NVIVO for this Grounded Theory project was explained from the start of the project, through to open coding, axial coding, and finally to theory development through the use of the conditional/consequential matrix. Examples were provided throughout the chapter to illustrate the different elements of the project and how these were handled in NVIVO.

5.6 Summary

The data collection and analysis followed an iterative, rather than linear process. For simplicity, however, only information pertaining to the focus groups was presented in this chapter. Recruitment, design of the focus groups, ethical issues, analysis techniques, and the use of NVIVO were discussed. The next chapter presents, in more detail, the analysis and findings of the focus group data as related to coaches' perceptions of appropriateness.

Chapter 6: Emergent Themes - Perceptions of Appropriateness

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore coaches' constructions of appropriateness with regard to coach-athlete sexual relationships. Previous quantitative research (Hassall et al., 2002; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001) examining coaches' perceptions of appropriateness provided an initial description of what was considered appropriate and inappropriate in coaching at the time and location of the studies. The quantitative studies described in chapter 3 are well suited for eliciting prevalence rates and statistics on predefined variables. These studies gave relatively little attention to increasing an understanding of salient factors affecting coaches' decisions about appropriateness which, in turn, are likely to influence their actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). The inconclusive results from these studies suggest that variability in perceptions extended beyond measurable age, gender, and sport role differences. The qualitative data collection methods used in the current study, in conjunction with the analytic tools of Grounded Theory, allowed me to explore the complexity of constructions of appropriateness.

The results presented in this chapter are based on the analysis of the focus group data. Examples are provided from the analysis process to illustrate how the final categories presented here emerged from the four focus group transcripts. Emergent themes are presented in italics to distinguish them from the rest of the text. A description of appropriateness based on the age of the athlete is presented first and followed by the results of axial coding (see chapter 5) that explain the different perceptions of appropriateness in more detail.

6.2 Development of Themes

In the first hour of coding in this project, I created the following nine categories: *gender, age, age of consent, outside of swimming, nothing wrong, exploit, ethics code, civil liberties and interfere*. The last three categories were in-

vivo labels taken directly from the words of the coaches. A sample of 7 of the 15 quotes that were coded into the category *nothing wrong* is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 A Sample of Quotes Coded at the Node “Nothing Wrong”

Passage	Speaker
I don't see anything at all wrong with that.	Don
They are outside swimming, nothing has happened within the sport.	Don
But, I know of uh, instances within sport, where somebody has coached somebody for years and years. Coached them since they were a kid, alright. There's probably over a 20 year age gap and got married, and still stayed within the sport. And, nobody, nobody, has ever stood up and said that's wrong. And nobody would dare stand up and say that's wrong. And it has not gone down as being wrong	Don
The thing is the handling issue, the fact that, whatever we do is going to get scrutinised. And someone is going to be chasing us for doing something that is quite legal and quite morally OK.	Elliot
I wouldn't have a problem with that, you know. I think, I would worry for the person, if somebody tried to make more out of it and say, oh they've been coaching them since they were 14, so this must have been going on since they were 14. Which I think some people would say, regardless of what they know and don't know. So, you have to be aware of that. But I think that if I went into some programme, and started coaching some 25-year-old lass, I wouldn't have a problem, with either myself or someone else having a relationship with that person.	Frank
With your wife, don't be ridiculous.	Don
So, uh, it's just another thing you've got to deal with. Um, so I don't see, this situation (the vignette) or a situation of consenting adults, there ain't no problem. There's a law there folks. Now we are going to go above that and stick in an extra law of our own. I don't see the need for that. Consenting adults has always been OK.	Don

Figure 6.1 illustrates the memo for the node *nothing wrong*. By documenting the ideas in this node, I realised that *nothing wrong* was a dimension along a continuum of appropriateness. Reviewing the passages in Table 6.1 also highlights factors that might have influenced perceptions of appropriateness (e.g., where the relationship developed and perceptions of bystanders). The memo for ‘nothing

wrong' is linked to the node *degrees of appropriateness* (created later), a higher order node containing the node *nothing wrong*.

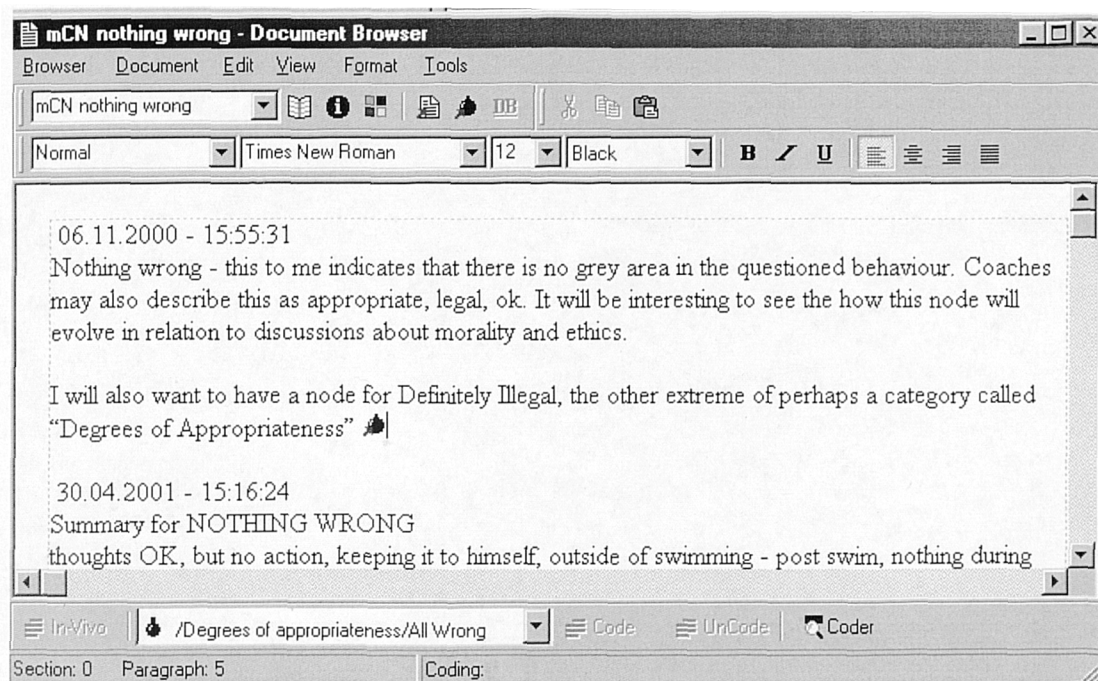


Figure 6.1. Conceptual memo for the node nothing wrong.

Microanalysis was a strategy used to examine the text for meaning that might lead to additional categories or links between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A microanalysis of the following passage reveals several themes of possible relevance,

I think, I think that's the point I was trying to make. I think that it's the guilt side of it, isn't it. I mean, you feel that, um, you are under scrutiny, so um, whatever the age, you feel a little bit bound to be, what should I say, "totally professional?" (John)

The use of the word *age* suggests several subcategories (or properties) of age including *coach age*, *athlete age*, *age difference*, *age of consent*, and *sport age* (Kirby, 1986). Subsequently, age became a category with subcategories *age of consent* and *age difference*. *Sport age* did not emerge as a concept important to the coaches in this study, and therefore the concept was not further explored. Asking questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) about the word *scrutiny* and *professional* also helped to develop those categories. Who is scrutinising the coach? The governing

body? Parents? What is the implicit assumption in feeling bound to be totally professional? Does he feel resentment? Why does he only feel “a little bit bound”? Does this suggest that there is not a total commitment to being professional? What does being “totally professional” mean for the coaches, and why does it seem to be a negative construct in this passage. Using an extreme example, or “far-out comparison” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) the idea of professional conduct was compared with that of a teacher or doctor. When might a teacher or doctor feel restricted by being “totally professional”? This type of microanalysis was used any time a concept needed to be evaluated in more depth.

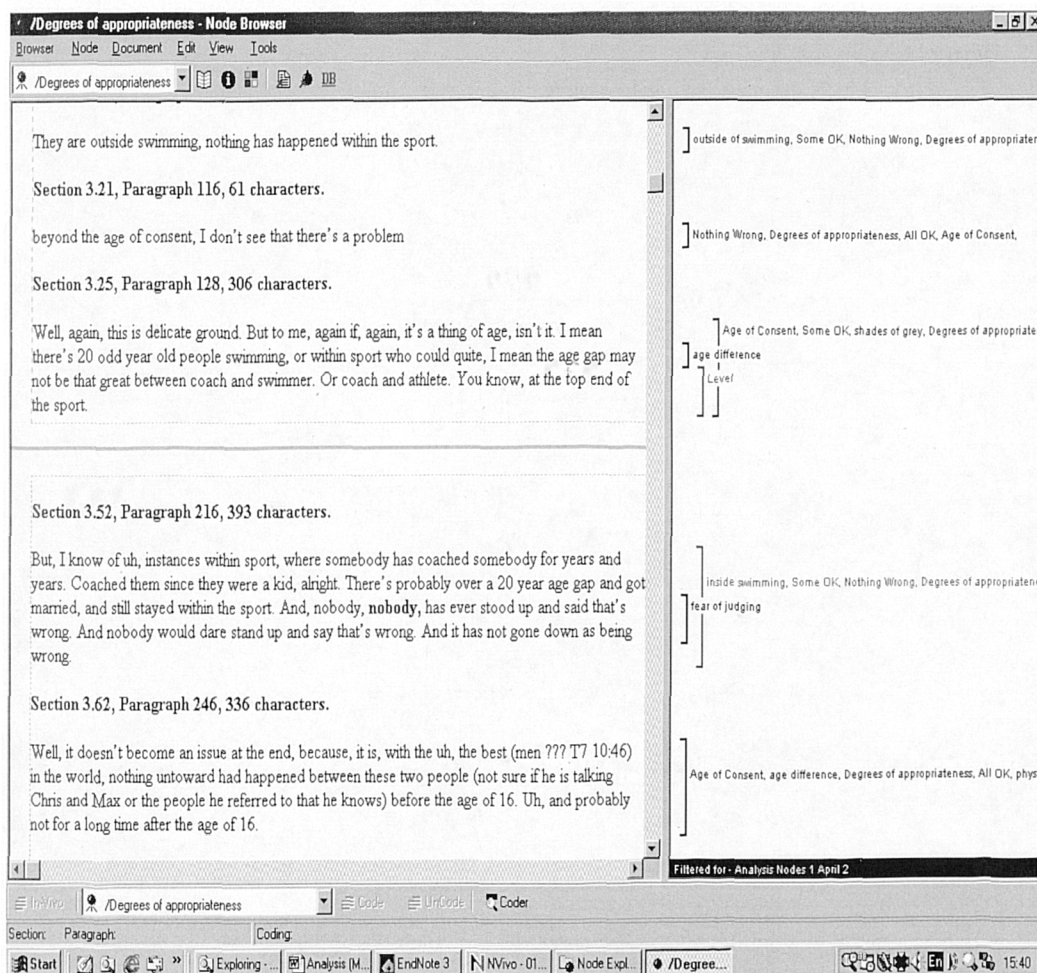


Figure 6.2. Coding stripes for the node degrees of appropriateness.

Figure 6.2 is the node browser for the node *degrees of appropriateness* with coding stripes illustrated on the right side of the figure. The children for this node, *all wrong*, *some wrong*, *high morals*, *some OK*, *all OK*, were copied into the parent

node for easy cross comparison. Examining the coding stripes makes it apparent that *age* (especially *age of consent*) co-occurred frequently with *all OK*. Whereas, *fear of judging*, co-occurred in instances of *some OK*. Examining coding stripes was one way that I started to explore the links between categories that would lead to the development of an explanatory model.

In the above example, *age* has the properties *age difference* and *age of consent*. The dimensions of *age difference* range from no difference to many years difference. As might be expected, *age difference* is one category that emerged in relation to perceptions of appropriateness. I was able to further expand categories by comparing responses from someone who did not feel constricted by professional standards to someone like John from the above passage. Such comparisons led to new categories, confirmed in the data, that influenced perceptions of appropriateness including: *what is the priority* (the coaching relationship versus developing a romantic relationship), *relationship boundaries*, and *sacrifices* (sacrificing the possibility of a romantic relationship with a swimmer in order to maintain the coaching relationship). These became subcategories of *professional manner* when I performed what Glaser and Strauss labelled the second stage of comparisons, “integrating categories and their properties” (1967, p. 105).

6.3 Continuum of Appropriateness

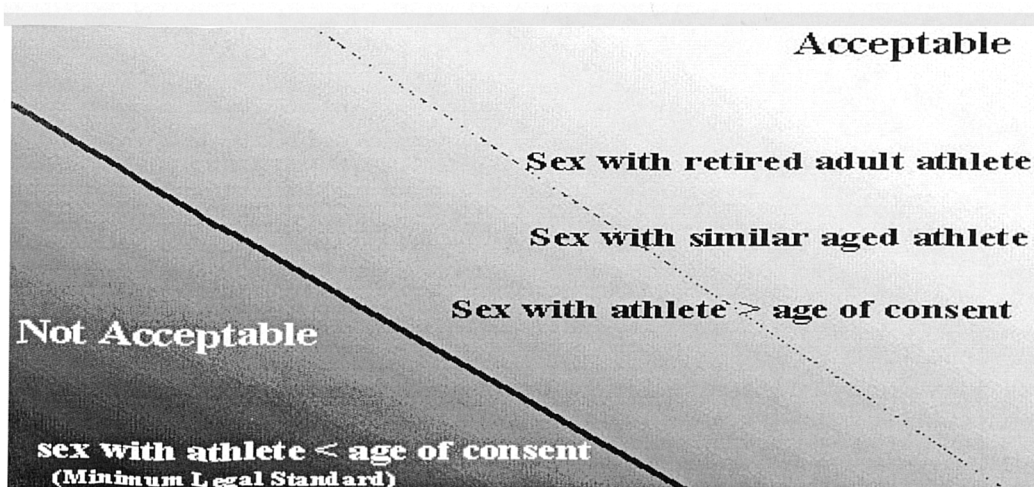


Figure 6.3. The continuum of appropriateness.

The continuum of appropriateness diagram (Figure 6.3) evolved after examining the focus group transcripts, coding passages into categories, and analysing the categories in relation to perceptions of appropriateness. Age was consistently mentioned as a salient factor. As discussed above, age was broken down into two main concepts, *age of consent* and *age difference*.

An examination of the data revealed that *age of consent* was the one criterion that all the coaches agreed upon for differentiating between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. This is illustrated in Figure 6.4 where several references to *age of consent* are also coded as *definitely wrong* with reference to sex with athletes below the age of consent. Therefore, in Figure 6.3, sex with an athlete below the age of consent falls to the left of the solid black line (for not acceptable), along with the minimum legal standard. (The possibility that coaches were only responding in a socially desirable manner is discussed as a limitation in chapter 11.)

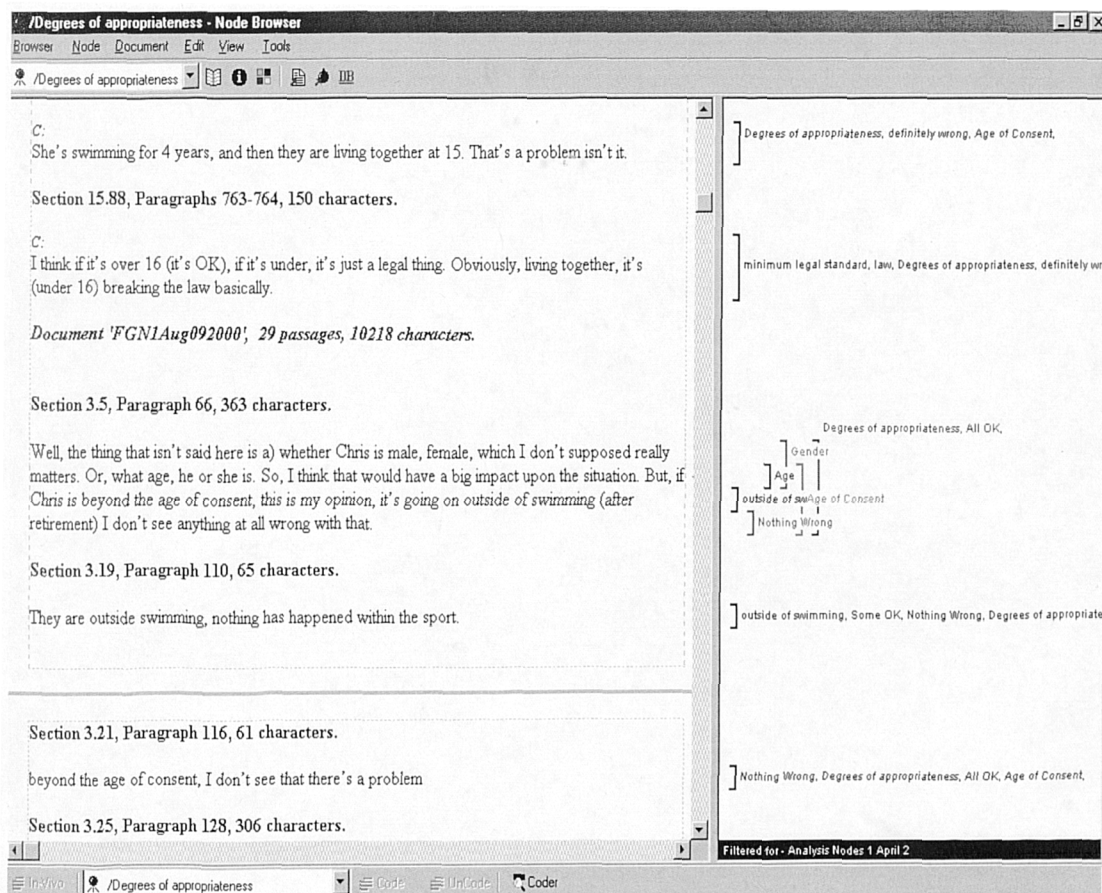


Figure 6.4. Coding stripes illustrating age of consent and nothing wrong.

While some coaches felt very strongly that sex with any athlete *over* the age of consent was appropriate, others disagreed. For a few, it was deemed never to be acceptable, for others it was an issue of maturity and a 16, 18, 20 year old athlete was perceived as too young to enter into a sexual relationship with the coach. Greg recognised this as a power issue when he commented that, “I would personally go further, than that, like in medicine, doctors shouldn’t have relationships with their patients.” In Figure 6.3 sex with an athlete above the age of consent is slightly in the not acceptable sphere, encompasses the grey area in between, and overlaps with the acceptable sphere. Age difference was important but there was much more contention around this issue.

The memo on age difference, written in February and March 2001, focused on two quotes that highlight the normative discourses of age difference. Don said, “my wife was 10 years younger... And that isn’t an unusual age gap.” Frank later added, “My own experience ... when I was 25, I met a lass that I eventually got engaged to. She was 17.” Neither coach was challenged by others in the focus group on the age difference of 10 and 8 years. Either the other coaches did not want to engage on this point, or it was not unusual enough for the group to question it. In another focus group, Henry argued that outside swimming nobody would “raise their eyebrows over a 56 year old and an 18 year old.” He was not challenged on this. However, a few coaches did comment on age difference with regard to exploiting an athlete. For example, Frank said, “because it’s, there is that, chance of some older guy, sort of exploiting maybe that, his position, his maturity.” From the analysis of these and similar quotes, it was clear that there was some contention on the issue of age difference if examined in terms of the power differential (explained further in section 6.8). My final memo entry written on age difference in October 2001 examined age difference in conjunction with scrutiny, “age difference is not necessarily a variable that weighs heavily on coach’s decision making, but it definitely influences the amount of public scrutiny received.” Although a few coaches regarded age difference as a distinguishing mark for inappropriate relations, most did not. In Figure 6.3 sex with an athlete of a similar age falls into the grey area and overlaps into the acceptable sphere.

Sex with a retired adult athlete was viewed as appropriate by all thus in Figure 6.3 this category is placed fully into the acceptable region. Coaches only expressed concern about such relationships when the relationships started before the swimmer retired. Their concern was that the coach might have been exploiting his power as a coach in order to gain the swimmer's attraction. This is discussed in more detail below.

The range of responses regarding relationships with athletes above the age of consent demonstrates how contentious this topic is for coaches. Not surprisingly, relationships with athletes under the age of consent were considered totally inappropriate. Above the age of consent, the main arguments ranged from a moral absolutist standpoint, by which any relationship with an athlete was considered totally unprofessional due to the opportunities for exploiting an athlete, to a moral relativist standpoint, whereby it would be a restriction on civil liberties if they were not allowed to develop intimate relationships with athletes. In the middle were coaches who recognised both sides of the issues and sought guidance for appropriate behaviour. This wide range of perceptions about acceptability indicates that there are no clear norms about acceptable relationships between adults and athletes who are above the age of consent. (This is discussed further in chapter 9.) The purpose of this study was to move beyond mere description to examine factors influencing the coaches' perspectives.

6.4 Beyond Describing - What Influences Constructions of Appropriateness?

The contextual/consequential matrix, writing a descriptive storyline (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and examining coding stripes were three strategies used during axial coding to assist in integrating the categories that would lead to an analysis of factors influencing coaches' constructions of appropriateness. Table 6.2 highlights the concepts included in the conditional/consequential matrix as drawn on 9th of April, 2001. The items in the left column relate more centrally to the coach whereas the concepts in the right column become progressively more external to the coach. On the micro level (or individual level), personal experiences of being in a coach-athlete intimate relationship or having friends in such relationships and age were

two conditions that appeared to influence perceptions of appropriateness. Moving away from micro issues, the club environment and scrutiny from others (e.g., parents or other club members) also appeared to influence perceptions of appropriateness. On a more macro level (or societal level), new governing body guidelines and the overall change in public awareness about abuse appeared to influence perceptions. Drawing the matrix helped to highlight concepts of importance that were then integrated into the storyline memo.

Table 6.2 List of Concepts from the Conditional/Consequential Matrix drawn 9 April, 2001

Centre of the Matrix	Moving Outward Toward External Factors
age	type of relationship with athlete
gender	others' perceptions of the relationship
power	reluctance to interfere
personal experience with allegations	club norms
intent	governing body guidelines
situational details	overall public awareness of abuse
awareness of abuse in sport	

The purpose of writing a descriptive storyline is to help the analyst verbalise the main concepts and their relationships to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The following is an excerpt from the storyline memo. (The words in capital letters represent categories.)

On a micro level, the coach's decisions are based on his own morals. These are influenced by his views on human rights and CIVIL LIBERTIES. Coaches with a relativist ontology don't believe that sport governing bodies should INTERFERE with relationships that are LEGAL. Other coaches are more absolutist and realise the POWER OF THE COACH to EXPLOIT athletes. An approving coach probably has a relativist perspective. If the athlete is a consenting adult, and there are no negative effects on training (EVALUATING CONSEQUENCES) (EFFECT ON TRAINING/OTHERS). Before making a decision, a coach first EXAMINES his OWN MORALS. If his morals allow, then the coach would EXAMINE LEGAL CONSTRAINTS, and possibly CODE OF ETHICS for his organisation. If the relationship was legal, he would then EVALUATE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES (e.g., EFFECT ON TRAINING, EFFECT ON OTHERS). Potential consequences are often influenced by the club culture, these might include jealousy amongst team members, misperceptions of others: team members, parents, other coaches; SCRUTINY by others; improved/decreased swimming performance. (Theoretical Memo – Appropriateness, 11 April, 2001)

The memo continued and several questions were highlighted that contributed to the development of concepts and to the selection criteria for the individual interviews (discussed in chapter 7).

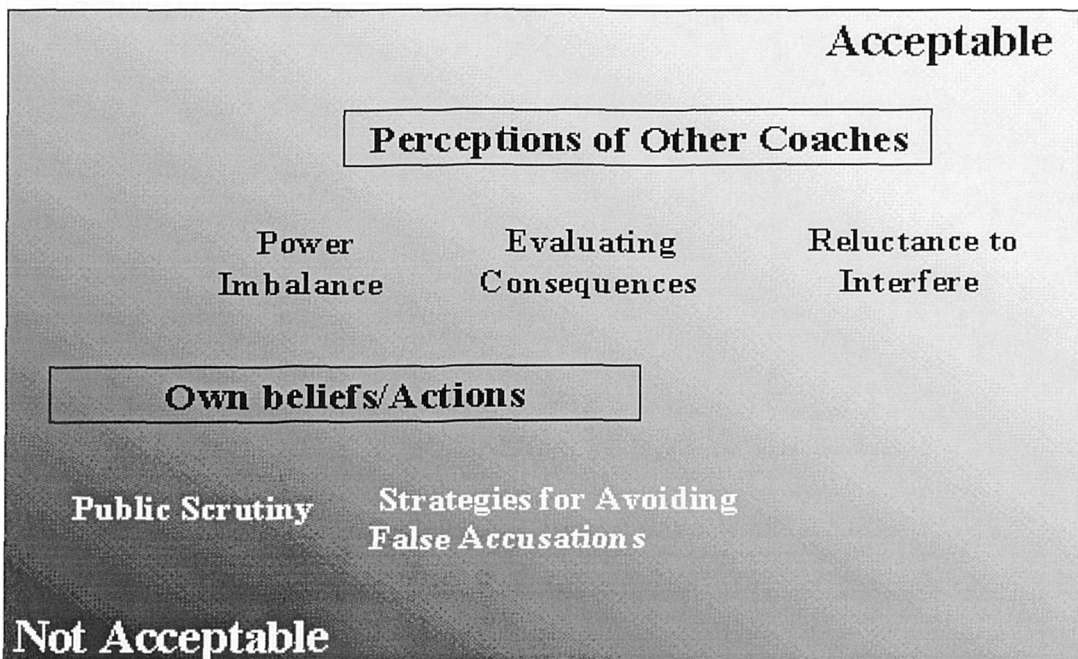


Figure 6.5. Preliminary model of concepts influencing perceptions of appropriateness in relation to a coach's own beliefs and actions and that of his peers.

The key concepts influencing perceptions of appropriateness are presented in Figure 6.5. This paragraph introduces the key concepts which are discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections. When discussing their own beliefs or actions, coaches tended to be more cautious and were more likely to describe behaviours as unacceptable. This conservative view was influenced by public scrutiny and strategies for avoiding false allegations. They held more tolerant views that fell into the acceptable category when discussing the same legal, but questionable, behaviours in relation to the action of *other* coaches. The key concepts affecting perceptions of other coaches were power, consequences, and a reluctance to interfere. The perception of another coach's behaviour was likely to be labelled unacceptable if the coach exploited his position of power to procure the relationship

or if the consequences of the relationship would be negative for the swimmer or the team. Despite a judgement that this was unacceptable, coaches were still reluctant to confront the coach or report the behaviour, thus in their actions (or lack of action) inappropriate behaviours may be socially constructed as acceptable by the abuser. Examples for each category are presented below and discussed in more detail.

6.5 Acting in a Socially Desirable Manner

Central to coaches' decisions about appropriateness was the idea that they must be perceived by others to be acting appropriately. Coaches discussed the problematic "grey areas" of congratulatory touching, instructional touching, and pastoral relationships in relation to increasing public scrutiny over appropriate behaviours. These were discussed as "grey areas" by the coaches because clear norms do not exist for these types of behaviours. This public scrutiny appears to be a key category in influencing coaches' perceptions about appropriateness, especially in relation to their own behaviour. For example, many coaches expressed reluctance to touch athletes, even their own children, for fear of that touch being misconstrued.

My daughter, she's 11, and she's big for her age, and um, there's occasion where she might be upset, and I want to put my arm around her, you know as father - daughter. And again, I feel, that I can't do that, I have to just sit down, cause I'm very nervous about what other people might think, who don't know she's my daughter. (Peter)

Arguably, Peter could have been presenting an extreme example just to be contentious. However, my perception of Peter during the focus group was that he was being very genuine in this disclosure. Furthermore, he was not the only coach to express fears about touching.

The perception of public scrutiny appears to be influenced by coach age and marital status, with younger, unmarried coaches feeling greater scrutiny. Although these perceptions of scrutiny have been expressed, it should be noted that they are not based on actual risk factors for offending.

6.6 Developing Strategies for Avoiding False Accusations

A common theme throughout the data was the tension expressed by coaches between developing a trusting relationship and a fear of good intentions being misconstrued by swimmers, parents, or bystanders. Coaches voiced a general perception of role conflict (see chapter 8) derived from the need to motivate, mentor, counsel, and coach athletes while at the same time maintaining what they perceived should be a professional distance. Acutely aware of the implications that false accusations can have for one's career, coaches actively avoided putting themselves in situations where accusations might arise from disgruntled parents and swimmers or malicious bystanders. Precautions included creating an open environment, that is, an environment in which others were not excluded. This was achieved by reducing or eliminating time alone with swimmers and inviting club managers to attend coach-swimmer meetings. Managing relationship boundaries by not favouring any one swimmer, and keeping a physical and emotional distance, were other strategies adopted for avoiding false accusations. Finally, some coaches talked about actively following club, union, and governing body guidelines in the hope of avoiding false allegations.

6.7 Evaluating Relationship Consequences and Coaching Priorities

Public scrutiny and fears of false accusations provided coaches with reasons for *not* personally becoming involved with adult swimmers, even though they did not necessarily perceive such involvement as inappropriate. In discussing appropriateness of legal relationships, coaches evaluated the consequences of such relationships beyond the negative consequences of scrutiny and false allegations. The potential effect on the team and the individual's swimming performance were key factors in deciding the appropriateness of a relationship. The negative effects that coaches discussed included: causing jealousy between team members, damaging team morale, giving preferential attention to the selected swimmer, or giving less attention to the selected swimmer in an attempt to avoid favouritism. The coaches recognised that the first responsibility was to the swimmer's sporting

development, rather than the coaches' own relationship needs. In the absence of perceived negative consequences, they supported the coach's civil rights to develop intimate relationships.

But if that relationship was formed through mutual attraction, and over time, two people getting to know each other, with no detrimental effects. Um, then I don't see the problem with that. I think, you know, yeah, you have to take the moral high ground. But, there's also, you have to start living your life at some point. You know, and if the only chance to socially interact with people, as a coach, is with athletes of a sensible age, and something materialises out of that, then you know, people go to night clubs and form relationships. You know, everyone has to have that chance of finding a partner, however it happens. (Frank)

The coaches also cited several examples of swimmers whose performance increased after entering into intimate relationships with their coaches. The limitations of basing their perceptions on examples of successful relationships are discussed in chapter 8.

6.8 Acknowledging the Power Imbalance

Some of the coaches put the athlete's welfare before their own and acknowledged that relationships with their performers were potentially unequal and might constitute an abuse of trust. Brackenridge (2001) argued that coaches, by virtue of their position, can never be in an equal relationship with an athlete. Even a coach who is not consciously aware of his power is likely to have power in the eyes of the swimmer who looks to him for training advice, team selection choices, and sometimes guidance on general life matters. Taking this into account, it is interesting that only a few coaches felt that such relationships were absolutely inappropriate. The other coaches had a relativist ontology by which they expected themselves to hold higher moral standards than they expected of their peers.

It's more from a professional point of view myself, but if, if say, [the coach] was 30, and there was a 22, 23 year old swimmer in the programme, I'd be like, 'Fair play.' I wouldn't do it, but I'd be like 'fair play.' (Scott)

6.9 Reluctance to Interfere

Coaches were especially reluctant to judge other coaches' behaviours as inappropriate or to intervene in potentially inappropriate coaching behaviours. The reluctance to intervene was magnified by awareness of the damage that unfounded allegations can cause. Difficulties in assessing intention, a key category identified by the coaches for determining appropriateness, further facilitated an environment of complacency. According to the coaches, behaviours that are legal (e.g., giving someone a lift home or giving a congratulatory hug) become unacceptable when a coach's intentions are to harm or exploit the swimmer. However, intentions are not visible or easily measured. Without knowledge about intentions, coaches felt they could not judge their fellow coaches' behaviour.

Furthermore, it was understandable that coaches did not want to take on the role of reporting suspected abuse when doing so was not in their job description. For example, after being asked to counsel another coach about inappropriate behaviour, one coach commented,

I, at that meet, was just another coach...you know, and it's not up to me, to go and tell somebody, of the concern, a fellow coach, I'm not his senior coach, I'm not his mentor, I'm not involved in his club, so I don't find, I felt it was [the gala organisers] who had to deal with the situation as they felt appropriate. They did nothing. (Oliver)

6.10 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore coaches' perceptions of appropriateness in relation to coach-athlete sexual relationships. The rich discussions elicited through four focus groups illustrate the complex nature of defining appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in a sporting relationship. Not surprisingly, coaches expressed perceptions of sexual relationships before the age of consent that were in line with the law. Discussion about legal relationships, however, encouraged greater debate of factors contributing to 'appropriateness'. Analysing how coaches reacted to public scrutiny and how they judged their fellow

coaches also provided valuable information about the coaches' constructions of appropriateness.

In general, a higher standard was held for one's own behaviour compared with that expected of other coaches. On a personal level, there was a willingness by the coaches to adapt to the scrutiny generated by recent greater awareness of child sexual abuse and the emergence of child protection policies. A more lenient perception of appropriateness, however, was more evident as coaches discussed appropriateness in terms of judging their coaching peers. Awareness of career-damaging false allegations, recognition of job roles, and attempts at maintaining civil liberties contributed to the reluctance to interfere when suspicions of abuse arose.

Working coaches are well placed to influence the social acceptability or otherwise of potentially harassing and abusive behaviours in sport. According to Finkelhor's model of sexual offending (see Figure 1.1), an abusing coach must be motivated to offend, overcome his own inhibitions, overcome external barriers such as parents or coaches, and finally he must overcome the targeted victim (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1999; Finkelhor et al., 1986). When coaches adhere to professional standards they are likely to act as external inhibitors restricting perpetrators from abusing in sport. However, the data from this study indicate that, whilst coaches may be willing to change their own behaviour, they are reluctant to intervene in that of their peers.

Chapter 7: Interview Methods and Reflections on the Research Focus

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods used in conducting the individual interviews. The analysis of the interviews contributed to the focus group analysis and is not intended to be a separate analysis. The same tools as described in chapter 5 were used to analyse the focus groups in addition to a new one presented here. This chapter concludes with a reflective section explaining how the focus of the thesis started to shift several months before conducting the interviews and was finally realised several months after the interviews had been conducted.

7.2 Interview Methods

7.2.1 Introduction to the Interviews

After the focus groups were analysed, the coaches for individual interviews were purposively selected for specific characteristics that might further inform the emerging theory. One question that was raised from the analysis of the focus groups was, “To what extent do coaches anticipate the consequences of engaging in a sexual relationship with a swimmer?” I was also interested in further examining the effect that child protection measures were having on coaches’ perceptions of the coaching role. The three coaches who were interviewed were selected on the following basis: the first had received a conviction for sexually assaulting a female swimmer in his care; the second was in a committed relationship with a swimmer who he coaches; and the third had been suspended (and then cleared) by the ASA during an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. (For simplicity, the convicted coach is referred to as a coach or convicted coach throughout the remainder of this thesis. He, however, has had his coaching licence withdrawn from

the ASA and is no longer coaching.) Each of these coaches had experiences that could potentially further my understanding of coaches' perceptions of appropriateness and the effect of child protection measures on coaching. I conducted one interview with each coach over a 3-month period.

Ethical protocols for data collection and data storage were similar to those used for the focus groups (see chapter 5). Specific situations of the individual interviews required additional ethical protocols. These are reviewed under the subsection for each interview. Details about recruitment and the structure of the interviews are discussed separately for each coach, and presented in the order in which the coaches were interviewed. (As was the case for the presentation of the focus group data, alias names are used to represent the coaches.)

Basic demographic information for these three coaches is grouped together here to protect their individual identities. For the convicted coach, the coaching information relates to his last year as a swimming coach. Their ages fell in the 35 to 55 year old range. They had been coaching between 10 and 30 years, coaching was their main profession, and they spent between 20 and 43 hours a week coaching. Each worked with a variety of swimmers from county to international level, with each coaching at least 5 national level swimmers per year. Two of the coaches reported attending an ASA child protection workshop and the third received his child protection in sport training from another provider.

7.2.2 Coach Convicted of Sexually Assaulting a Child He Coached

To adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act of 1998, the ASA legal department mailed recruitment letters on my behalf to 6 coaches from the ASA files who had convictions of a sexual nature relating to swimmers. Of the coaches who were contacted, two declined the invitation, 2 did not respond at all, and the prison locator service declined to give contact details for one. "Brian" was the only convicted coach who agreed for me to contact him. Upon receiving the coach's consent to contact him directly, I telephoned him to schedule an interview. I allowed him to designate a location convenient for him, and he chose his house.

I conducted the interview with the assistance of the head of the Child Protection in Sport Unit, Mr. Steve Boocock, who is a former probation officer with experience in conducting risk assessments of sex offenders. The decision to include another interviewer for the convicted interview was based on advice for interviewing sexual offenders taken from the literature (Hearn, 1993) and personal communication with probation officers responsible for the treatment of sex offenders (M. Metcalfe and T. Perry, personal communication, May 1999). According to these sources, having a male and female interviewer present reduces attempts by the interviewee to intimidate the researcher and increases interviewer safety. This was especially important as the interview was conducted at the former coach's home.

Conducting an interview at the coach's house has advantages and disadvantages. Allowing the interviewee to choose the interview location serves to reduce the power differential between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview participant is arguably more likely to feel comfortable answering sensitive questions in the privacy of his own home as compared with a public location. However, the familiarity of the home can also lead to distractions. In this interview, the coach was distracted by feeling the need to "play host" (i.e., making cups of tea), incoming telephone calls, another person in the house, and a jigsaw puzzle lying on the table.

Upon arrival, we had the choice of sitting in the living room on couches or at the table with the jigsaw puzzle. The living room set-up seemed too informal, there was no space for my audio recorder, and the physical set-up of the couches would not allow for eye-contact between myself and the second interviewer. Eye-contact was important so that we could use nonverbal communication with each other to decide when to move on and when to probe further. We opted for the table, sat across from each other with the coach on the side in between us.

Mr. Boocock and I had met on two previous occasions to plan the interview. During these meetings we discussed areas to cover in the interview. These included the coach's awareness of events that might have led to the allegation, clarification of events, the coach's response to the allegation and investigation, the perception of other's in the club, his relationship with the child, and his coaching philosophy. Mr.

Boocock's experience interviewing offenders, along with my own reading in the area, suggested that these areas had the potential to reveal the coach's rationalisations for the abuse and the coach's perceptions of appropriateness. We also discussed strategies that sex offenders use to try to take control of the interview and how to respond if this happened. For example, if the coach had called me "love" during the interview I would model acceptable boundaries and ask him to call me by name. (The coach did use this term with me, but not until I was in the car about to depart.) Mr. Boocock and I decided to share the interviewing with neither person dominating. It was agreed that we would use eye-contact to negotiate turn-taking.

Although I had a list of prompts and general areas for probing (see Appendix N), I did not have a set list of questions. Thus, the interview can be classified as unstructured. We decided to start the interview by simply asking the former coach to tell us his story. Mr. Boocock and I used prompts such as "can you describe" and "what was their response" to encourage the participant to elaborate when appropriate. In addition to the conviction, the participant was specifically asked to comment on how he became involved in coaching, to describe a typical session, and to describe his relationship with the club.

Despite having agreed to share the responsibility for directing the interview, upon reflection, I realised that I was unconfident in my interviewing skills and let Mr. Boocock lead the questioning. At one point the coach challenged me and asked, 'Who's conducting this interview, you or him?' I responded that we both were. The interview concluded by asking the coach what he would do differently and what advice he had for other coaches. The interview lasted 2 hours.

7.2.3 Coach in a Committed Relationship with a Swimmer He Coaches

This coach was originally recruited for the focus groups but was not available during the scheduled times. He was invited to participate in an individual interview because of his current relationship with a swimmer (over the age of consent) who he coaches. To protect his anonymity, details about his relationship are not given here.

This interview was also conducted at the coach's home. For safety reasons (Hearn, 1993), one of my supervisors was informed of my meeting time and I telephoned her after the interview to confirm my safe return. The interview was unstructured, allowing the coach to direct the conversation. Prompts (see Appendix N) were, however, used to focus the discussion based on issues of interest that arose from the focus group analysis. For example, I was interested in how his perceptions of appropriateness were influenced by public scrutiny so I asked this coach to reflect on how the opinions of other people might have influenced his relationship with the swimmer. I was also interested in the emerging idea of role conflict and how a coach's perception of what it means to be an effective coach influenced this. Therefore I probed in areas that would reveal his coaching philosophy and his feelings about child protection policies. This interview lasted 4 hours.

7.2.4 Coach Accused and Acquitted of Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

This coach was also on the original list of coaches who were contacted for the focus groups. To allow him to speak more openly about his allegation I did not want to include him in the focus groups and, instead, invited him to take part in an individual interview. Details of the accusations brought against him are not revealed here in order to protect his anonymity. He agreed to participate and we jointly decided on a public location with private meeting rooms.

As with the other two interviews, the format was unstructured but I used prompts to focus the discussion (see Appendix N). I was particularly interested in what extent, if any, he had changed his coaching behaviours to prevent future allegations being brought against him. I was also interested in his perceptions of what contributes to a good coaching relationship. For example I asked, "What sort of things do you see as being integral to the coach/swimmer relationship, and if you were to describe a good, close relationship, what would characterise that?" This allowed me to further examine how one's definition of effective coaching had an impact on role conflict.

We met in the agreed location and the interview started after he signed the informed consent form. Part way through the interview he expressed his option to

stop the audio recording for a few minutes. The information revealed during this time was not particularly relevant to the thesis and therefore did not create difficulties for the interpretation of the interview data. The interview lasted for 2 hours and stopped when he had to leave to conduct a coaching session. He offered to return afterwards to finish the discussion. He returned several hours later and we completed the interview in a café. For this segment of the interview I took notes, rather than attempting to record in a noisy environment. This part of the interview lasted 1 hour and did not add anything significant to the recorded segment of the interview.

7.3 Analysis

7.3.1 Introduction to the Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim by myself. Following the iterative nature of Grounded Theory (see Figure 5.1) the interview data contributed to the understanding of the focus group data. The process of analysis followed the tenets of Grounded Theory as detailed in chapter 5 and further developed in this section.

7.3.2 The Paradigm Model

The paradigm model, another Grounded Theory tool, facilitated the development of the model presented in chapter 8. The paradigm model “is nothing more than a perspective taken toward data, another analytic stance that helps to systematically gather and order data in such a way that structure and process are integrated” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128). This model evolved after 8 more months of exploring the relationships between the categories and sketching different matrices and paradigm models. The paradigm model is a heuristic tool to aid the researcher in examining conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences of the phenomenon (or core category) being studied.

Conditions help to explain how and why coaches experience (or do not experience) the phenomenon. The different elements in the paradigm model have depth as expressed in their associated properties or dimensions (see chapter 5 for a thorough discussion of properties and dimensions); it is this depth that explains variations between coaches' experiences (or lack) of the phenomenon. Through the process of examining different properties and dimensions of categories, one can locate an individual experience within the model. Conditions may include micro elements that are close to the coach's own action (e.g., his own personal experience with allegations) and macro elements that contribute to the general climate (e.g., societal attitudes towards child abuse). Unlike positivistic modelling approaches, the aim here is not to establish statistical causality in a deterministic way. It is acknowledged that conditions are interlinked in such a way as to make causality difficult to disentangle. The aim, instead, is to understand what situations, problems, and issues influence the phenomenon and why.

How the coach responds to the phenomenon is explained through actions and interactions. These may be strategic, in relation to a particular problem, such as a deciding whether or not to give a lift home to a forgotten child at the end of training session. Or they may be routine actions, such as setting a rule of only conducting morning training sessions if two or more swimmers are present. As with conditions, coaches will vary between one another in their actions and interactions. These actions are also likely to evolve over time as their consequences are experienced and evaluated.

A range of consequences evolves from the actions and interactions that coaches engage in while attempting to respond to the phenomenon. The inherent properties of consequences include the directness of the impact on the core category, the duration of the consequence, the immediacy or cumulative effect of the consequence, the number of consequences, the visibility of the consequence (Is it overt? Who is aware of it?), and the degree of impact (narrow or widespread) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

As I developed the paradigm model, I made relational statements to explain how concepts interact. New cases may validate the relational statements or, alternatively, generate contradictions. It is important to examine each case at the

properties and dimensions level to see if it is merely an extreme dimension of a property. Thus, the coach who does not seem to experience the phenomenon is not viewed as a contradictory case to the model. The case is examined to see what conditions were present and how the coach varied on these conditions compared with those who did experience the phenomenon. This negative case further develops the model rather than negating it.

7.4 Changing the Research Focus

7.4.1 Introduction to Changing the Research Focus

Before reporting the findings from the interviews and the further analysis of the focus groups, this reflective section is presented to explain how the analysis moved away from simply examining perceptions of appropriateness. I quote from my reflective research journal to track the development of my thinking over the main year of analysis. I also highlight my struggles in coming to terms with a shift in focus and what this meant for the research project. A major breakthrough was reached when I followed the Grounded Theory adage that the data should dictate the research focus, rather than the researcher forcing the data into a single direction. This breakthrough was facilitated by the use of the paradigm model in Grounded Theory, explained earlier in this chapter.

7.4.2 Rationale for changing focus

I chose to follow the methodological approach of the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) for my thesis mainly because of its strengths in guiding theoretical developments in new areas of research. The techniques of Grounded Theory also allow for the development of theory in an area that is important to the research participants. This would potentially lead to a more meaningful focus and, potentially, contribute to policy development. Grounded Theory was also deemed to be appropriate because there had been very little research in the area of interpersonal and intimate relationships

in sport so an exploratory approach, rather than a positivistic hypothesis testing approach, had greater potential for furthering knowledge in this area. One limitation of following an exploratory methodology is that the researcher must relinquish some control to the data and, therefore, cannot plan the development of the thesis in advance. There is also the risk of finding oneself in an area that is of paramount concern to the participants but not to the researcher. I was aware of these complications when I chose the Grounded Theory approach, yet I did not imagine that they would apply to my research project.

The more I analysed the focus group data, the more I became aware that the problem most relevant to my research participants was *not* how they constructed and distinguished appropriate from inappropriate sexual relationships but how the child protection movement was affecting their roles as swimming coaches. As I was reading another Grounded Theory paper in February 2001, I highlighted the following quote:

What happens if the data do not illuminate the researcher's initial interests? Often, our research topics are sufficiently general that finding interesting data is not a problem, although we find ourselves pursuing unanticipated leads. Grounded theorists evaluate the fit between their initial research interests and their emerging data. They do not force preconceived ideas and theories directly on their data. Rather, they follow the leads that they define in the data, or design another way of collecting data to try to follow their initial interests. (Charmaz, 1995, p. 32-33)

Although the design of my research meant that there was enough information in the data to examine my original question, the emerging findings suggested that a change in focus would be in line with the Grounded Theory methodology. This change had the potential to yield findings applicable to the respondents and to develop research knowledge about the impact of the child protection movement on sports coaches.

7.4.3 Oscillating – To Change or Not to Change Focus

I acknowledged the necessity of following the emerging analysis but I did not yet share Charmaz's (1995) conviction that I must do this. I was afraid that a change of focus might lead to my losing the support of my funding sources, the

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and the Leisure and Sport Research Unit (LSRU) and, most importantly, losing the academic support of my supervisor whose expertise is in sexual exploitation in sport. In my notes on Charmaz's paper, I wrote:

One of the certain difficulties in Grounded Theory methodology is the lack of focus that one must have when starting out. This is counter-intuitive to anyone trained in a positivist or post-positivist tradition. Furthermore, it causes difficulties in gaining funding and passing through research boards and ethics committees. People expect researchers to have a focused research question before starting a research project. Contract work often requires a specific research question to be addressed. In my own research, I am looking at how coaches construct appropriate and inappropriate intimate/sexual coach/athlete relationships. Underlying this question is perhaps the greater question of whether the sport context encourages abuse, or whether abusers simply find sport an easy place within which to abuse. I've pitched my research to the ASA, BSCTA, and the swimming coaches as an opportunity for coaches to voice their perspectives about coach/athlete relationships. Sufficiently vague, it does allow for what's most important to the coaches to emerge.

But, what do I do if what emerges does not fit with what my funding bodies (ASA and the LSRU) want to know? If I go down a line of looking at how the focus on child protection has made coaches afraid to act sympathetic to athletes, how they have changed their coaching practices (in their perspective for the worse) - where does that leave theory development in sexual harassment and abuse in sport? Have I diverged from the objectives of Celia's work? (personal notes on Grounded Theory, 21 February 2001)

I continued to struggle with what I perceived to be opposing forces. Despite trying to convince myself that the constructivist approach to Grounded Theory would allow me to adhere to my original research question, I was still feeling that it was my duty to allow the data to drive the research focus.

But, I have chosen the constructivist approach to Grounded Theory, which allows me to focus on MY research question. I almost wish I was going with Glaser's approach - because of the ASA grant I feel like I "owe" it to my participants to be a voice for them, to explore what is most important to them. I feel like what is most important or relevant to them is how their coaching practices are being changed by the fear of false allegations. But, this doesn't relate to their perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate relationships, or does it? Has how they've changed affected their perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate? Are the accepted norms from the

governing body and society at large, decreasing as abuse and awareness of abuse grows (see node “coming out into the open”). Is there a larger process going on here? (research journal, 27 February 2001)

I was feeling as though I had to choose between doing Grounded Theory properly (allowing the participants to determine the research direction) and being faithful to my thesis proposal. This controversy seemed to be constantly on my mind, and I even found myself discussing it with colleagues in a social setting. I recorded the following in my journal:

I feel like the main theme is not really related to my research question but more to this issue of being scrutinised and how coaching practices are having to change. Their whole concept of what is a good coach is being called into question. Two of my colleagues think that I can work this into my question - how the coaches define appropriate and inappropriate more generally, might impact how they define it more specifically. (research journal 2 March 2001)

By 3 March 2001, I had created 62 nodes, all with corresponding memos, from the open coding of the first national level focus group. As explained in chapter 5, open coding is the process of breaking down data to discrete categories. At this stage, I set aside my worries about the focus of my thesis and focused on reducing my nodes to a workable structure. My aims through March, April, and May 2001 were to code all of the focus groups, develop questions for the individual interviews, and develop the analysis for presentations to the ASA, my research department, and the quadra-annual conference of the International Society for Sport Psychology. My concerns about determining a core category for my project were always in the back of my mind but did not reappear in my research journal again until May 2001 when I highlighted some of the key questions and concerns of the coaches that were emerging from the data:

- (a) One of the problems identified in my study is the difficulty of knowing what is and isn't appropriate.
- (b) What behaviours should/shouldn't be allowed?
- (c) How should the coach manage relationships for the trust needed without crossing the line?
- (d) How can they act, so as not to be seen as “abusive”?
- (e) Coaches feel they are having to coach with their hands tied because of increased scrutiny.

I'm interested in how coaches construct their decisions about what is and isn't appropriate - but is this the problematic behaviour at the centre of my data? Does it suggest a core category? (research journal, 19 May, 2001)

I reread Glaser's (1978) criteria for identifying a core category in hopes that I would "find" the answer to my dilemma. One suggestion was to examine the "processes" that were evident in the data. From memory, I listed the following processes that I was noticing in the data: rationalising and normalising relationships with athletes; defending their civil rights to develop relationships; sacrificing their civil rights (willingly and begrudgingly) as part of their role as a coach; upholding professional standards; establishing, maintaining, and negotiating boundaries with athletes; setting standards of acceptable behaviour for self; growing awareness of public scrutiny; and inhibiting natural responses due to scrutiny. Again, this list suggested that my core category was related to the changing nature of the coaching role. I felt like I was the proverbial insecure student in need of a little reassurance that I was "on the right track" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 148).

7.4.4 Confirmation of the Importance of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

From June through September of 2001, I focused on writing two papers for publication and conducting the interviews with coaches (who were selected for their specific characteristics that might assist in further developing the emerging theory). Responses during the individual interviews led again to the core category relating more to the overall impact of child protection movement on coaching than how coaches define appropriateness in coach-athlete sexual relationships. I was able to examine this emerging core category with some prompts during the interviews. One of the defining moments for confirming the need to alter my focus came when one coach wrote on the quality assurance feedback form, "we need more research to examine what we mean by coaching." In October 2001, I refocused on attempting to make sense of this emerging core category. I was also cognisant that it was late in the doctoral research process to be changing focus but I felt that I had enough data to support the emerging core category and that it would be a significant contribution to knowledge. To ignore this would be to do a disservice to the child protection in

sport movement and the coaches that participated in this project as well as a distortion of the Grounded Theory method. In October I wrote,

What I've been struggling with in the last couple weeks is that the bigger issue - and perhaps the core category, is that the child protection policies are forcing coaches to re-evaluate their coaching, and challenging coaches' perceptions of "good practice" in coaching. They have developed strategies for dealing with these restrictions on coaching but feel as though it results in a compromise to good coaching. Their perceptions of "appropriateness" are a reflection of their attempt to resolve the conflict between child protection policies and "Good Coaching." Child protection policies are meant to make sport safer for children, the policies are not intended to impinge upon performance, yet the coaches feel like it is impinging on performance. This is the greater issue for them; how do they resolve this conflict? My research has focused on the sexual relationship side of things, but it is these greater issues that seem to have emerged as the most important concern for coaches. Now I need to write this up in a way that is sufficient for my journal article, and then I can work on expanding it for the thesis. (research journal, 5 October, 2001)

From October onwards, when I had finally acknowledged that role conflict and role ambiguity should be the core category, I started using one of the Grounded Theory analytical tools called the paradigm model to develop the concept further. The paradigm model (see section 7.3.2) consists of examining the categories as they relate to the core category in terms of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences. Using the paradigm model helped me to create a structure for writing and helped to illuminate gaps where I needed to return to the data.

As the paradigm model grew, my fears of not following my original question dissipated and my confidence in knowing that I had stayed true to the spirit of Grounded Theory grew. My decision to examine role conflict and role ambiguity was further validated when coaches in the Sports Coach UK's *Good Practice and Child Protection* course made comments that fitted within my paradigm model. One nearly quoted the title of my core category as he was expressing his frustration about being a coach. I shared my preliminary findings with other coaches and officials at the launch of the Child Protection in Sport Unit on the 29th of October. The people I spoke with found my results to be credible. I was especially reassured by the captain of one of the national women's teams who also coaches youth sports

and commented that I was “spot on” with the concepts of role conflict and role ambiguity, especially in relation to touching.

Throughout November, December, and January I continued to develop the Role conflict and role ambiguity paradigm model and continued coding as necessary. My decision about my evolving model was again vindicated when I met with Barbara Barrett, an independent child protection consultant to the ASA and a full-time social worker. We spoke for over four hours without any breaks. Before I showed her my model, she spoke about a coach she knows who is in his 50s and is very aware of child protection matters. He will give a handshake after a particularly good swim; this respects the swimmer’s personal boundaries and it has become something that the swimmers value. She explained it as an incentive, much in the same way as an extrinsic reward (e.g., medal or trophy). I then showed her my model, and how he fits in as the coach who is not likely to experience role conflict or role ambiguity at all because although he is aware of child protection measures, he already has professional standards that match the child protection guidance. She found my model insightful and agreed with the concepts that were in it.

7.5 Summary

The emergence of the core category, role conflict and role ambiguity is an excellent example of how the data should drive the analysis when following the Grounded Theory methodology. The challenges of actually allowing the data to refocus an entire project were illustrated in the 9 to 10 months that it took me to fully acknowledge the new focus of analysis. Although I feared the response of the ASA and my research department, I was fortunate in that my funding bodies and my supervisors did not dispute my change of focus. The analysis, as presented in chapter 8, indicates important implications for the implementation of child protection policy and the delivery of coach education workshops on child protection. Furthermore, the emergence of role conflict and role ambiguity opens up a new area for research about how coaches are affected by and respond to the child protection movement.

Chapter 8: Theoretical Development - Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

8.1 Introduction

One benefit of Grounded Theory is that it facilitates theoretical development in areas of research relevant to the participants. In the current study, issues of appropriateness regarding coach-swimmer sexual relationships (as discussed in chapter 7) emerged as less salient for the coaches than their concerns about how their jobs were being affected by increased public awareness of child abuse and protection. I interpreted this central concern as *role conflict and role ambiguity*. This chapter is organised using the headings of the Grounded Theory paradigm model: conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences in relation to role conflict and role ambiguity. Extracts from coach interviews, analytical memos, and academic literature are provided as an audit trail to support the development of the concepts of role conflict and role ambiguity.

The core category encapsulates two social psychology concepts: role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict in this thesis refers to conflicting expectations (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snowek, & Rosenthal, 1964) about the coach's role. Role ambiguity is defined as insufficient information about a role (Kahn et al., 1964). In this study it represents the struggle to redefine coaching, or as Clive aptly asked, "What do we mean by coaching?" The phenomenon that the coaches described concerns changing and ill-defined roles brought about by conflicting expectations and insufficient information. It is important to note that role conflict and role ambiguity are conceptualised here not as a stable state but as dynamic processes of experiencing contradiction and uncertainty. They are an ever-changing experience as the coach interacts with swimmers, parents, governing bodies, and his environment more generally.

In social psychology the terms role conflict and role ambiguity have been used in different ways, sometimes without acknowledging the different types of role conflict. The core category in this analysis was initially named role ambiguity to reflect the uncertainty about what behaviours constitute the role of coach. This was

based on my understanding of role conflict as a conflict experienced within a person trying to fulfil two roles with competing expectations. For example, researchers in sport psychology and sociology have examined the potential for role conflict when female athletes are confronted with Victorian ideas of femininity that contradict the values of strength, competition, and aggression needed to succeed as an athlete (Allison, 1991). What the coaches experienced in this study appeared to be a result of new information from child protection policies and from advocates challenging coaches' previously held perceptions of coaching roles, and thus I labelled it ambiguity. However, upon further reading, I realised that I missed a crucial distinction in role conflict, that of inter-person and intra-person conflict (Grace, 1972; Kahn et al., 1964).

What I had understood as role conflict was inter-role conflict, that is one person performing two conflicting roles (e.g., soldier and parent; Grace, 1972). Intra-role conflict reflects part of my initial definition of ambiguity, that is, the confusion caused by other people and organisations expressing conflicting expectations about a particular role (Grace, 1972; Kahn et al., 1964). Role ambiguity, as defined by Kahn and his colleagues (1964), refers specifically to the experience resulting from the perception of having insufficient information to define one's role. It is recognised that there is objective conflict and objective ambiguity as well as the subjective interpretation of the objective conflict and ambiguity (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992; Kahn et al., 1964). For the purposes of this thesis, role conflict and role ambiguity refer to the *subjective experience* of role conflict or role ambiguity. It is very likely that coaches in this study, and more generally, experience role conflict and role ambiguity not related to the child protection movement. The analysis in this thesis, however, is restricted only to role conflict and role ambiguity arising from child protection issues in sport.

It is evident from the above definition of ambiguity that role conflict and role ambiguity are closely linked. In some instances the contradictory expectations being communicated from the different stakeholders in sport *resulted in* a coach acknowledging that the different expectations were not congruent. In other instances, the conflicting messages resulted in the perception (role ambiguity) that the information needed to define one's role was non-existent (e.g., when coaches

asked for guidance), insufficient, or inadequately communicated (Kahn et al., 1964). Inadequate communication may come in the form of contradictory expectations, thus illustrating the connection between role conflict and role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964). The extent to which individual coaches experience ambiguity and conflict is influenced by the different concepts described in the paradigm model below. (See chapter 7 for an explanation of the paradigm model arising from the Grounded Theory analysis.)

8.2 The Paradigm Model

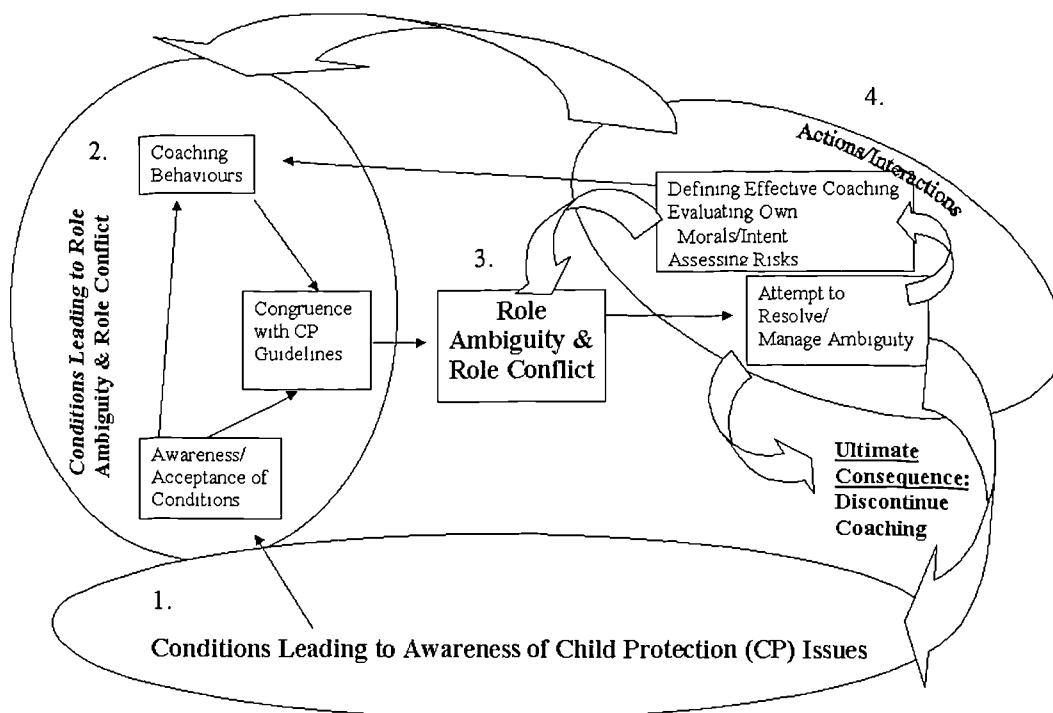


Figure 8.1. Conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity in male swimming coaches.

A paradigm model devised from the data analysis is used in this chapter to illustrate the relationships between categories in a way that illustrates: the conditions for experiencing role ambiguity and role conflict; the actions/interactions that a coach takes when faced with role ambiguity; and, the consequences of these actions/interactions (see Figure 8.1). Although this model is meant to be read in a clock-wise direction, it is important to note that this model is not necessarily linear,

nor static. Rather the elements interact over time to influence the core category. For example, the consequences of a coach's actions will influence how he experiences role ambiguity and are even likely to influence the conditions for experiencing role ambiguity in the future.

The macro and micro environment in which coaches worked combined to set the conditions (numbers 1 and 2 in Figure 8.1) in which role conflict or role ambiguity were experienced. The degree to which role conflict and role ambiguity were first experienced, and how they were managed, led to varying consequences for the coaches. Perceptions of coaching effectiveness and the many roles that comprised the "effective coach" interacted with their assessment of their own moral standards and evaluation of risks as a way of managing role conflict or role ambiguity. The consequences of these actions and interactions included: seeking clearer role definitions; changing their behaviour to resolve the conflict and ambiguity; deciding not to change; and, possibly, changing professions. In Figure 8.1 the consequences are illustrated with the three dimensional arrows. It is especially important to note the cyclical nature of the model, in that consequences influence future behaviours, role ambiguity and role conflict, and the overall context that provides the conditions for awareness of child protection issues.

8.3 Conditions Influencing Awareness of Child Protection Issues

Understanding the conditions leading to and surrounding the coaches' experience of role conflict or role ambiguity is the first step towards understanding the core category and individual differences within these experiences. The conditions combine to create the situational context in which a coach may experience role conflict or ambiguity. Both micro and macro conditions influence the environment in which the coaches live and work. The description of conditions in this chapter is provided to illustrate the situational context, not to suggest that these are causally or temporally determined conditions, nor to suggest that any one factor is more influential than the others are. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 131) note that, "unless research participants are extremely insightful, they may not know all of the reasons why they do things, although they might give researchers some

rationales for their behaviour.” The conditions presented in this chapter are specific examples of the more general historical/cultural, legal, sport political, and personal experience conditions presented in chapter 2. The conditions presented here arise from and are grounded in the data.

Figure 8.1 illustrates how conditions generally influence the overall phenomenon of role conflict and role ambiguity. The first set of conditions (see number 1 in Figures 8.1 and 8.2) is the more general, in this case leading to awareness of child protection issues. The second set of conditions (see number 2 in Figures 8.1 and 8.2) includes those that lead to the core category (see number 3 in Figures 8.1 and 8.2). These include awareness and acceptance of the conditions, one’s current coaching behaviours, and the level of congruence between coaching behaviours and child protection guidelines. Figure 8.2 illustrates the specific conditions discussed in this chapter.

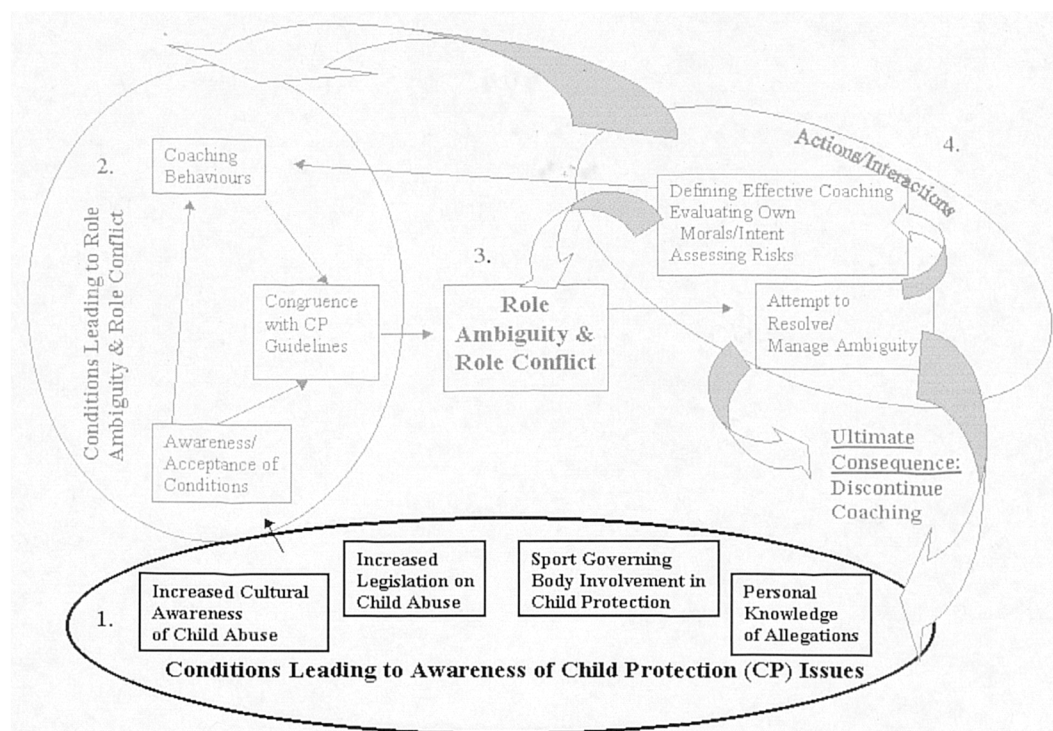


Figure 8.2. Conditions leading to role ambiguity and role conflict.

Conditions leading to awareness of child protection issues include: a greater cultural awareness of child abuse (Janko, 1994; J. E. B. Myers, 1994b), increased legislation on abuse (Department of Health, 1989, 2000; Home Office, 1999,

2000b), sport governing body involvement in child protection (Brackenridge, 2001; Sport England, 2001a, 2001b), and personal knowledge of allegations of abuse. These conditions interact to influence awareness. For example, an increased cultural awareness occurs concurrently with new legislation and personal knowledge.

The following quote about abuse outside sport illustrates how what was concealed, both privately and in society, is now more acceptable to discuss openly. The coach was referring to a statistic that he had heard about girls being abused.

No, just nationally, 1 in 3 girls had been abused. And normally, by a relation. And this was just a room that this came up in. And of, it actually happened, that nearly every girl in that room had been in some situation where they'd been abused by a relation or whatever. Uhm, my own son was abused in, um, one of England's top boarding schools. You know, and we should have drummed that teacher out of teaching and didn't. My wife was abused, by a relation. And it just goes, but in those days, you covered it up. And now, it's coming out into the open, and I think it's far more prevalent than we imagine. And I don't see, I have no answer, I don't know how you stop it happening within (pause), but I think you try and close off as many doors as you can. (cut off). (Don)

Don spoke with surprise that the alleged prevalence of personal abuse was discussed openly in a room and that what had seemed like an unrealistic statistic appeared to be representative of those in his company. His reflection demonstrates that it was the norm to keep occurrences of abuse quiet. Personal experiences of abuse (to oneself, a family member, or a friend) and a cultural transition toward openly discussing abuse are two of the conditions that contribute to coaches being more aware of abuse in general and in institutions, including sport. This awareness suggests an acknowledgement that there is a problem and that some attempt must be made to prevent abuse.

As discussed in chapter 2, the media also have a large impact on cultural awareness of abuse, including within sport. The passage in Figure 8.3 is an example of how the media have contributed to the awareness of child sexual abuse in swimming. All of the coaches in this study knew that Paul Hickson was a former Olympic level coach who is now serving a jail sentence for raping and sexually assaulting some of the swimmers he coached. The media's portrayal of the Hickson

case contributed to their social construction of abuse. The speaker, Al, reflected that in the media's portrayal of Hickson they raised awareness and helped swimmers to distinguish between the legitimate "professional swimming coaches" and those with ill intentions. He astutely recognised that the media portrayed Hickson as only an evil predator. Brackenridge (2001) argued that when the media demonise offenders and present them in the unidimensional light of the paedophile, this creates an atmosphere of moral panic. This process contributes to the "othering" (Brackenridge, 2001) or stigmatising of paedophiles in a way that distances everyday coaches, both in their own minds and in the minds of their swimmers, from offending coaches.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "/Awareness of Abuse/Media Contribution - Node Browser". The address bar shows "of Abuse/Media Contribution". The main content area displays a document with the following text:

Document 'FGE1Aug082000', 1 passages, 785 characters.

Section 21, Paragraphs 2353-2371, 785 characters.

But, I don't think, they see us as a threat. Because they know that we are doing our job as a professional swimming coach. They don't see us as a dirty old man that wants to see them in a swimming costume, that **has been** portrayed, portrayed by television sometimes in the Hickson case and the other case that did come up. The only reason that he wanted to be a swimming coach was that so he could look at people in swimming costumes.

JB:
right

A:
or touch their legs or whatever.

JB:
Do you think that people saw Hickson in that way?

A:
I don't know, I don't think so. It was, that's how it came across on television.

JB:
yeah

A:
I think the kids who are now, 17, 18, 19 you know, thought, "our coach isn't like that" or maybe some of them did think, our coach is like that

On the right side of the document, there are coding stripes (brackets) indicating thematic categories:

- Paedophile, intention, Developing Rapport.
- Media Contribution
- Paedophile, intention,
- Paedophile

Figure 8.3. Passage and coding stripes representing the media's contribution to the social construction of an outsider infiltrating sport with the sole intention of abusing.

The role of the sport governing body in raising awareness of child protection was evident as the coaches discussed the ASA's policy and the BSCTA's code of conduct in relation to their decisions about appropriateness. Elliot reasoned, "if the coach was a member of an organisation like the ASA, or the BSCTA, then he would

probably would not be in breach of any ethics code, because the person's not involved in the sport anymore." On the issue of giving lifts, Craig commented, "We have a policy that says, you shouldn't be taking a female in your car on your own." Regulations, whether legal, governing body, or club were sources of information that led to an increased awareness of child abuse in general and specifically within sport.

Many conditions lead to an increased awareness of child protection issues in sport. The main conditions discussed in this chapter were those that were grounded in the data and included an increased cultural awareness (enhanced by the media), personal experience or knowledge of allegations, legal definitions, and sport governing body regulations. Without these conditions, it is unlikely that the coaches would be experiencing role conflict or role ambiguity in relation to child protection measures.

For role conflict to exist, the coach must be aware of conflicting expectations. Likewise, for role ambiguity to exist, the coach must actually question his role. The two main influences on whether or not a coach questions his role are awareness and acceptance of child protection issues and his current coaching behaviours. The extent to which coaching behaviours are congruent with child protection measures will ultimately establish the degree of role conflict or ambiguity experienced, if any.

Child protection education for coaches has been perhaps one of the weakest areas of provision by the ASA, as individuals studying for their coaching licences have traditionally only received as much information on child protection as the tutor felt comfortable delivering (ASA Child Protection Working Group, personal communication, 11 April, 2001). Just under half of the participants in this study had received some form of child protection training. Of the 11 coaches in this study who hold a *Coach* qualification, five have had child protection training. Of the 12 coaches with a *Club Coach* qualification, six reported having had some child protection training. The training received was provided by: Sports Coach UK (n = 5), ISTC (n = 4), ASA (n = 3), home study (n = 2), local authority (n = 1), and university (n = 1) with three coaches having taken two or more formal courses. Hoping to alleviate the gap in training, the ASA's Child Protection Working Party

proposed that specific time for child protection training be set aside, and that a minimum of two hours be devoted to this in the Teacher course and 1 hour in the Assistant Teacher course (Child Protection Strategy Group, meeting minutes, 2 May, 2001). Members of the Working Party are currently reviewing the tutor materials.

Receiving education about child protection may prove to be one of the most cost effective measures for preventing child abuse in sport (Brackenridge, 2001). Just because a coach attends training, however, does not necessarily mean that he will be aware of or accept that child protection issues are important. The same can be said for high profile cases of abuse. The convicted coach interviewed for this study did not identify with Hickson and thus was able to deny any need to change his own behaviour:

No, it was down South, it didn't bother me at all. I, I had done 24 years [of coaching] or something up until the year the Hickson thing had come on. Nothing had ever happened, why should I change? (Brian)

In addition to the conditions that may influence a coach's perception of role ambiguity, one's current coaching behaviours, and their congruence with child protection guidance, will influence the extent to which ambiguity is experienced. If a coach has always acted in a professional manner, endorsing and reflecting upon recommendations set out in sexual harassment and child protection guidance, then he will experience very little role ambiguity. He will already be clear about where the boundaries of the coaching relationship lie and will never have overstepped these boundaries, despite perhaps having been tested. His everyday coaching behaviours will match examples of good practice described by the coaches in this study (e.g., not coaching alone, only touching swimmers in full view of other adults, not flirting with swimmers, maintaining a professional relationship, etc.).

The level of congruence (or incongruence) between the coach's awareness and acceptance of child protection issues and his current coaching behaviours influences the degree of role ambiguity or role conflict experienced. The passage in Figure 8.4 illustrates the conflict experienced in relation to child protection guidelines about touching.

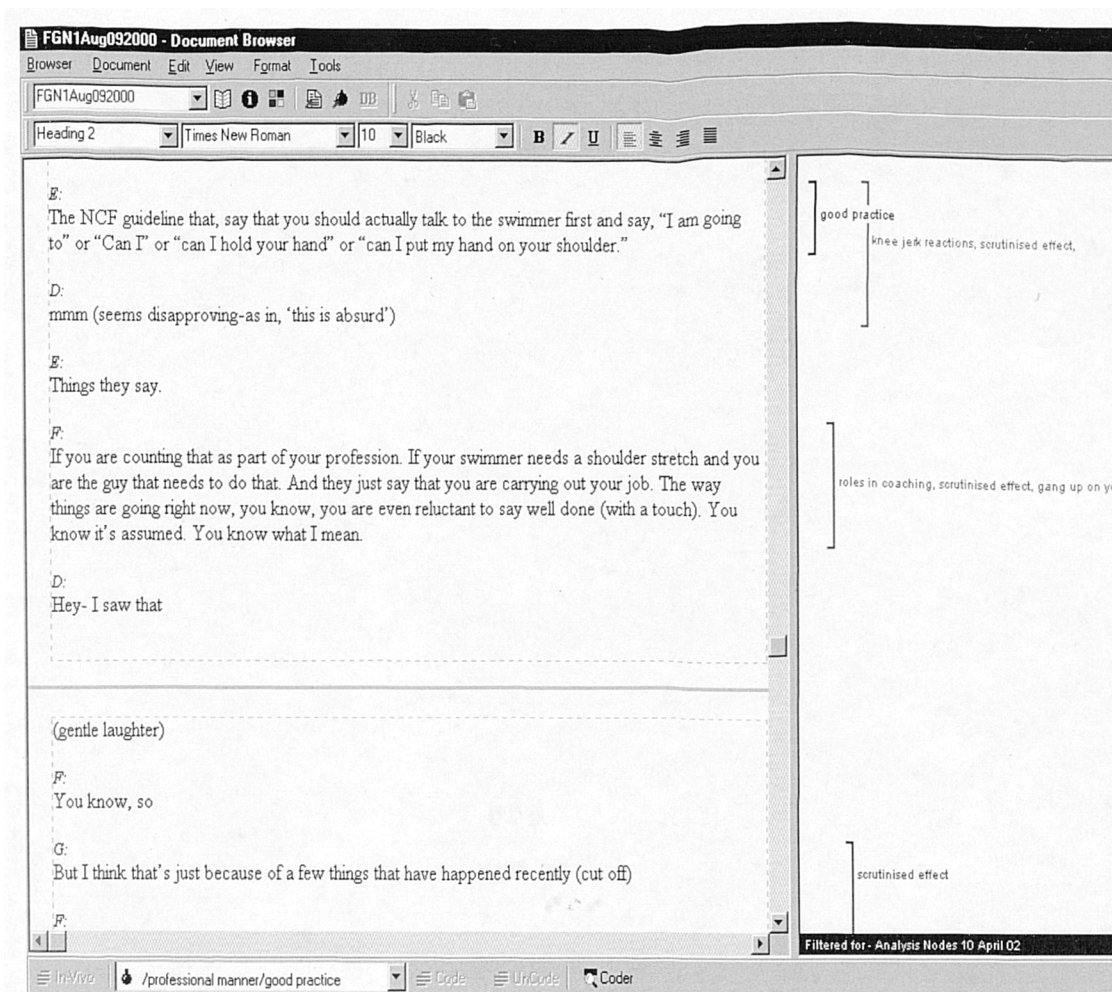


Figure 8.4. Passage illustrating incongruence between awareness of child protection guidelines and coaching behaviours.

This group of coaches clearly accepts the need to protect children but demonstrates the tension between behaviours carried out as part of coaching (e.g., stretching or congratulating) and those recommended in child protection guidelines. Clive also commented on the issue of touch:

C: if you have to put your hand, or if you have to touch a swimmer, in order to show them say, *hand position or something like that*, you feel a real tosser, if you have to say, 'oh now, if I put my hand on you, and I put it in a place where you feel uncomfortable with, uh, will you please tell me.' Now, really you have to--that's really what you have to say to cover yourself.

JB: but what do you say? I mean the reality of it is,

C: in reality you don't say that.

The issue of congruence between coach behaviours and child protection guidelines emerged from the data after I had examined overlapping coding. For example, much of what was coded at *good practice* was also coded at *scrutinised effect*. One of the reasons for this overlap is that I coded what I considered to be examples of good coaching practices into the category *good practice* whereas passages that were coded at *scrutinised effect* were examples of *coaches responding* to being under the scrutiny of the public. This exemplifies the pressure that coaches perceive they are being put under to change their practice. Role conflict and ambiguity arises from conflict between the coaches' current behaviour and the expectations of *good practice* as defined by child protection advocates (including myself).

8.4 Actions and Interactions

Actions and interactions represent an intermediate response to the core category, role conflict and role ambiguity. The process of actions/interactions is similar to the Cognitive Appraisal Stage in Lazarus' transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For example, one coach may adapt quickly to the role conflict and role ambiguity whereas another coach may struggle with it. Number 4 in Figure 8.5 highlights the actions/interactions in the role conflict and role ambiguity model developed from this study. The strategies used by the coaches for adapting to role conflict and role ambiguity included: defining (or redefining) what was required of them to be an effective coach, evaluating their own morals and intentions in relation to child protection measures, and assessing the risks of being accused of child abuse and the risks of a swimmer in their care being abused.

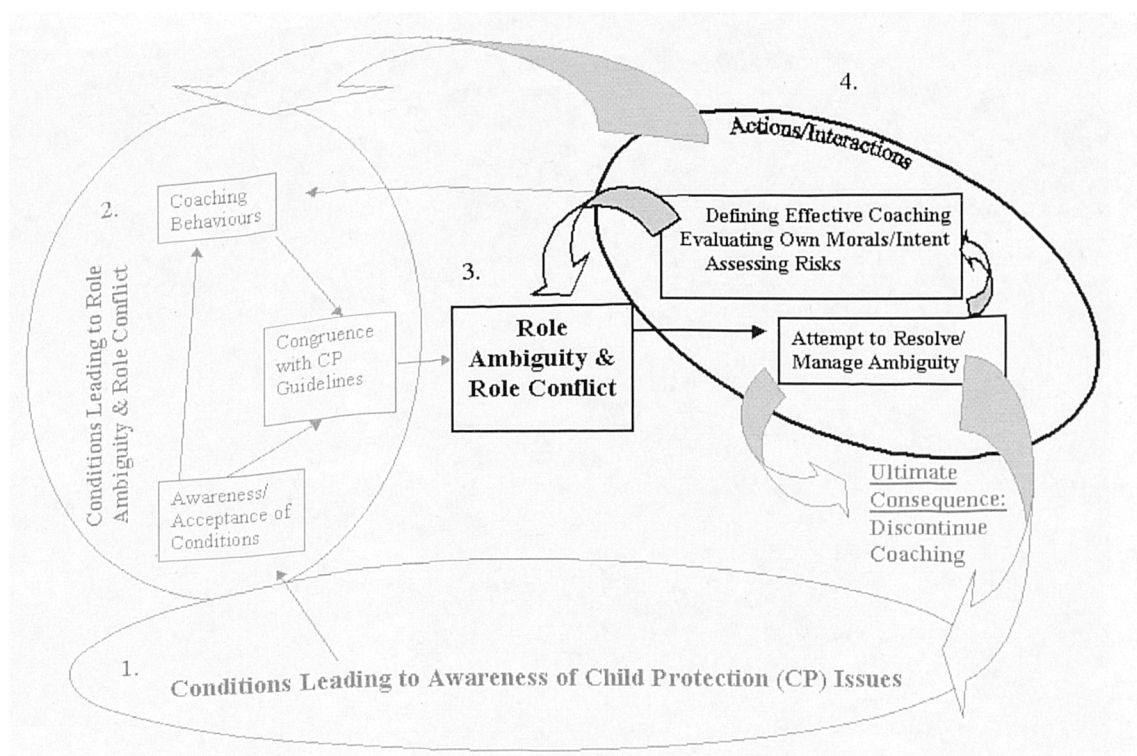


Figure 8.5. Actions and interactions influencing the experience of role ambiguity and role conflict.

8.4.1 Perceptions of Coaching Effectiveness - Ambiguous Coaching Roles

Coaching effectiveness is defined here as the coaches' perceptions about what it takes to be a good, effective swimming coach. Measuring actual coaching behaviours was not the aim of this study and, arguably, *perceptions* of coaching strategies are just as salient to feelings of role ambiguity as are actual behaviour. In coaching burnout studies, for example, it has been found that perceptions of stress are more salient predictors of burnout than actual behaviour (Kelley, 1994; Kelley, Eklund, & Ritter-Taylor, 1999; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992). A coach's cognitive representation of what constitutes effective coaching is his own expectation of his role. It is precisely the expectations of roles that Kahn and his colleagues (1964) refer to when discussing subjective conflict and ambiguity.

Contributing to the confusion are the many roles that a coach may fill in order to meet both his own expectations of being a good coach and those of parents or swimmers. (In this discussion I include functions as roles.) In education, teachers have also experienced role conflict as a result of being expected to perform a number of diffuse roles (Grace, 1972). There are many roles involved in coaching other than those presented here (e.g., instructional, organisational, attending to public relations issues, recruiting new athletes).

The coaching roles related to child protection issues that emerged from the data (with the node names in brackets) include: motivator, disciplinarian, pastoral roles (*protective, counsellor*), facilitator (*lifts*), moral/character developer (*swimming is just the vehicle*), and social (see Figure 8.6).

Nodes in /roles in coaching				
Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
🔗 motivating swimmers	1	18	02.03.2001 - 11:36:06	14.04.2002 - 1...
🔗 socialising	2	34	02.02.2001 - 15:44:12	14.04.2002 - 1...
🔗 Counsellor	3	49	02.04.2001 - 00:42:59	07.04.2002 - 1...
🔗 discipline	4	12	28.04.2001 - 20:53:58	20.01.2002 - 1...
🔗 they make the choice	5	7	22.10.2001 - 07:37:12	21.01.2002 - 0...
🔗 swimming is just the vehicle	6	11	22.10.2001 - 14:55:11	21.01.2002 - 0...
🔗 Lifts	7	21	12.11.2001 - 16:15:56	21.01.2002 - 0...
🔗 Developing Rapport	8	29	18.01.2002 - 23:13:13	14.04.2002 - 1...
🔗 Protective	12	6	01.04.2001 - 23:11:13	21.01.2002 - 0...

Figure 8.6. Inductively derived categories for roles in coaching.

Role ambiguity and conflict occurred because coaches did not perceive a consistent view amongst policy makers, parents, swimmers, and coaches of what constitute constructive roles within coaching. For example, offering tangible support (House & Kahn, 1985) may be enabling, or conversely may be the early stages of grooming a swimmer for abuse (see chapter 4). A swimmer or parent may interpret a coach's verbose motivating style as bullying. Attempts at disciplining and developing character may be interpreted as being domineering and characteristic of verbal and emotional abuse. Examples of the latter two are provided in Myers and Barrett's (2002) analysis of the ASA child protection case files. Their study demonstrated that some coaches have had allegations of abuse

brought against them for treating swimmers in such a manner. The following section describes coaching roles that were perceived by the coaches to be part of effective coaching but that might have been perceived by others as unnecessary and potentially abusive.

8.4.2 Motivating, Grooming, Disciplining, or Bullying?

Motivating athletes was a common topic of debate during the focus groups. Coaches acknowledged the individualistic nature of athletes and the need for individualised motivational techniques. This is in line with Chelladurai's (1980; 1990) assertion that coaching effectiveness is related to coaching characteristics, athlete characteristics, and situational characteristics. Some of the motivation techniques that the coaches discussed included what those outside sport might consider as bullying, such as shouting and pushing athletes beyond their perceived limits. In discussing this, the coaches argued that the means justified the ends. Looking towards elite examples, Frank commented:

He bullied him to his gold medal. Sharon Davies was bullied to her victories. Tennis players, some of the greatest tennis players were either bullied by their parents, or by their coach, but they become great tennis champions. But we are being as coaches, what we are being, I'm not saying we need to be bullying our swimmers, but we are being curtailed in terms of how we can express ourselves in terms of coaching our athletes. And to me, there are going to be some athletes that could be very great athletes but they will fail as athletes, because we will fail them as coaches. Because we will not be coaching them as to how they need to be coached with some of these rules and regulations.

In addition to being coded at *motivating* and *bullying*, this passage was also coded at *intention* and *loads of instances*. Behaviours that coaches intended to be motivating were sometimes perceived by onlookers as bullying. I created *loads of instances* as a category to capture examples of when coaches try to rationalise questionable behaviour by citing other coaches who use the same behaviours. Quotes like this highlighted the process by which appropriate behaviour is socially constructed. The fallacy in citing well known examples of success is that the coaches tend not to hear about the athletes who have discontinued their sport

because of pressures from the coach or others. Within the subculture of sport, shouting at athletes and physically pushing them beyond their abilities have become accepted and even expected by many.

Only recently have negative coaching behaviours been called into question (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Coakley, 1992; McKay et al., 2000b; Smith, 1986; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Smoll, Smith, Curtis, & Hunt, 1978). Although it was not the most important reason cited, 28% and 16% of children in a study of attrition in swimming reported that not having fun and pressure, respectively, were reasons for dropping out of the sport (Gould, Feltz, Horn, & Weiss, 1982). Similar reasons were cited in a study of burnout in junior tennis (Gould, Tuffey et al., 1996). After conducting several studies that demonstrated that punishment was related to disliking the coach (Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983; Smoll et al., 1978) Smith and Smoll and their colleagues developed the Coaching Effectiveness Training programme (Barnett et al., 1992) to teach coaches behaviours that would increase player motivation (e.g., through increased reinforcement, mistake-contingent encouragement, corrective and technical instruction, and a focus on effort and enjoyment; and decreased nonreinforcement, punishment, punitive instruction, and strict control). Significantly fewer players (74%) of the no training control group returned to play in the next season compared with players (95%) of coaches who received the training. Although these research studies illustrate the benefits of positive coaching styles, the responses of the coaches in my study suggest that they are either not aware of the benefits of positive coaching or they do not feel confident using these coaching strategies.

One of the coaches who seemed to be experiencing more role ambiguity than the others had been formally reprimanded for directing profanity at adolescent swimmers. He also felt that child protection regulations would restrict human potential. Similarly, another national level coach expressed dissonance with child protection measures. He was specifically concerned about a restriction on the types of motivational methods available to coaches pushing young swimmers to excel,

‘Cause certainly when you do push them we are getting told that we are abusing them. And I’ve certainly come across that. I’ve had two authorities tell me that I’m working kids too hard. And I’m saying, you know, let’s get real about this. Let’s look at what’s happening in the rest of the world, here.

You've got uh, we are having experiences of people over in Australia coming over telling us that we, and from other countries, that we are not doing a very good job. That, "we work our swimmers 10 times harder than you. What's the problem?" (Elliot)

Motivating swimmers to reach their potential is unquestionably an element within the coaching role. The *method* that the coach uses in achieving this aim is where the potential for ambiguity and role conflict arises. Until coaches learn more positive methods for motivation they are likely to continue experiencing ambiguity and conflict because their behaviours are being scrutinised by parents, other coaches, and child protection advocates. Myers and Barrett (2002) make a clear distinction between emotional abuse and poor practice, whilst also noting the necessity of analysing each situation individually.

The study shows the coach's use of aggressive language is a "practice issue" but the coach who constantly uses negative language to a swimmer rather than praise and constructive criticism in tandem is being emotionally abusive. On occasions, referred coaches have verbally abused the swimmer in front of fellow swimmers believing this will fire [up] the person concerned to greater training efforts or a faster 'final' swim. The effect such coaching methods have on a swimmer will depend on the individual swimmer's character and self-belief. It is an area of concern that can prove the hardest to assess and deal with. (J. Myers & Barrett, 2002, Section on Definitions of Abuse)

Although a coach may justify his behaviour as being "well-intentioned," because intention is not visible his behaviour may be mistaken as abusive. Knowing which motivational methods to use is complicated by the fact that some athletes respond to negative coaching styles, whilst some do not. Thus, a coach who, with good intentions, yells and screams at a child may inadvertently be causing harm to the child. Coaches need to be aware that abuse can be defined in terms of the effect on the child.

Many of the coaches in the study believed that, in order to motivate a swimmer to peak performance, they must build a rapport with them. This relationship can be manifest through developing a trusting bond with the swimmer, being overtly friendly, and getting to know what happens in other facets of the swimmer's life. This category is closely linked to the category "pastoral care", discussed in section 8.4.5. Role conflict is caused in this aspect as the relationship

becomes scrutinised by other people or simply contradicts child protection policy.

Clive explained,

When, when I was married, it used to piss the, piss my wife off to no end, you know 'why do you have to get that close to them' I said 'cause you do' Cause I don't feel you can do a good job if you don't. That's just, you can't, it's like, it's inappropriate to say you need a hands on approach, you do, but you need an appropriate hands on approach. (Clive)

For Clive, he believed he could not perform his job effectively unless he knew the swimmers well enough to know when to push them and when to back off.

This corroborates the findings from a study that examined the effects of Olympic level coach-athlete marriages on the coach-athlete working relationship (Jowett & Meek, 2000). Using deductive content analysis, Jowett and Meek found that emotional closeness increased common views and aims which, in turn, enhanced behavioural co-operation. Findings such as these indicate that it is expected that coaches and athletes should have a close relationship. Coaches in the current study are struggling with how to achieve closeness without being suspected of having ill intentions.

Another coach explained that coaches at larger clubs could afford to be "aloof" and stern but that, being at a small club, he was forced to use a more personal style because, from a financial perspective, he could not jeopardise losing even one swimmer. He felt that through a friendly approach he achieved better results from the swimmers he coached.

I mean [Rick, the coach at the large club] may argue about that, because, each coach is different, uh, you get, they all got their results that way, I get my results this way. I mean you got [Tom, this other coach] totally different than me, but he's very friendly, and [Sam] from [somewhere else], fairly friendly as well, because they are all the smaller type clubs. And the local feeder clubs, well it's like a big party with them, isn't it. (Brian)

The above quote suggests that the smaller clubs are more relaxed by necessity, with the smallest local clubs having the most relaxed atmosphere of all. This perhaps illustrates a transition from social swimming to competitive swimming and more professional coaching. Brian's perception of coaching styles should be interpreted with scepticism, as it is impossible to know how the parents and

swimmers in his club interpreted his coaching style. The interviews and focus groups with the international and national level coaches, however, suggest that personal rapport is even more important with high level swimmers.

For some coaches, developing rapport was something that happened naturally over time. The amount of time, quality of time, and the location of the time spent together were all influential in how coaches perceived the development of relationships, and whether or not this might lead to professional boundaries being crossed. The memo in Figure 8.7 illustrates the conceptual development of this category and highlights trips away as an opportunity for quality time together to transform the relationship from professional to personal.

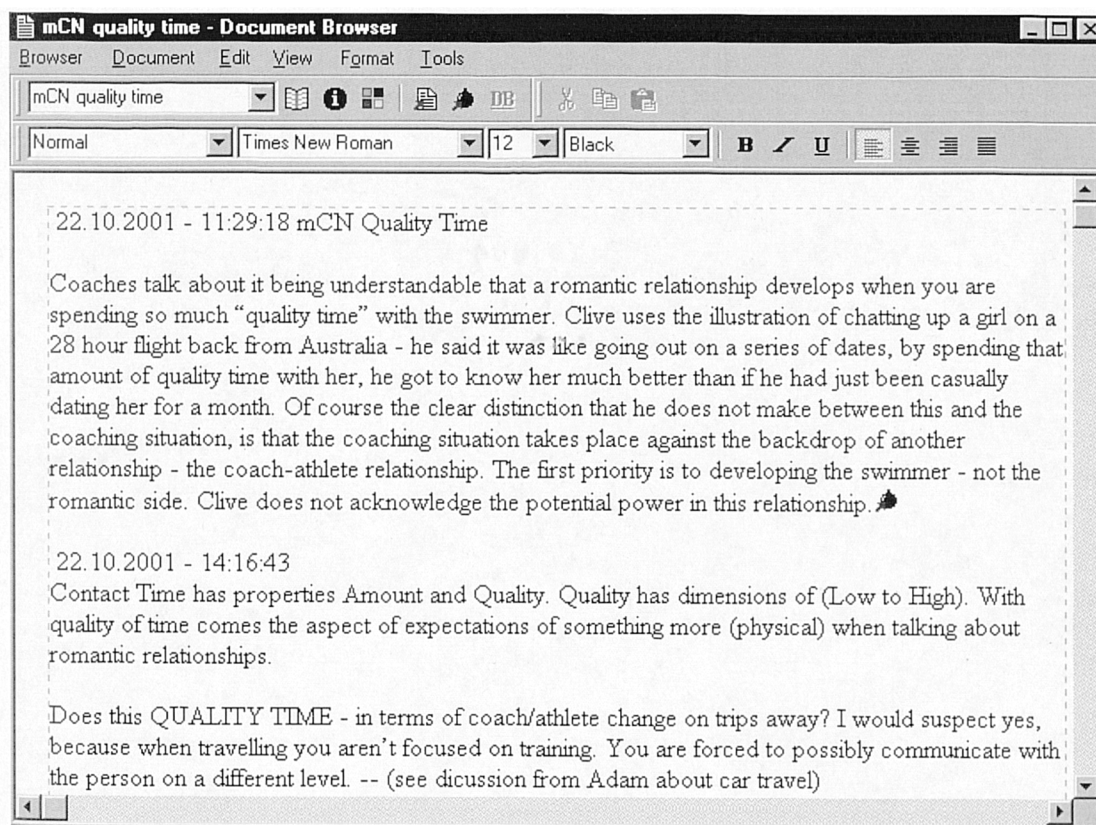


Figure 8.7. Conceptual memo for the node quality time.

In several cases, the friendship evolved from time spent together away from the training environment. In Brian's case, a relationship with a swimmer grew from increased time coaching and giving them lifts home. Here he describes how gradual the transition was:

I mean I wouldn't have thought sch-- she wouldn't have put her arm around me until [she started coming to morning training]. It would only be because, we saw more of each other. And the, the barriers gradually dropped. Her barriers would drop, my barriers would drop, and in- in this--like grains of sand, going out of a bloody egg timer ain't it--you can't exactly say that was the day. (Brian)

This gradual transition is one of the elements of entrapment (Brackenridge, 2001; Gallagher, 2000), where the abuser gradually breaks down personal barriers of the victim so that the victim is less likely to resist and others are less likely to notice. Interestingly, Adam commented that it was not until some time after other people recognised his developing relationship with his current partner that he, too, recognised it as being more than just a coach-athlete relationship. When he was first approached about the relationship he made a conscientious effort to spend less time with the swimmer. In spending time apart from her, he realised how strong his feelings had become.

In coach/athlete relationships the onus is always on the coach, by virtue of his position of power, to not allow the relationship to develop into anything inappropriate (Brackenridge, 2001; Home Office, 1999). The above discussion about how spending quality time with an athlete contributes to a close relationship raises the question of how conscious coaches are during the development of relationships. Clive pondered this in relation to abusers,

Do coaches make a conscious decision to abuse? Is it a result of the way they are at that point in time and the situations that they then find themselves in. I don't know. You --[do your supervisors] think there is a conscious decision to, right, like there's a juicy 12 year old.

Brian and Adam's situations suggest that they are not always aware of the consequences of their actions over time. Coaches are different from school teachers and other helping professionals in that they rarely have formal and regular opportunities for peer or supervisory assessments or self-reflection. If coaches more regularly took time out for reflection (A. Miles, 2001) they might more readily recognise when a relationship is crossing a professional boundary. Similar recommendations have been made to help sport psychologists recognise and resist

erotic-transference and counter-transference in practitioner/client relationships (Andersen, 2001).

8.4.3 Socialising

Socialising was another coaching role that some coaches acknowledged. The properties and dimensions of socialising make this a category that is difficult to dissect into discrete parts. The data did not provide a clear indication of what types of socialising were considered part of the coaching role. Properties of socialising that emerged from the data included the purpose, the location, and with whom it took place. Although not all purposes of socialising were discussed, they might include fulfilling a work role, relaxing with friends, or meeting new people. Locations for socialising included: work, sports clubs, pubs, night clubs, or simply at home. In general, people may socialise with peers, superiors, subordinates, clients, friends, family, neighbours, or strangers. Difficulties arise when these are not discrete social networks. The positive consequences of socialising include developing rapport, building relationships with clients, peers, etc. The potential for negative consequences, however, is also high. Acting unprofessionally in a mixed group of friends and clients may endanger relationships within those groups. Coaches who socialise with swimmers may find themselves haphazardly crossing from a professional relationship into a friendship role.

Socialising is another component of the sport culture that separates it from the more formal relationships of school teachers and other helping professionals. For example, Clive said “I mean, when I was coaching the club, I mean your social life is, pretty non-existent really.” A study examining burnout amongst swimming coaches in the United States (Raedeke, Granzyk, & Warren, 2000) corroborates Clive’s statement: about 75% of the coaches surveyed spent less than 10 hours a week socialising outside swimming. With so little time available for socialising outside of the swimming arena, it is not surprising that some coaches expect to be able to socialise within the swimming context. In fact socialising with the swimmers was seen by some as a benefit of the job.

You know you've got your 18, 19 year old guys that that you get on so well with. And now I've made some real good friends through that. (Clive)

Just as with discussions about sexual relationships (see chapter 6), a distinction was drawn by the respondents between interactions with older and younger swimmers. Figure 8.8 shows two passages coded at “age” and “socialising.” It is evident from Clive’s comment about enjoying coaching that he sees the freedom to act informally as an integral part of the coaching role. On the one hand coaches want to be treated as professionals and, on the other hand, one of the things that coaches said they enjoyed about coaching was the ability to be in a more relaxed environment compared with a job in business. If coaches want to be treated like professionals they need to be prepared for parents, swimmers, and governing bodies to have expectations of them acting professionally. When these expectations do not match the coach’s expectations that he should be allowed to socialise with swimmers (especially adult swimmers) then role conflict and ambiguity are likely to be experienced by the coach.

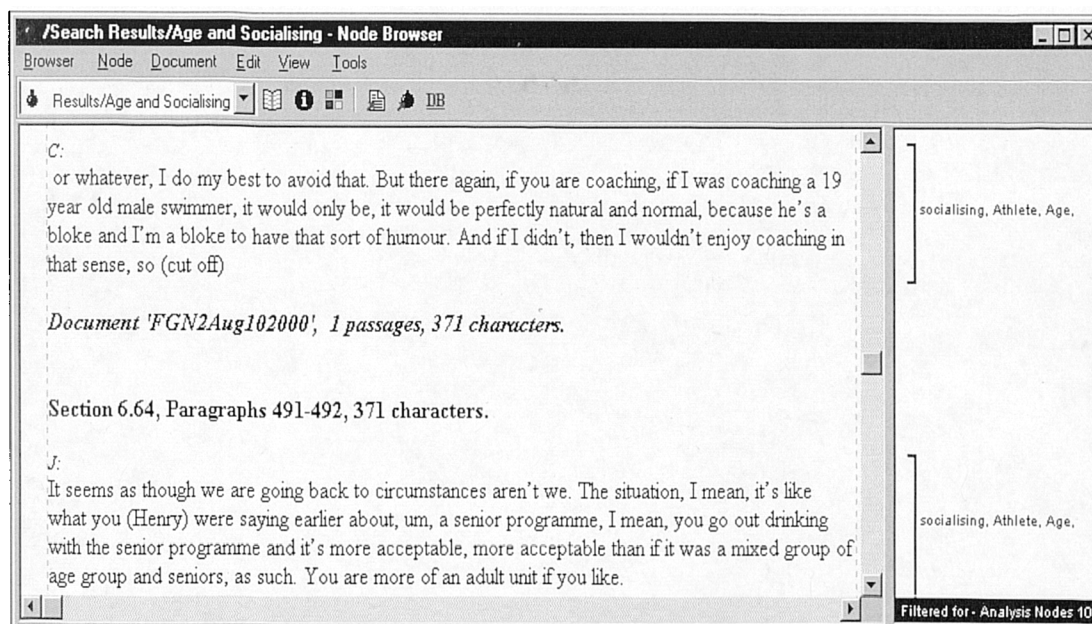


Figure 8.8. Passages illustrating age as a moderator of appropriate socialising as a coaching role expectation.

Socialising *within* one’s professional environment can, however, blur the line between professional and personal relationships. One coach reported finding himself in a potentially compromising situation when a retired swimmer approached

him at the club Christmas party and informed him that she was now “legal.” He said he pretended not to hear her. Coaches may also find themselves overstepping professional boundaries if they are seeking to fulfil their own personal needs (e.g., the need to relax and gain social and physical contact.)

Socialising, as a coaching role, can contribute to role conflict and ambiguity when there is a conflict between the coach’s personal needs to socialise, his professional responsibilities to socialise, and the need to keep a professional distance. Socialising with swimmers outside swimming has also led some coaches into compromising situations, such as was the case with the convicted coach interviewed for this study. The coach, who was interviewed because of his relationship with an adult swimmer much younger than himself, attributed the development of the relationship to socialising with her parents. He reported that other people involved in swimming questioned his relationship with the then 16-year-old swimmer. With her parents’ consent he rationalised that, as long as they kept the poolside relationship professional, how he spent his social life outside the swimming context was his own business. Traditionally, boundaries between swimmers and coaches have been fairly relaxed but, with concerns over child protection measures, responses from this study suggest that they are becoming more rigid.

8.4.4 Tangible Support/Enabling Support

Traditionally, and still in many cases today, coaches assisted aspiring performers for the intrinsic pleasures of helping someone realise their human potential. Coaching was not a profession and monetary rewards were not sought. Thus, it is not surprising that many coaches were, and are still, willing to offer tangible support to the dedicated performer who would otherwise be unable to attend training or competition. Coaches in this study described feeling torn between leaving a child to wait in the cold and putting themselves at risk by driving the child home alone in the car. Coaches are consistently reminded through policy documents and coach education that they must not drive children home alone, yet many still do this, and interestingly, none of the coaches contradicted the notion that giving lifts

did, indeed, put them at risk for false allegations of abuse. (See Section 8.5.3 for a more detailed discussion of risk taking.)

8.4.5 Pastoral Care

Providing pastoral care, as protectorate and as counsellor, were two other roles that influenced role ambiguity and role conflict in the increasing scrutiny that coaches now face. Coaches perceived that they were judged as guilty before being proven innocent but some still saw part of their role as protector. This took the form of protecting athletes from harm that might have occurred had swimmers been left alone in the cold while waiting for parents or carers to collect them after training. One coach found himself on more than one occasion warning flirtatious older swimmers from another club of the age of the mature-looking, but much younger, swimmers with whom they were flirting. When asked if he felt that this was his responsibility as a coach, he responded:

R: Yes, oh yeah, yeah. Because those swimmers were under my control, that's what I felt, and I'm responsible for them

T: It's your job to protect them really, isn't it. (Ron & Tony)

Another role filled by coaches is that of the counsellor as explained by Henry, "part of the work we do, when working with athletes, whether of age, or under age is almost a counselling thing." The conflict that arises in these situations, is again, linked to public scrutiny. Henry expressed his frustration about how coaches are restricted when performing this role.

We've got to conduct a counselling session in public places, (Kevin, "yeah") in open arenas, in front of other people, you know, rather than allowing an athlete to open up to you, to help a situation to help diffuse a situation they may be going through type thing. It does become very restrictive to being able to do your job effectively with them. (Henry)

The coaches viewed offering social support as an important role because it is sometimes necessary to alter the coaching session accordingly. For example, Larry explained the importance of knowing about problems within the swimmer's family, such as divorce.

We would most definitely know that and, we would be aware that the child has got external pressures. And we would not necessarily give them preferential treatment, but we would support them, maybe in different ways with encouragement and so on. Um, uh, because they may not be getting that at home. So I think maybe we would support them more, rather than giving them something different that the other squad members are not getting. (Larry)

In the same focus group, Max discussed this as simply part of his role as an effective coach,

In many ways, I mean, our job has changed that much over the years, it's no longer the case of being a swimming coach, you are everything. You, you're the person with many hats. You know, you are a social worker, you are a counsellor, even marriage guidance. (Nick, "Yeah") You know, whatever, you become totally involved and it's very, very difficult quite often to not, to not be involved in many ways. I think we tend to be dealing with lots more problems. (Max)

These coaches perceived coaching to include the protection of swimmers from non-swimming dangers as well as providing social support to swimmers who were having difficulties in other domains of their life. They saw protecting swimmers as falling under their 'duty of care' as *in loco parentis* (Sockett, 1993) during those times when the parents or carers were not on the poolside. Providing social support, or counselling, as Henry called it, was seen as integral to understanding the pressures in a swimmer's life and being able to coach the swimmer effectively. Indeed, emotional social support is often cited by swimmers as a preferred coaching behaviour.

Studies examining preferred coaching style have found that social support offered by the coach is related to athlete intrinsic motivation (Amerose & Horn, 2000), athlete satisfaction (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986), burnout (Gould, Tuffey et al., 1996; Gould, Udry, Tuffey, & Loehr, 1996; Price & Weiss, 2000), anxiety, enjoyment, and perceived competence (Price & Weiss, 2000). In these studies, leadership style was measured by the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980), which measures social support by the extent to which a coach is perceived to establish warm and caring relationships with athletes. A sample item from this portion of the scale is "My coach helps athletes with their personal problems." Research using the LSS has also revealed that

athletes, especially higher level or more experienced athletes, value coaches who offer social support (Chelladurai & Carron, 1983).

The role ambiguity that may arise from fulfilling these multiple roles derives from the scrutiny that is placed on coaches. Henry concluded that the scrutiny, which he links directly to the action of a few abusers, has resulted in a sterile treatment of children.

In some situations, you know, I think kids are in some ways more isolated and less nurtured nowadays than what they were. Because of some of these, you know, because of the consequence, you know of the minority of the people, in not just the profession, but in any walk of life. (Henry)

An exchange in a focus group of regional level coaches further highlighted the tension between providing support and maintaining the necessary distance for complying with child protection guidance.

R: The biggest problem here, is they (swimmers) are sliding up to you for a reason. And the reason usually is they need help to a certain extent. And you can't slide away straight away.

S: no

R: but you've got to slide away.

S: yeah

R: it's, it's a balance. (Ron and Scott)

8.4.6 'Swimming is Just the Vehicle' - Developing Character

Developing character was another key theme that emerged as a role for the coaches. The main element of character discussed by them was developing self-determination in the swimmers.

Now, your roles as a coach with age groupers, if you like, your objective, or my objective would be to, swimming is just the vehicle, the vehicle to reaching the age of 18, and being in a position where you have hopefully had a positive influence on bringing that individual up in a balanced, appropriate way, through their teenage years, so they are, I don't know, a nice person, in inverted commas, whatever that is, you know so their

experiences are positive and then in a position to take responsibility for their own life. (Clive)

Building character has long been one of the aims of sport participation (e.g., Gibbons et al., 1995; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995), thus it is not surprising that coaches view this as part of their coaching role. This role is legitimised within sport psychology with its inclusion on the Coaching Efficacy Scale (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999). Coaching efficacy is defined as “the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes” (Feltz et al., 1999, p. 765). The four components of coaching efficacy measured by the scale are: character building, motivation, strategy, and technique. In the current study, the conflict related to building character was influenced by the method the coach decided to use for this. As already discussed in “developing rapport,” “motivating” and “disciplining,” the swimmer or bystanders may easily misinterpret how this is done.

8.5 Re-evaluation: Is Child Protection Guidance Congruent with Coaching Effectiveness?

In the discussion of the conditions leading to role ambiguity and conflict, it was mentioned that congruence between a coach’s current coaching behaviour and child protection guidance would influence their experience of conflict and ambiguity. Coaches’ definitions of an effective coach further interact to influence the experience of ambiguity and conflict. Adam, a national level coach, explained how he saw child protection having a negative effect on coaching effectiveness,

I think you’ve got a lot of coaches now who are very much, they turn up on the poolside, they coach, they go home, and that’s it. And they are nothing. And they might have yelled, and balled at a kid who’s father died yesterday, and I’ve seen that happen, and you sit there and say, well that’s not coaching, that’s -- that’s training if you like. (Adam)

Participants in one of the focus groups also commented on how coaching required a more involved approach than that recommended in some of the child protection guidance recommend.

K: I don't think any of us can say that we just walk onto the poolside, do a coaching session, and then walk off.

I: disappear

K: That just doesn't happen.

H: You are not effective in your job if that's what you do. (Kevin, Ian, Henry)

Grace (1972) explained a similar phenomenon in teaching that influences role conflict and ambiguity. Specifically, there are more sources for role conflict in the teacher who accepts multiple roles, for example "socialiser, counsellor and liaison between home and school as well as director of learning" (Grace, 1972, p. 9) than for the teacher who only accepts the role of director of learning.

In summary, role ambiguity and conflict appeared to be influenced by perceptions of coaching effectiveness and the varying roles that contributed to effective coaching. The perception of what it takes to be an effective coach may be static and firmly rooted, or the coach may have a flexible schema of coaching effectiveness that is malleable upon self-reflection or further coach education. Role ambiguity occurred as the coaches were faced with having to choose between coaching behaviours that conform to child protection guidance and behaviours that are perceived as effective coaching behaviours. In this study, coaches perceived motivating and disciplining, developing rapport, socialising, providing tangible support, pastoral care, and developing character as key elements of an effective coach's role. The coaches expressed frustration as child protection issues had led to many of the coaching behaviours associated with these roles being scrutinised by child protection advocates. They said that to give up these roles would mean becoming an ineffective coach but to maintain them put them at risk of false allegations and circumventing child protection guidelines.

8.5.1 Is Child Protection Guidance Impinging on Personal Morals?

In chapter 6, it emerged that criteria for making decisions about appropriateness could be legal definitions, governing body or club guidance, social

norms, or individual moral judgements. Personal moral standards arose again as another potential influence on role ambiguity. The main issue here was the extent to which the law, the governing body, or the club should become involved in private matters. Coaches also expressed feeling as though the scrutiny they received suggested that they were guilty just for being coaches.

Because these things have got nothing at all to do with sexual relations, or, or, misusing position of trust. And, you know, because of, you know, that situation of sexual abuse and that, it's put a cloud over all the areas that really have got no bearing on that situation type of thing. You know where, like we said, you are in a room alone with an athlete. Someone walks in immediately the assertion is that you are up to no good, you are breaking the law. Where clearly you are not. If you are anyone else sitting in a room, one on one with a child, those same suspicions wouldn't be placed on top of you. You know, it comes down to our basic human rights and you know how much are we expected to give up by both the governing body and other agencies. (Henry)

Within teaching, it has been suggested that one way of alleviating role conflict is to “ignore the significance-power dimension and take a ‘moral orientation’ to the situation, concentrating upon the question of the legitimacy of expectations for the role and rejecting those which appear illegitimate...” (Grace, 1972, p. 8). Grace labels these as the perceived legitimacy of a role demand and suggests that the number of roles that a teacher accepts as legitimate is related to the experience of role conflict. Among the coaches in this study, the line between accepting a role demand as legitimate and illegitimate was moderated by whether or not the coach was referring to his own actions or those of other coaches. As explained in chapter 6, the coaches generally held themselves to a higher standard than they expected of their fellow coaches. They did not want legal restrictions on dating athletes above the age of consent. Coaches may have held themselves to higher standards because they recognised the power differential between coaches and athletes. Or, perhaps more likely, they were motivated by fear of false allegations.

8.5.2 Intent

The coach's intended outcome, as opposed to what others perceived his intention to be, appeared to influence role ambiguity and role conflict. Intent in this study refers to what the coach hoped to achieve through a particular coaching behaviour. Two main properties of intent affected role conflict and role ambiguity. The first was that decisions about whether or not a behaviour was appropriate should be based on the intent of the coach. (See for example, Clive's quote at the bottom of Figure 8.9.) The second property was that intent was difficult, if not impossible, to measure. To suggest that appropriateness should be measured according to intent assumes that a coach is consciously aware of his intent. This does not suggest that an unaware coach should be absolved of responsibility for causing abuse.

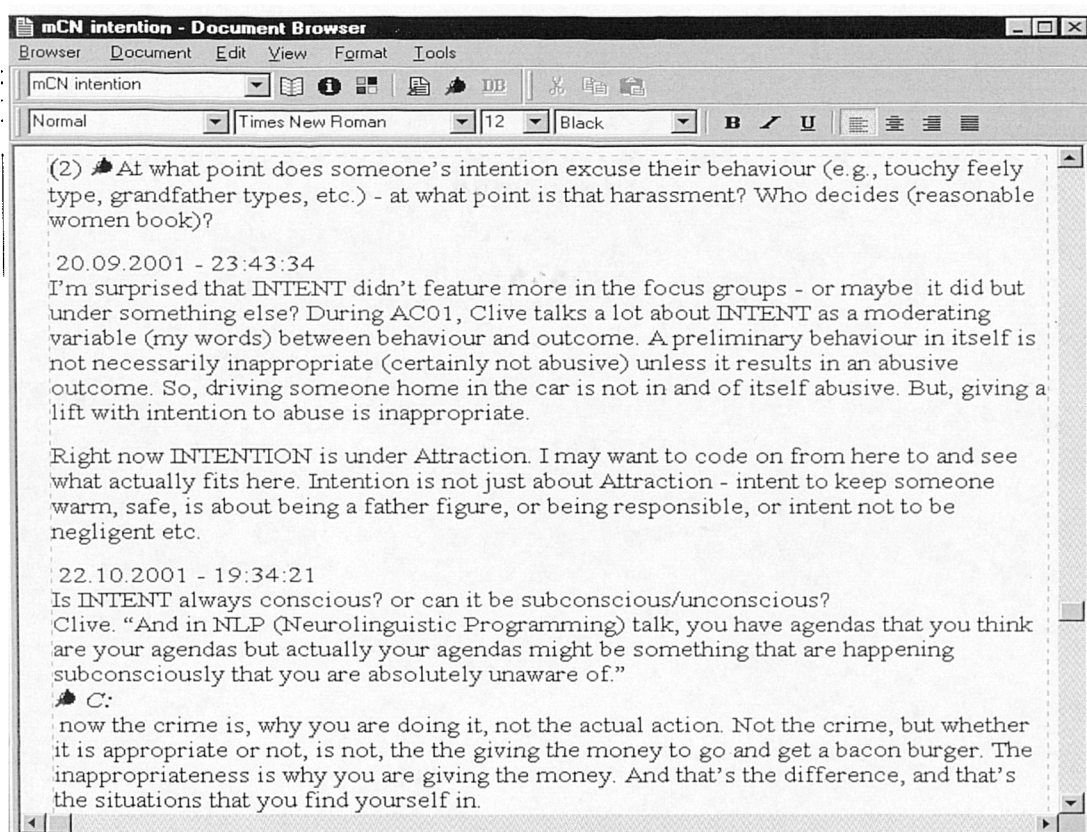


Figure 8.9. Partial memo about the theme 'intention'.

As mentioned previously, the difficulty of measuring intent means that child protection guidance is based on actual behaviour even though it may be the intent and outcome of that behaviour that defines an abusive situation. Thus, coaches in

this study expressed frustration that they were being inhibited from carrying out well-intentioned behaviours because of the actions of a few ill-intentioned coaches.

8.5.3 Assessing Risks

Role ambiguity and conflict were influenced by how far the coach evaluated the risk involved in continuing to coach in the manner he always had done, as against changing his coaching style to comply with child protection guidance. This section explores the coaches' awareness of their own vulnerability and that of the swimmers they coach. The perceived risk of jeopardising one's job or career is also examined.

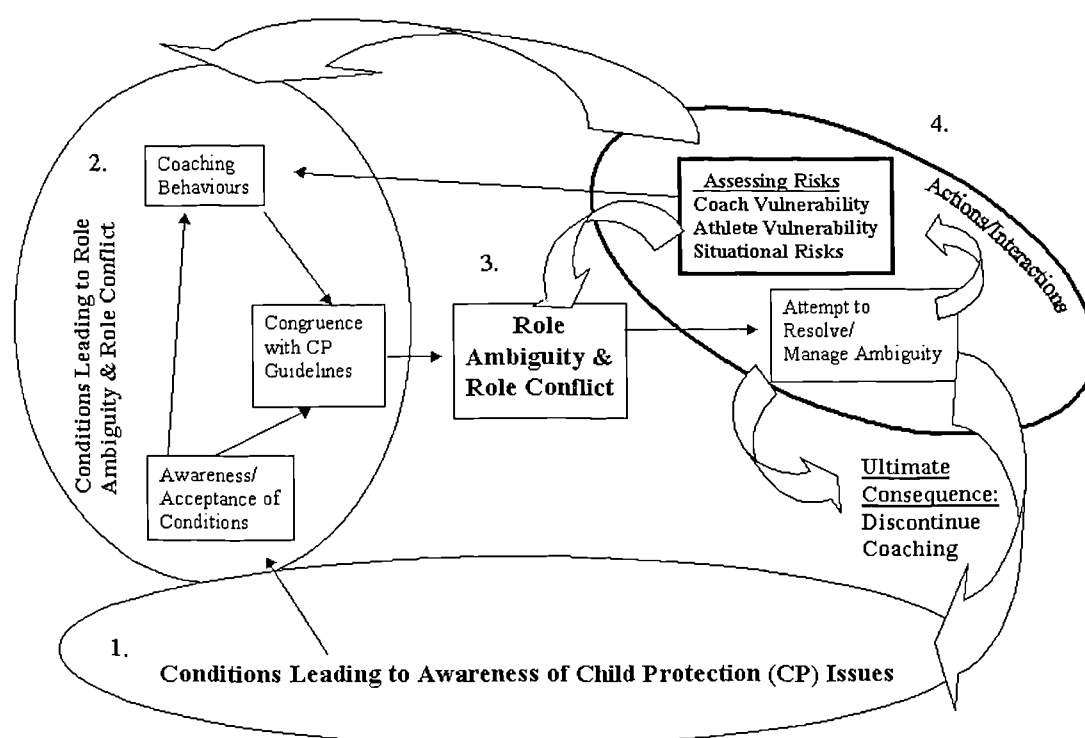


Figure 8.10. Paradigm model for role conflict and role ambiguity focusing on risk assessment.

Assessing risks is presented here in the Action/Interaction section of the paradigm model and not as a condition because it was perceived as an action taken in an attempt to manage or resolve ambiguity and conflict. Where there is initially no conflict there is not a need to assess the risk of engaging in a behaviour that may

cause conflict. The paradigm model is not linear, therefore these actions are meant to affect role ambiguity and conflict directly as well as being mediated through the conditions leading to awareness and conditions leading to role ambiguity (see Figure 8.10 and the three dimensional arrows representing consequences.) The components of assessing risks are: awareness of coach vulnerability, awareness of swimmer vulnerability, and assessing situational risks.

The extent to which a coach acknowledged his vulnerability and that of his swimmers is likely to also affect the amount of role conflict and role ambiguity experienced. The main property of vulnerability was the perceived congruence of oneself or a swimmer's characteristics with that of an at-risk person. This was evident in the passage displayed in Figure 8.3 when the coach surmised that athletes perceived their own coaches to be different from the media's portrayal of the 'sex monster' (Brackenridge, 2001).

8.5.4 Awareness of one's own vulnerability

Perceptions of vulnerability appeared to be heavily influenced by personal experiences and experiences of the coaches' colleagues. The temporal, spatial (distal/global v. proximal/local) and situational similarity combined to influence the perceived congruence with one's own situation. In the case of the convicted coach, he reported that he did not experience an increase in vulnerability after the Hickson case because it occurred in a different region and because Hickson was not someone he readily identified with. Several coaches, including the convicted coach as quoted here, distanced themselves from paedophiles through a process called "othering." By identifying differences (real or imagined) between the "other" person and oneself, it is possible to believe that the "other" person is so different that it is difficult to identify with that "other" person on any level. For instance, a coach would be less likely to learn from the mistakes of a coach considered to be a paedophile than from a coach who was more like himself.

If it's true [that Hickson sexually abused the swimmers in his care], then he was bloody evil. And it does seem to be that way, that it was true, so, he must have a bit of an evil streak in him. (Convicted coach)

In this case, the convicted coach attributed Hickson's abuse to an inherent evil characteristic. As the convicted coach did not view himself as being evil, he was unable to see how his own coaching behaviours could be abusive. Only after he had an allegation brought against him did this coach realise the vulnerability of other coaches. His advice to other coaches was to:

Just [be] aware, the whole thing, not, not passing it off, saying it happens to someone else, not to you, cause it does happen, it's been proven, you don't have to be a Hickson, you can be little Jo Bloggs [in my region] and it happens to you as well. And if a coach finds himself in a one to one situation, he's got to get out of it, as soon as he can. (Convicted coach)

8.5.5 *Awareness of Swimmers' Vulnerability*

When coaches did not recognise that swimmers can be vulnerable, the child protection measures seemed completely irrelevant or only as a force inhibiting the coaches. When this was coupled with an increased feeling of vulnerability for the coaches (in terms of false allegations), then the coach felt more role ambiguity. On the other hand, when the coaches did recognise the vulnerability of the swimmers, and were following governing body guidelines, they were less likely to feel ambiguity. For example, in the passage displayed in Figure 8.11 Frank is reluctant to acknowledge vulnerability based on differences in power. This statement, combined with an earlier statement, where Frank asks for some guidance about acceptable adult coach/athlete relationships, illustrates that he is experiencing more ambiguity than Greg. Clear about his boundaries, Greg understands that child protection policies are underpinned by the concept that adults such as coaches and teachers have power over children and they are entrusted not to exploit this power.

The screenshot shows a text analysis interface. On the left, a dialogue is displayed with speakers G and F. On the right, a vertical list of concepts is shown, with brackets indicating which parts of the dialogue they apply to. The concepts are: 'professional manner, inside swimming, Relationship boundaries, Age', 'social norms, Age of Consent', 'Power, situation specific, Exploit', 'Exploit', and 'civil liberties, Exploit'. At the bottom right, a status bar reads 'Filtered for - Analysis Nodes 10 April 02'.

G:
I feel, it doesn't matter about age. I mean, I coach masters as well. They are all swimmers for [to] me. It doesn't matter, age. They are all swimmers. As coaches, we shouldn't be involved in any personal relationship with anybody who's in our program.

F:
Now, I think that's wrong, because if you're in a, if you are working for a company in a bank, and you are the bank manager, and you are in charge of a 25 year old bank tiller assistant, are you saying that that bank manager shouldn't have a relationship with the till assistant.

G:
Well, I feel that that's a slightly different situation. Because when, it's saying, um, when you are talking about students at university, I don't feel that people that are lecturing there, running classes whatever, shouldn't get involved with students. Because, we are supposed to help them with whatever they are doing. We are their leaders. You are dealing with them when they are feeling good, you are dealing with them when they are not feeling so good about themselves because of sport, or because of whatever they do. Um, and I think it could be, um, there are moments when they are vulnerable.

D:
I actually agree with Frank. Though I see what you are saying Greg, because in that situation, when they are vulnerable, you can take advantage. (1) (cut off)

G:
That's right. (cut off)

D:
So, you are talking about people that take advantage. But yes, that is a danger, and there are people. But they are the people, they are the people I'm sure that drag this out into the open arena. But, just because they are about, should not impinge upon your rights.

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Figure 8.11. Passage examining the nature of abuse and vulnerability.

The coaches acknowledged that a swimmer could be vulnerable in various ways. Particular to sexual abuse were concerns about age differences between coaches and swimmers and coaches exploiting their position of power. They also acknowledged that the physical and emotional maturity of some young swimmers might make them more vulnerable to romantic approaches by older swimmers and coaches who thought they were over the legal age of consent. Furthermore, coaches also acknowledged that a swimmer who is insecure, or simply is experiencing pressures external to swimming, is potentially more susceptible to sexual abuse, bullying or emotional abuse. Bullying and emotional abuse were especially relevant in cases where the coach was unaware of external pressures. If a coach is unaware of any external pressures that a swimmer is facing (e.g., school exams) he may not realise that his “encouragement” to swim well is pushing the athlete beyond his or her ability to cope.

Whether or not coaches are potential abusers arose as a contentious issue in the focus group represented in Figure 8.11. Before the displayed passage, Frank commented that abuse can occur in any relationship:

I think, also, it's down to your own conscience as to how that relationship has been formed. If that swimmer, you know, at a respectable age, has had bereavement of family, and turned to you, and you've used that as a means of forming a relationship, then that's wrong. You've exploited the person. But you could exploit any person in that situation, whether you are coaching them or not, if you are on friendly terms. (Frank)

Greg acknowledged the vulnerability of all swimmers on the basis of the coach/athlete power differential. With this clarity it is likely that he has always acted in conjunction with child protection guidance and welcomed the guidance as a method to raise standards in swimming. Frank, on the other hand, had a more flexible schema of appropriateness that was definite about age of consent but varied in different situations. Frank was likely to be experiencing more conflict because his own beliefs about adult relationships conflicted with the perceptions of others and there was little information with which to guide his actions:

So, if the law says, a swimmer in your care must be 20 before you can have a relationship, then that's fine, at least you've got something to work to. I think as the case stands now, it wouldn't even matter if they are 25, people want to make an issue out of it, and the fact that you were coaching them since they were 14 (cut off) (Frank)

Frank's comment illustrates the lack of clear norms about "legal" coach/athlete relationships. Furthermore, he does not acknowledge the power dynamics that are likely to be present in adult coach/athlete relationships especially when the coaching relationship started when the athlete was at a more impressionable age. Without clear norms or guidance for these situations, coaches are more likely to experience role ambiguity.

8.5.6 Situational Risk Assessment

Situational risk assessment featured in the coaches' reasoning about how to act, or change their coaching behaviours. The general feeling was that, in order to act professionally, it was important for them to know exactly what the rules were in order to abide by them. As shown earlier, however, many coaches were reluctant to have so many rules enforced upon them that they could not use their own moral judgement, or coach in an effective manner. Another exchange between Frank and Greg (see Figure 8.12) demonstrated their desire to have set guidance so that they

were not taking risks that might ultimately jeopardise their careers. Don commented on the ever-present risks arising from parents with conflicting expectations. Don warned that it is these parents who may raise false allegations.

The screenshot displays a text analysis software interface. On the left, a transcript of a conversation is shown with speakers F, G, and D. On the right, a diagram maps specific phrases from the transcript to analytical concepts. The transcript text is as follows:

F: Like if you are stretching their shoulders and something goes wrong with the shoulder, what happens.

G: Well yeah, yeah, I mean that's the risk that you take. Now, we should know, what we can, what you can and can't do. (cut off)

F: But, we shouldn't be risk takers. We are not risk takers. We are not entrepreneurs. We are coaches. We are educators. (cut off)

D: We've got, we've got a parent, well he's no longer a parent of a kid in the club, although he's still involved in the club, who threatened to sue the last coach of the club, for you know, our AI or whoever it was has got a bad shoulder, and uh, it was your fault. And when I went there and said he was, uh, he threatened to sue me because, on something else. So, I said, go ahead, sue. You've been (threatening to) suing everyone for years, now go on, sue. So that was the last I heard of him suing. But, you know, he could have been really dangerous. And uh, we had one letter in from parents about a teacher. And they were really vitriolic about it, and really all that had happened was that their kid really wasn't good enough to move a group. So, we didn't move him a group. So, it went up to the council and there had to be a special disciplinary meeting called, and I was really, really, and it was all about nothing and this parent who was just really, really vindictive. So, I just, I just think you can get in trouble for anything. (cut off)

The analysis diagram on the right consists of three vertical lines with brackets on the left side, indicating connections to the transcript:

- The top bracket connects the phrase "scrutinised effect sacrifices" to the text "(threatening to) suing everyone for years, now go on, sue."
- The middle bracket connects the phrase "professional manner, roles in coaching." to the text "We are coaches. We are educators."
- The bottom bracket connects the phrase "personal experience, gang up on you," to the text "And they were really vitriolic about it, and really all that had happened was that their kid really wasn't good enough to move a group."

At the bottom right of the interface, a status bar reads "Filtered for - Analysis Nodes 10 April 02".

Figure 8.12. Passage examining risk assessment.

Even when guidelines (e.g., about giving lifts and crossing professional boundaries) were clear, both Clive and Adam admitted that they still engaged in those behaviours. However, they reported being more selective with whom they joked around with or offered rides to.

Which in that respect [offering rides], yeah, you get to the stage where you've got to be very careful and all the rest of it. I think, probably, you've spoken to a number of coaches who have said the same thing. They will do things like that, that they shouldn't do, but it depends on the audience and the people they are dealing with. (Adam)

Adam's attempt at reducing role conflict and ambiguity was manifested by his being more selective about who he interacted with on a more familiar level. By interacting this way only with people he trusted, he was reducing his perceived potential for false allegations. In effect, he created two sets of role expectations for himself: one for interacting with swimmers and parents more generally, and one for interacting with those with whom he had developed a trusting relationship.

When a coach analysed a situation, knew the risk of disregarding the child protecting guidance and knowingly took that risk, did this increase or decrease role conflict and role ambiguity? On the one hand it could be argued that the coach would feel so strongly about providing tangible support, or socialising with swimmers that these risk assessment decisions would only strengthen his conviction that those behaviours are part of the coaching role. However, one could also argue that if he had some self-doubt about behaving in this manner, then the child protection regulations might cause him to question whether or not this should still be one of his roles as a coach. These are questions deserving of further research.

8.5.7 Normalising Coach-Swimmer Sexual Relationships

The degree to which a coach rationalised the development of coach-swimmer sexual relationship as normal and natural human behaviour was likely to influence the outcome of risk assessment. If a coach normalised such relationships, then he was likely to face more role conflict and role ambiguity in relation to child protection guidance. Specifically, the guidance was perceived as an infringement of one's civil rights and normal human interaction.

Several coaches admitted that they might, from time to time, find an under-aged swimmer physically attractive. Whilst acknowledging this as normal, they were also adamant about not expressing any of these feelings openly.

I mean it's the same sort of principle isn't it. You may have thoughts, but you don't act on them. (Keith)

Tis just human nature isn't it. We can't all be cold and calculating. It does happen. (Max)

Well, we've all got a lot of good looking swimmers, haven't we? You look and say, there's a good looking kid. But that's what they are. (Oliver)

In establishing appropriateness, coaches cited examples of successful coach-athlete adult relationships. Looking for examples of what was already socially accepted within swimming provided the coaches with a reference point for acceptability.

We have instances at the moment, where uh, coaches and swimmers are married to each other. Very successfully. (Elliot)

And also, there is an athlete now that I know, who is going to go to the Olympics who, has formed a relationship coach - swimmer relationship. Yeah? I'm not sure whether since they have gotten married. There is nothing whatsoever wrong with that relationship. And this athlete improved, just really, really improved. In um, when they started to be coached by this particular person. And um, I'm not sure if they aren't married now, probably are actually. (pause) You know, there was nothing wrong with the relationship, they were both adults. See I can't see, I can't see what's wrong, I can see the point that Greg is making, about you are making a lot of flak for yourself within the club. (Don)

Normalising coach/athlete relationships potentially increased role conflict by strengthening the coach's beliefs which contradicted governing body policies. In time, however, normalising might reduce feelings of conflict as the coach reduces the legitimacy of policy claims (Grace, 1972).

8.6 Consequences

8.6.1 Introduction to Consequences

The macro and micro environment in which coaches worked, from government regulations to social expectations with individuals scrutinising every move, combined to set the conditions in which role conflict and role ambiguity were experienced. The degree to which role conflict and role ambiguity were first experienced, and then how they were managed, led to varying consequences for the coaches. Perceptions of coaching effectiveness and the many roles that comprised the "effective coach" interacted with a coach's examination of his own moral beliefs and the risks of continuing his coaching behaviours to manage the role conflict and role ambiguity. The consequences resulting from these actions and interactions included seeking role definitions, changing one's behaviour to resolve the role conflict and role ambiguity, deciding not to change, and possibly changing professions (see Figure 8.13). The range of consequences is discussed in terms of

the three major actions/interactions affecting role conflict and role ambiguity: perceptions of coaching effectiveness, moral decision making, and evaluating risks.

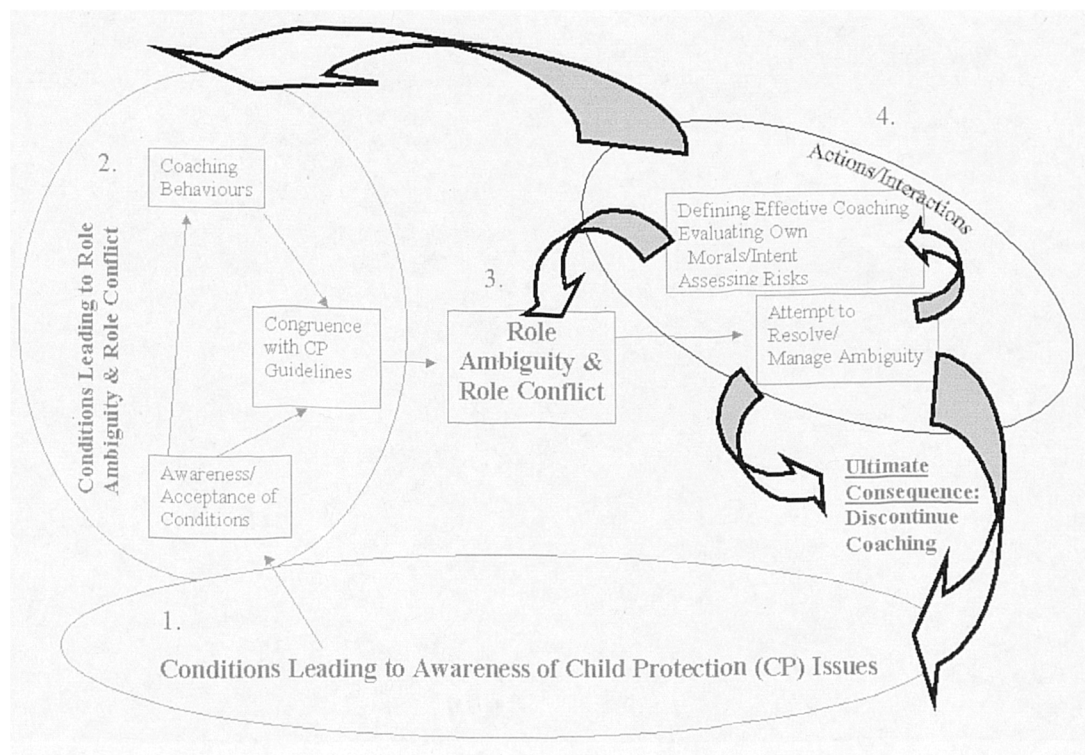


Figure 8.13. Consequences of role ambiguity and role conflict represented by the bold three-dimensional arrows.

The increasing prominence of child protection discourse, together with increased public scrutiny, has resulted in the coaches in this study examining what it takes to be an effective coach. They discussed the consequences of altering their own behaviour to match child protection guidance. If coaches felt that they could change and still be effective coaches then they were more likely to change and thus to experience less role conflict. If however, they did not feel like they could be effective as coaches but, knew at the same time, that they could not afford to jeopardise their job by not complying with the guidance, then role conflict was likely to increase. A third possibility was believing that changing would make them an ineffective coach. If they were not willing to risk becoming ineffective in order to comply with child protection guidelines, then they were likely to experience low to moderate role conflict and role ambiguity. This was expressed by two of the

coaches (Clive and Adam) who felt strongly about the roles of an effective coach. They were willing to adapt to the child protection guidelines in most cases but, when they trusted the swimmer and the swimmer's family, they were willing to take situational risks and to continue those coaching practices that matched their definition of effective coaching.

8.6.2 Consequences of Evaluation Own Morals and Intent

The process of examining his own moral standards allowed the coach to decide if he needed to question his role in coaching at all. If a coach did not acknowledge the power that he held over swimmers, both those above and those below the legal age of consent, then he was unlikely to perceive that he posed any sort of risk to the swimmers. Similarly, he would reason that, as long as he was acting within the law, any relationship that he developed with an adult swimmer would be perfectly legitimate. A coach whose moral reasoning was based on laws would be likely to have a more rigid view about the acceptability of relationships, based on legal and governing body guidance. In accepting the law he would be likely to change his behaviour accordingly and experience little ambiguity. If however, he were to question the law (because he did not believe that the law is always right), but at the same time wanted to be seen to be acting appropriately, he would be likely to experience more ambiguity and perhaps seek guidance. This was demonstrated by Elliot who responded to Frank. (Frank had expressed feeling restricted in his coaching methods due to child protection measures but also wanted some guidance to feel as though he was acting appropriately):

It (the guidance) also helps you, because at least you know where you stand. And what you can do and can't do if you want to accept those rules. (Elliot)

In summary, coaches' personal need for legal structure or guidelines is likely to influence the amount of role ambiguity experienced.

8.6.3 Consequences of Assessing Risks

Evaluating the risks of not complying with child protection guidance resulted in some coaches deciding that their job was not worth jeopardising or that, conversely, it was not worth coaching under restrictions that compromised coaching effectiveness. All of the coaches in this study said they knew at least one person who had been financially disadvantaged by allegations of child abuse. Based on the experiences of their colleagues, the coaches strongly believed that, once an allegation was made, even if it was found to be spurious, it would be difficult for the accused to get another job coaching. The coach whose long time partner was a swimmer who he met while coaching her in age-group swimming (11-16 year olds), suspected that he did not get some jobs because of speculation that his relationship was inappropriate. The coaches in this study actively sought ways to reduce the risk of false allegations against them, such as avoiding being alone with athletes, having one-to-one conferences in front of the pool's security camera, and looking for a swimmer's friend or family member to comfort the swimmer after a dismal performance rather than doing it himself.

Another way of reducing risks was to maintain professional boundaries. In addition to putting themselves in positions where ambiguous feelings might arise, coaches were aware that they might also leave themselves open to false allegations by swimmers who felt that the coach had betrayed that rapport, or simply not returned amorous feelings. One coach succinctly summarised these concerns.

I think the danger, is though, when you do get some insecure kids and they might not have a very good home life and they are with the coach a lot. And the next thing, they do form that bit of attachment, there is a bit of a danger. (Craig)

Ron also reflected on the balance of developing rapport without overstepping the professional boundaries.

It's a problem, isn't it, we got, because we build up this trust, and basically to get the best out of them on the coaching side, we get right inside the kids don't we, really. We try to, cause they are all individuals, and you build up a trust, then they come and tell us some of the terrible things, a lot of things you just don't want to hear. But, you've got to listen to a certain extent, without throwing them out the door. (Ron)

In some cases, evaluating the risks to the child was deemed by the coaches to be of secondary importance to evaluating the risks to the coach. The coaches acknowledged the potential for abuse of younger swimmers, and welcomed measures that would keep paedophiles out of swimming, but they did not necessarily take ownership of the problem of child abuse. Child protection was a burden to them because, in their opinion, they were not the coaches at whom measures should be aimed. Only the coaches who viewed all coach-athlete relationships as being potentially exploitative welcomed child protection measures.

8.7 Summary

This chapter has examined the role conflict/ambiguity paradigm model that is grounded in the detailed analysis of the focus group and interview data. The core category, or core issue for the coaches in this study, was a perception of role ambiguity and role conflict. The definitions of Kahn and his colleagues (1964) were used for role conflict and role ambiguity, with the former referring to conflicting role expectations and the latter referring to insufficient information about role expectations. The two are inextricably linked in the paradigm model.

The starting point for the model is the collective conditions that lead to the coach being aware of child protection issues. Possible conditions leading to awareness were described in chapter 2. The specific conditions that were grounded in the data included: personal experience, cultural change, media coverage, and legal changes and governing body policies. These conditions influenced the conditions leading to role ambiguity and included: awareness/acceptance of child protection issues, coaching behaviours, and congruence (or incongruence) of coaching behaviours and child protection guidelines. Once role conflict or ambiguity was experienced by the coaches there were three main strategies for attempting to resolve this: first, defining effective coaching, secondly assessing one's own morals standards and intentions, and thirdly assessing risks. The consequences of each of these strategies for role ambiguity and conflict were discussed. The ultimate consequence, which was not found in the data for this study,

would be for a coach to drop out of coaching. (See chapter 9). The passage below, from Clive, accurately sums up the phenomenon of role conflict and ambiguity.

C: So your role within coaching there is, well that's your grey area, isn't it. Nobody specifies exactly what is your role, you know. My role, is purely to teach you to swim, period. Is it? You know, where--what are your responsibilities. And I don't think anybody has really sat down and said, OK. Because again it comes back to jumping through these hoops doesn't it. Jumping through these hoops to win gold medals. Is that what coaching is about, coaching gold medallists? I don't think it is, at all. That may be a result of the coaching process (cut off)

JB: so what do you see coaching as?

C: I see coaching, really, I just see coaching as, uh, well, this is ideally, but you get sucked into this performance issues...Uh, so, you know you are responsible for the performance, but you've got to have a responsibility for the development of the individual. And I think that is probably unique to each individual coach, how they see their role, in that sense. (Clive)

Chapter 9: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the emergent themes influencing the swimming coaches' perceptions of appropriateness in sexual relationships with swimmers and the coaches' experiences of role conflict and ambiguity. These findings are discussed in relation to existing knowledge about sexual harassment and abuse in sport. The results from chapter 8 are discussed in relation to literature about role conflict and ambiguity first, and then located in recent research about coaching effectiveness and coach burnout.

9.2 Overview of Findings

In this thesis, I set out to examine male swimming coaches' perceptions of appropriate coach/athlete intimate relationships. I approached this research from a constructionist epistemology using the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory methodology (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) because the aim of the thesis was not simply to identify perceptions of appropriateness but to explain what might influence those perceptions. To date, there is scant research in this area, and the research that *has* examined coaches' perceptions of appropriateness has been conducted using quantitative measures that did not allow for an exploration of what influences coaches' decisions (e.g., Hassall et al., 2002; Toftegaard Nielson, 2001). Using an exploratory approach, it emerged from this study that after age of consent was taken into account, coaches were most influenced by: public scrutiny, avoiding false accusations, recognising the power imbalance between coaches and athletes, avoiding potential consequences, and a reluctance to report or judge their peers. From the focus group analysis it emerged that defining appropriate coach/athlete relations was of less concern to the coaches than apprehension about how child protection measures were affecting their role as a coach (see chapter 7). I constructed their experiences as role conflict and role ambiguity. Individual follow-

up interviews with selected coaches provided additional data that contributed to the models presented in chapter 8. Awareness of child protection measures and congruence of child protection measures with the perceived coaching role influenced experiences of role conflict and role ambiguity. Coaches attempted to manage or reduce role conflict and ambiguity by defining effective coaching, evaluating their own moral standards and intentions, and assessing risks. These results are discussed below in relation to relevant literature.

9.3 Perceptions of Appropriateness

9.3.1 Review of Main Findings

The results from this study indicate that coaches first and foremost base decisions of appropriateness about sexual relationships with swimmers on the age of the athlete. All the coaches in this study agreed that sex with an athlete under the age of consent (16 years old) would be unacceptable. It is not surprising that coaches' responses were in line with the law. In a recent study conducted in Denmark (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001), 93% of the coaches described an intimate relationship with an athlete under the age of 18 years old as unacceptable. In Denmark, the age of consent is 15 years old but an abuse of trust law forbids coaches, teachers, and others in positions of trust from entering into sexual relationships with those in their care who are under 18 years of age (Toftegaard Nielson, 2001). Only 50% of the Danish coaches surveyed were aware of this law. This suggests that some of the coaches were basing their ratings of inappropriateness on standards set higher than their perceptions of the legal age of consent. Explanations from the swimming coaches in England might help to explain this higher standard.

Responses from the current study suggest that coaches also take into account public scrutiny, the potential for false accusations, power imbalances, negative performance consequences, and not wanting to report or judge their peers when making decisions about appropriateness. Overall, the swimming coaches tended to hold themselves to a higher standard than their peers. Similar results were found in

the Danish study (Toftgaard Nielson, 2001) where, in 13 out of 18 listed behaviours, coaches refused to partake in behaviours even when they rated the behaviour as acceptable for others. Reasons most frequently given for this included the coaches' own personal boundaries and respect for athlete boundaries. These coaches were perhaps holding themselves to a higher moral standard whilst maintaining the right to behave in such a manner if desired, or, as suggested by the swimming coaches in the current study, did not want to interfere with the legal rights of their peers.

Hassall and her colleagues (2002) examined differences in perceptions of appropriateness between coaches and athletes and males and females in relation to 19 ambiguous behaviours. Counter to previous research on sexual harassment, coaches and males tended to rate behaviours as *less* appropriate than did athletes and females. Interestingly, the means for the results in Hassall et al.'s study fell in the inappropriate to neutral range. This suggests that both coaches and athletes perceive ambiguous behaviours as inappropriate rather than appropriate. These results may be explained by the findings in the current study, which indicate that swimming coaches in England are striving to avoid public scrutiny. In Hassall et al.'s study, behaviours categorised as "invasion of personal space" (which included instructional touching) and "social enquiries" were rated nearer to the neutral range than the inappropriate range. Whereas invitations for one to one interaction and personal enquiries were rated nearer the inappropriate range. The neutral responses may be a reflection of norms within sport that have traditionally included touching as part of the instructional process. Unfortunately, the questionnaire design of the English and Danish studies does not allow for cross comparisons. When given the choice between acceptable and not acceptable, however, 88% of the coaches in the Danish study rated instructional touching as acceptable (neutral was not a possible response.) In the current study, touching was a contentious issue; refraining from touch was one strategy mentioned for reducing public scrutiny and avoiding false accusations. With respect to social enquires, these may simply be interpreted as being friendly. Invitations and personal enquiries, however, are unnecessary for the athlete's development and may be considered unprofessional.

9.3.2 Links to Ambiguity and Conflict

Perceptions of appropriateness and experiences of role ambiguity and conflict were presented as separate chapters in this thesis. However, the two phenomena are not discrete. Perceptions of appropriateness relate to experiences of role ambiguity and conflict. Coaches' previous perceptions are being challenged, thus leading to ambiguity about what is acceptable. Mean scores in the study conducted by Hassall and her colleagues (2002) indicated more moderate views rather than polar opposites of extremely inappropriate or extremely appropriate, thus further indicating a lack of clear norms about what behaviours are acceptable. However, the more conservative views expressed by coaches, as compared with athletes, suggest that there has been a shift in norms. Within the ASA, this shift may reflect organisational change in relation to a trend towards the professionalisation of sport governing bodies, and more specifically the establishment of child protection policies. During situations of organisational change it is expected that members of the organisation will experience some role ambiguity and conflict (Kahn et al., 1964).

9.4 Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

9.4.1 Review of Main Findings

Role conflict and role ambiguity were the core categories that emerged from the data. Throughout the focus groups and individual interviews, the coaches' responses included conditions, actions and interactions, and consequences related to how the development of child protection in sport is leading them to question what it means to be a swimming coach. Conditions such as an increased cultural awareness of abuse, media coverage of abuse in sport, legal changes, policy development, investigations by the ASA, and public scrutiny have contributed to the coaches' increased awareness of child protection issues in sport. The second set of conditions (as presented in Figure 8.1) influence the extent to which a coach may experience conflict or ambiguity. These conditions include an awareness and acceptance of

child protection issues in sport and an evaluation of how congruent their existing coaching behaviours are in relation to child protection guidance. Those coaches who experienced role conflict or role ambiguity were likely to engage in attempts to resolve or manage the conflict or ambiguity. These actions and interactions include redefining coaching effectiveness, evaluating their own moral standards and intentions, and assessing risks. Their success in managing the ambiguity and conflict influences future conditions which, in turn, may lead to further (or decreased) conflict and ambiguity. These results are discussed in relation to the organisational psychology literature and recent studies examining coaching effectiveness and burnout.

9.4.2 Integration with Existing Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Research

It is important to re-iterate that the concepts of conflict and ambiguity are grounded in the data. In accordance with Grounded Theory, I read the literature presented in the current chapter *after* the concepts emerged from the data. The purpose of including this literature is to help to explain the findings, not to force structure upon them.

Role conflict and role ambiguity are conceptually located in theories of stress. There are numerous models examining stressors, moderating variables, and the physiological and psychological consequences of stress. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all of these models, but the 'Theoretical Framework for the Study of Stress in Organizations' (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992) is discussed here because it offers particular relevance for this thesis. The framework evolved from the Social Environmental Models, also known as the Institute of Social Research (ISR) or Michigan models named after the University of Michigan where Kahn and his colleagues were based (Buunk, de Jonge, Ybema, & de Wolff, 1998).

The framework includes organisational, social, psychological, and physical elements that may influence stress or be affected as a consequence of stress. An abbreviated version of the model is presented in Figure 9.1. Both objective and subjective role ambiguity and role conflict are accounted for in the Stressors in Organisational Life category. The Perception and Cognition box originates from

Lazarus' research (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) examining cognitive appraisal as a fundamental element in the stress - health relationship.

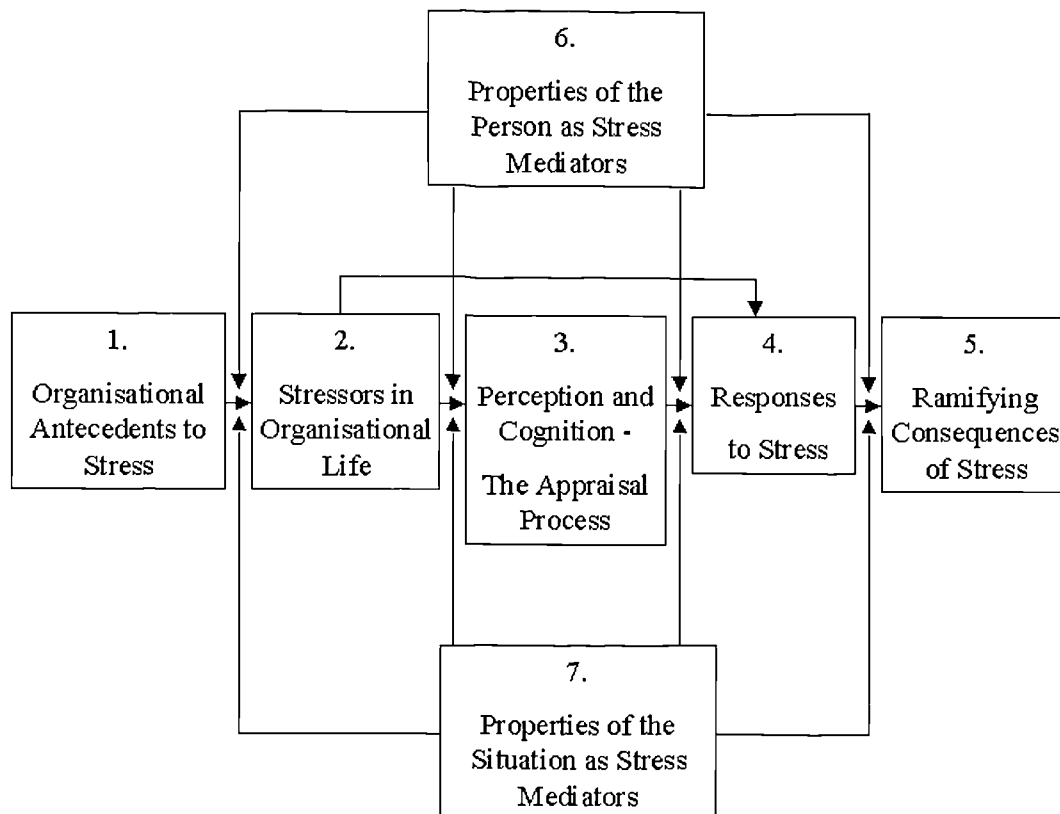


Figure 9.1. Abbreviated theoretical framework for the study of stress in organisations (Kahn & Byosiére, 1992, p. 592).

Since Kahn and his colleagues published their study in 1964, hundreds of research studies have examined role ambiguity and role conflict. A search of the academic database PsychINFO from April 1992 to April 2002 revealed 318 results for role ambiguity, 658 for role conflict and 427 results containing both role conflict and role ambiguity. Many of these studies have examined role conflict and role ambiguity in relation to job satisfaction or burnout (Buunk et al., 1998; Kahn & Byosiére, 1992; Le Blanc, de Jong, & Schaufeli, 2000). A major criticism of these studies is that they are generally cross-sectional and therefore, not designed to measure causality. Kahn and Byosiére also noted that, “Although role conflict and

role ambiguity are probably the two most frequently studied stressors in organizational life, few researchers have investigated their antecedents” (1992, p. 596). In the current study, child protection measures appear to act as antecedents to coaches experiencing role conflict and role ambiguity (see chapter 2).

In sport psychology the dynamics of coach athlete relationships have been examined in terms of verbal feedback (Smith, 1993; Smith & Smoll, 1991; Smith et al., 1983; Smoll et al., 1978), leadership style (see review in Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998), athlete burnout and attrition (Coakley, 1992; Gould, Tuffey et al., 1996; Gould, Udry et al., 1996; Raedeke & Smith, 2001; Smith, 1986; Udry, Gould, Bridges, & Tuffey, 1997), athlete satisfaction and enjoyment (Averill & Power, 1995; Petlichkoff, 1993; Scanlan et al., 1989), emotional closeness (Jowett & Meek, 2000), and coach burnout (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Price & Weiss, 2000; Raedeke et al., 2000; Vealey et al., 1992). Although these research studies were not designed to examine the effect of child protection issues on role conflict and ambiguity, they are applicable to this discussion. They will be discussed here in relation to the role conflict and ambiguity model presented in chapter 8.

The extent to which a coach may experience role conflict or ambiguity depends on his construction of what it means to be a coach, what behaviours he engages in as part of this role, and how congruent these are with child protection measures. One of the greatest difficulties in defining the role of the coach is that there is little agreement on what it means to be an effective coach (Lyle, 2002). Empirical studies of coaching effectiveness have included behavioural (e.g., Barnett et al., 1992; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Fischman & Oxendine, 1993; Smith & Smoll, 1991; Smith et al., 1983; Smoll et al., 1993; Smoll et al., 1978) and cognitive components (e.g., Côté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995a; Côté, Salmela et al., 1995b; Côté, Salmela, Trudel et al., 1995). Whilst these studies have provided information about behavioural procedures and “expert” knowledge, because of the complex nature of coaching they have often failed to present results that are sufficiently applicable to the development of coaches (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Effective coaching strategies vary according to the aim of the session, characteristics of the coach, characteristics of the performer (including age, level,

physical and mental development), type of sport, time of season, number of attendees, and other situational variables. This complex mix of variables negates any attempt at a simple role definition for effective coaching (Abraham & Collins, 1998).

Adding to this the demands of child protection measures, it is not surprising that swimming coaches are experiencing role conflict and ambiguity. In their in-depth study of role conflict in organisations, Kahn and his colleagues (1964) found that those in high conflict roles reported more often subjective experience of role conflict than did those in low conflict roles (58% compared to 28%). It could be argued that, if parents, athletes, policy makers, and sport scientists are exerting pressure on coaches to meet a variety of (often conflicting) outcomes then the coaching role should be classified as a high conflict role. Coaches who are attempting to satisfy all of these stakeholders may feel even more conflict from child protection measures. This discussion will now focus on pressures to modify coaching behaviours brought about through child protection measures.

Awareness of child protection measures is a precursor to experiencing pressure to change. For example, until his own arrest, the convicted coach interviewed for this study only expressed superficial support for child protection measures. In his case, guidelines for protection children in sport were readily available (as an ASA tutor he presented this material to aspiring coaches) but he did not perceive these to be relevant to his own situation. He was able to minimise the potential cognitive dissonance that might develop with the realisation that his coaching behaviours were inappropriate by not applying the knowledge to his own situation. Kahn and his colleagues (1964) refer to this as distorting the facts to reduce ambiguity and role conflict.

Other factors found in the present study that influenced awareness of child protection measures included the coach's ability to identify with (as opposed to othering) an accused or convicted coach, personally knowing someone who was abused (or accused of abuse) in swimming, and the existence of local club policies. In each of these there is an element of proximity, that is if it is a local issue (as opposed to only a national governing body initiative) and one that the coach can easily identify with, child protection guidance is more likely to have an impact on

coaching practices. Similarly, in a study of organisational stress, proximity of role senders to the target person had a direct effect on the amount of conflict experienced by the target (Kahn et al., 1964). In coaching, those who are likely to put pressure on the coach to change his behaviour (role senders) include: club executive committee members, line managers, parents, swimmers, other coaches including mentors, tutors delivering coaching courses, swimming event organisers, union representatives, the national governing body, media, and child protection advocates. All of these were mentioned in the data as sources of information about child protection and coaching behaviours. It was not the purpose of this study to examine which role senders exhibited the most pressure on coaches. However, it is likely that those most proximal to the coaches had the greatest impact. This is based on the assumption that proximity represents a more constant pressure to change. This has implications for how child protection awareness schemes are delivered. (See chapter 11).

Coaches' attempts at managing role conflict and ambiguity are represented in the actions/interaction segment of the paradigm model (see Figure 8.1). The consequences of these actions/interactions ultimately influence the extent to which coaches continue to experience conflict and ambiguity. Kahn and his colleagues examined these responses in terms of coping:

The person who is confronted with a situation of role conflict must respond to it in some fashion. One or more role senders are exerting pressure on him to change his behavior, and he must cope somehow with the pressure they are exerting. Whatever pattern of response he adopts may be regarded as an attempt to attain or regain an adequately gratifying experience in the work situation. Of special significance to us are certain identifiable coping responses. These include direct attempts at solving the objective problem by compliance or by persuading role senders to modify incompatible demands. Coping also takes the form of attempts to avoid the sources of stress, and to use defence mechanisms which distort the reality of a conflictual or ambiguous situation in order to relieve the anxiety of the undistorted experience. (Kahn et al., 1964, pp. 28-29)

The above notion is based on the basic assumption, that when presented with stress, the body will react to the stressor in such a way as to return to homeostasis (Selye, 1978). Some coaches were more successful than others in their attempts to adapt to child protection measures in a way that maintained an enjoyable coaching

environment. The coaches who seemed to experience greater role conflict were those who did not know how to comply with child protection measures in a manner that was consistent with their perception of effective coaching. Future research needs to examine the differences between coaches who successfully adapt their coaching behaviours and those who do not.

Redefining effective coaching, evaluating their own moral standards and intentions, and assessing risks were the three main strategies for managing conflict and ambiguity in this study. Redefining effective coaching and examining morals can result in a definition that accommodates child protection guidelines. Following Kahn and his colleagues (1964), it would be expected that coaches might also negotiate with governing bodies to modify the child protection guidelines. Although coaches complained about the guidelines in the focus groups and interviews, there was no indication that they had raised these issues directly with those who are in a position to change the child protection guidelines. This suggests that the coaches may feel powerless with regard to influencing governing body policies. A similar sense of helplessness is found in educational institutions where the lone teacher feels powerless to influence the system (Sockett, 1993).

Risk assessment, as discussed in chapter 8, is analogous to managing conflict by avoiding the sources of the stress (Kahn et al., 1964). By assessing the risks involved in a coaching behaviour, and as a consequence changing one's behaviour, the result is less public scrutiny (e.g., less stress). The coaches in the interviews and focus groups identified two types of risk assessment: assessing risks to the swimmers and assessing risks of false allegations. With respect to assessing the risk of swimmers being abused, the non-abusing coach is not likely to change his behaviour, which he knows is well-intentioned and not abusive. However, if coaches realise that swimmers, by virtue of their structurally dependent status, are vulnerable then they may change their behaviour so that the level of acceptable behaviour is raised to a higher standard. Prior to child protection becoming an issue in sport, parents and swimmers trusted coaches not to abuse and coaches trusted parents and swimmers not to raise false allegations of abuse. Following the onset of active child protection advocacy in sport, it appears that trust has broken down with detrimental effects for swimmers (and parents) and coaches.

A similar phenomenon has been described in education: “the change from *in loco parentis* to due process was an indicator of the collapse of mutual trust between parents and teachers” (Sockett, 1993). This trust is integral to the development of children. To dive into the water for the first time, to push oneself to train twice a day in pursuit of a place on the national team, to learn discipline and respect for competitors, requires the swimmer (and parents) to dismiss fear and trust in the swimmer’s coach. Checks and balances need to be in place so that coaches do indeed have the qualifications that they claim to have. Additionally, it is important that coaches continually improve their sport science knowledge so that they will use techniques that assist development, rather than cause harm. However, if trust breaks down between coaches and swimmers (and parents) then coaches will be afraid to push the swimmers to reach their potential, they will be afraid to create training schedules that match individuals’ needs. The coaches from this study suggested that this was already starting to happen. Some felt that the child protection measures meant that they could only safely coach swimmers who are self-motivated. What coaches will fear is due process. They will fear (as some do already) that parents will sue them when their child does not succeed. They will fear that parents will sue them when they try to teach a child responsibility and respect through the use of discipline.

Developing this trust, which is at the core of athlete development, requires a close coach/athlete relationship. One difficulty in developing such close relationships is being able to adhere to professional boundaries. Role conflict is potentially increased for those individuals who do not recognise the difference between friendly relations and personal friendships. Sockett (1993) delineates the difference between the two:

The closer the relationship, the greater the opportunity for it to turn into a friendship, as opposed to friendly relationships. But friendship creates obligations that go beyond the rights and obligations of a role relationship, for friends have privileged access to each other. The development of friendships between teachers and students (as opposed to friendly relations) as well as between teachers and parents, is complicated by the need to sustain a professional accountability relationship. Friendships have a measure of exclusivity about them and those outside the friendship relation (e.g., other students or parents) may see it as a threat to the ordinary role relation they have. (Sockett, 1993, p. 116)

Some of the coaches in this study were well aware that becoming too close to any one athlete would cause jealousy amongst the swimmers. However, the data did not reveal the extent to which coaches understand how a friendship relationship with a swimmer can compromise their professional accountability.

In a critique of the American educational system, Sockett (1993, pp. 59-60) noted “the system has moved from working with a conception of *due process* and away from a conception of *in loco parentis*, so the teacher’s individual exercise of his or her role has been circumscribed.” The coaches in this study expressed similar concerns about this happening within sport in England. Trust, which is integral to the teacher/student, coach/athlete relationship, has been disregarded as national sports governing bodies are being held accountable for the actions of individual coaches. With respect to the importance of trust invested in teachers and educational institutions, Sockett (1993, p. 118) writes, “If parents complain and nothing happens, their trust in the institution is weakened.” After well publicised cases of abuse in sport, it is understandable that parents have lost trust in the institution of swimming.

Before Hickson’s sentencing in 1995, parents and swimmers lost trust in the ASA after lodging complaints with the ASA about Hickson and little action was taken. In addition to strengthening its own systems for accountability, the institution of sport in England has responded by withdrawing its trust in coaches.

Withdrawing trust from teachers and coaches may reach the aim of reducing *opportunities* for abuse, but could this aim be met through other means that do not compromise the benefits of trusting relationships? Some coaches fear false allegations so much that they simply do not trust some swimmers or their families. They report avoiding becoming too friendly with these families, for to do so would make the coaches vulnerable. However, there are families that these coaches still trust. With these families, they may develop a friendship and will certainly offer the swimmer transportation to and from training or events and other favours reserved for those who are not likely to raise false allegations. The coaches do not seem to be able to recognise that they can be friendly without putting themselves at risk. Might assisting coaches to develop professional standards, teaching them how to care and

be professionally friendly without overstepping the boundary into friendship (see Section 9.4.2), whilst also teaching parents and athletes how to recognise inappropriate coaching behaviour, achieve the objectives of both protecting and developing children?

The responses from the coaches in this study indicated that, when faced with role conflict or role ambiguity, coaches may attempt to change the interpretation of the child protection guidance, ignore the guidance, or change their own beliefs, moral standards, and behaviours to comply with it. In a recent impact study (Woodhouse, 2001) of Sports Coach UK's 'Good Practice and Child Protection' workshop, 91.5% of respondents claimed to be more aware of child protection measures after attending the workshop. However, only 42% reported having changed their behaviour as a result of the workshop. For those who did change their behaviour this included not coaching alone, using less negative feedback, and only touching when necessary. One barrier to changing behaviour is the lack of clear guidelines for coaching effectiveness (Abraham & Collins, 1998) and the effective dissemination of research findings when they are available. Coaches who attend the child protection workshops that I tutor for Sports Coach UK and the Football Association often request more information on how to effectively manage bullies and appropriate procedures for disciplining and motivating children. Due to time constraints, only minimal information on appropriate behaviour management can be disseminated in the workshops.

An alternative to changing one's behaviour is to discontinue coaching completely. No coaches in this study discussed this as an option, nor did they cite other coaches who had withdrawn from coaching for this reason. However, in the study conducted by Woodhouse (2001), two coaches reported withdrawing from coaching after attending a child protection workshop. Without follow-up interviews, it is impossible to ascertain whether there were other factors that contributed significantly to those two coaches discontinuing as coaches. However, there is sufficient evidence from the organisational psychology literature that indicates a strong relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and burnout (e.g., Brown, 1998; Buunk et al., 1998; Embich, 2001; Le Blanc et al., 2000; Zimmerman, Wagoner, & Kelly, 1996).

Child protection is often presented to coaches in terms of ‘coach protection.’ That is, the emphasis is put on protecting the coaches from false allegations, rather than protecting the child from abuse. In the child protection workshops that I tutor, coach protection is one of the most frequently cited objectives that the coaches hope to learn from the session. Coaches may be more motivated to change their behaviour when they think that they may be sued if they do not. Sometimes behaviour change is achieved. Comments from coaches in this study suggest that when coaches do change their practice to reflect child protection guidelines, it is to protect themselves, not the athletes. This is, where the role conflict and ambiguity arises - coaching behaviours are meant to develop athletes, not protect coaches. Coaches experiencing role conflict and ambiguity see protecting themselves and developing athletes as incompatible. To reduce conflict and ambiguity, child (and athlete) protection needs to be discussed as central to the coaching role and bound to the development of athletes and the professional development of coaches.

In education, teachers appear to be accepting their role as adults responsible for protecting children from harm. Perhaps this is because the legislation mandates that teachers must protect children from harm. Teachers have also been faced with child protection issues longer than sports coaches. Finally, publications have specifically addressed the teacher’s role in child protection (e.g., David, 1993; Hawtin & Wyse, 1998; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). If sports coaches could be convinced that coaches do have a role as child protection advocates and that child protection is not incompatible with athlete development then role conflict and role ambiguity would decrease.

9.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed how the swimming coaches in this study construct appropriateness and how child protection measures are leading some coaches to experience role conflict and role ambiguity. These concepts were discussed in relation to the literature about sexual harassment and abuse in sport, organisational psychology research about role stress, and sport psychology research about coach

burnout and coaching effectiveness. The coaches' perception that child protection is incongruent with the coaching role was compared with that of school teachers who appear to be more accepting of child protection measures and their role in relation to these measures. In the next chapter, I reflect on the research journey from both a personal and academic perspective.

Chapter 10: Reflections on the Research Journey

10.1 Construction of Knowledge - Acknowledging My Values

This chapter serves two purposes: (a) to locate myself in the research and (b) to reflect on my development as a researcher over the course of this study. I do not believe that my values and assumptions can truly be set aside, as objectivist scientists aim to do. Therefore, before collecting data and throughout the research process I documented and questioned my assumptions so as to not obscure the voices of the coaches. For example, if I had let my own views about coach/athlete relationships that start during the athlete's adolescence and the coach's adulthood impinge upon my interpretation of the data, then I might have dismissed the concepts used by the coaches to justify these relationships. Or I might have labelled all coaches 'abusive' who support the appropriateness of legal coach/athlete relationships. With this over-classification, I would have overlooked the distinction between a coach's own standards and his unwillingness to judge other coaches. In this chapter, I reflect upon my reasons for studying this topic, the challenges of studying a sensitive topic, and the benefits of being involved in applied child protection work. I examine my experiences of using Grounded Theory and NVIVO and conclude with an evaluation of strategies that were beneficial in completing the thesis.

10.2 My Orientation to This Study

When I first learned about the doctoral bursary in England I was 5 months out of my master's degree and was working full-time as a project manager for a medical group in California. I enjoyed my job but felt like I was letting my undergraduate degree in psychology and my master's degree in sport psychology go to waste. I had been contemplating studying for a doctoral degree in sport psychology in an area that would facilitate women's and girls' participation in sport.

I had only read popular press reports of abuse in sport (e.g., Burton Nelson, 1994), so I spent the weekend at San Jose State University reading as many of Professor Brackenridge's papers as I could find.

My own sporting background was in soccer, tennis, and athletics. The summer before my 16th birthday I was spending about 35 hours a week, training and learning how to teach tennis, with my 24 year old tennis coach. This was an incredible developmental experience where my teenage awkwardness turned into confidence and eventually more autonomy. After reading about athletes who had been abused by their coaches, I realised how vulnerable I had been that summer and how easy it would have been for my coach to take advantage of me. It angers me that not all athletes are so fortunate and that, because some coaches have stepped over the line, the trusting relationship that sets the foundation for personal growth (Sockett, 1993) would be difficult to develop in today's climate of child protection. Thirteen years on, my former tennis coach admits that he took many chances with me and is much more formal in his relationships with tennis pupils today.

In addition to my sporting background as a player, instructor, and coach, my research training also had an impact on my journey as a doctoral student. I knew the exploratory nature of my research topic would require a qualitative approach. Although I had studied qualitative research during my master's degree, I had never conducted an in-depth qualitative project of my own. My previous research had been quantitative and from an objectivist epistemology. The focus of my current research was best approached from a constructivist epistemology, a way of knowing that was academically new to me but was intuitively and logically affirming.

Humberstone (1997) reflected on the hierarchy, albeit one that is slowly changing, within academia that favours positivist (and post-positivist) research. She was confronted with this when one of her thesis examiners demanded that she discuss her quantitative results as a way of verifying her qualitative results. She responded by adding a chapter explaining how such an approach would contradict her interpretative epistemology. Whilst she faced external conflict, my epistemological struggle has been internal. This struggle is not surprising when one considers that the acceptance of qualitative work (arguably an interpretative

endeavour) in psychology has generally been under the conditions of objective verification (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000).

I found myself attributing more credibility to positivistic studies. I struggled to write about my results in a way that did not suggest generalisability. My study indicated that language, perception, and context are important. My learned response was to turn to positivistic explanations, because those results meant more, or so I had been taught. Only upon engaging in reflective writing and discussion with my peers and supervisors was I able to recognise my folly. But, at times, I was still not convinced that my results would be accepted as academically credible in the absence of probability statistics. Speaking with other coaches about my research and listening to the coaches attending the child protection workshops that I tutored assured me of the relevance of my research. My confidence in my research approach grew as I presented my work to academic audiences and wrote for publication. I was later comforted by Mellor's (2001) writing about similar epistemological challenges to identity:

Like the straw man, do I need a certificate...from some fictitious university, to prove that I have a brain? I guess this is a struggle with my 'researcher identity'. If I cannot show $P < 0.001$, is it 'true'? I am still torn apart by this, I realise I am still trapped in my positivistic, scientific frame! (pp. 417 - 472)

As with Mellor, my struggle was not resolved overnight. It is a debate that I still return to in my reflective writing.

Adding to my 'identity crisis' was the false dichotomy between psychology (my parent discipline) and sociology (where much of my reading was leading me). The contributions of both disciplines are necessary to fully understand human behaviour, especially when examining the complexities of abuse in sport. But, I still feel stuck in the middle. Will I be accused by my parent discipline of abandoning 'true' psychology? Will I be dismissed in sociology for not exploring sociological theories with enough depth? Such are the trials and tribulations of an emerging interdisciplinarian.

Just as Brackenridge acknowledges that being a "white, middle-class, lesbian, engaged in sensitive research about (largely) female oppression in a (largely) male dominated world" (2001) has an effect on how she conducts and

interprets research, I also acknowledge that my identity influences my research. Not only does it influence my approach to the topic and the interpretation of data, but also how I interact with my participants and how they view me. I am an educated, young looking, California blonde, heterosexual female, with minimal knowledge of competitive swimming. When I entered the field, I was aware that my physical appearance would influence how my participants would respond to me. I wanted them to respect me as a professional, trust me not to distort their views, and to feel comfortable discussing all of their views with me. I felt that my heterosexual “appearance” assisted in this aim on two accounts: (a) the male coaches would feel less threatened by me and (b) they would not feel inhibited about discussing homophobic views.

When I presented my research proposal to the ASA and the BSCTA, I wore a suit to fit in and be perceived as professional. When the BSCTA representative first introduced me to the coaches at a national competition I wanted to look professional, yet casual. I wore jeans, a plain top, a blazer, and nice shoes. I had forgotten how hot it is in indoor facilities, and how I would have been more appropriately dressed wearing a T-shirt and shorts. The representative took one look at my shoes and, following his suggestion, I changed into my trainers! I was obviously an outsider.

My first attempt to conduct a focus group with the swimming coaches was thwarted by only one of the three coaches arriving as planned. (I had scheduled the focus group to occur during dinner at one of the hotels where the coaches were staying for a national competition.) In trying to understand why I was having difficulty scheduling the focus groups, the remaining coach suggested that my status as a ‘psychologist’ was threatening. (I had signed my introductory letter as “Joy Bringer, MSc, Doctoral Candidate in Social Psychology of Sport.”) That evening, I tried to recruit another coach to the study over a drink (non-alcoholic for me) at the hotel bar. He had also been sceptical about my study but appeared more trusting of me after we had conversed for a while. Perhaps -- too trusting-- he asked me out and after giving the excuse of having to drive home, he offered his hotel room. I reflected on that interaction in my research journal:

I need to really watch myself in terms of walking this fine line between being friendly and getting coaches to trust me and being flirtatious and having coaches only interested in me because I'm a young, California blonde. Being too rigid, I risk not gaining their trust. But, being too friendly I risk losing professional respect. The men may not respect me or my work, the women definitely wouldn't respect me. There are some power issues-- they've got something I want (interviews with them), I've got something they want (pretty young blonde female). In some ways, it is similar to the struggles they might deal with in terms of drawing the line in athlete/coach relationships. (Research journal; date concealed to maintain coach's anonymity)

I had incorrectly assumed that my research topic would have discouraged any approaches from the coaches. As far as I was concerned, the coaches were, in a sense, professional clients, not people I would socialise with. After this interaction, I prepared a couple of professional responses that I could use if I found myself in a similar situation.

10.3 Researching Sensitive Topics

When conducting research on sensitive topics, special consideration must be given for the potential impact of the research on the participants as well as the researcher (Lee, 1993). As explained in the section on ethical considerations (chapter 5), I took special precautions to assure confidentiality. I also provided participants with a debrief sheet that included national abuse support telephone numbers, and I carried with me the reference book, *Survivors' Directory 1998/99: Support Services for Survivors of Sexual Abuse in Britain and Ireland* (Broadcasting Support Services, 1998). I prepared this referral information so that I would not inadvertently cross the boundary from researcher to "counsellor." I am not a qualified counsellor. Furthermore, fulfilling a dual role of counsellor and researcher would have created ethical dilemmas for data collection.

From Brackenridge's experiences of researching abuse in sport (Brackenridge, 1999, 2001), I was aware of the possibility of hostility and physical threats, emotional exhaustion, feelings of helplessness, and emotional trauma. To protect myself against physical threats, I did not give out my home telephone number to the coaches. To maintain the coaches' anonymity, I did not give out my

office number, which is a shared telephone. Instead, I used my mobile telephone number for all contacts. When I conducted the individual interviews, at least one supervisor knew of my location (but not the name of the coach) in case something went amiss. I also listened closely to my instincts. Unlike Brackenridge's experiences (1999; 2001) I never felt threatened during my study, and thankfully no physical harm came my way.

I did, however, feel the emotional strains of conducting research on such a sensitive topic. At the advice of my supervisors, I arranged for counselling support before I started data collection. In actuality, the sessions dealt more with the stressors of studying for a doctoral degree than they did with the content of my research. However, it was reassuring to know that I had developed a trusting relationship with a qualified counsellor in the event that any serious issues emerged. The strain that I did experience included having nightmares about abusive situations after reading journal articles late at night and feeling hatred toward men after reading vivid accounts of abuse (e.g., Burton Nelson, 1994; Stanko, 1990). After hearing anecdotal accounts of abuse in elite sport during informal discussion with my colleagues at the 10th Annual World Congress of Sport Psychology, I could not even bear to look at the Olympic merchandise on sale at Athens airport. If I was going to continue my work, my love for sport, and my relationships with the men in my life, I needed to find a positive way to manage these feelings. Writing in my research journal became an important source of catharsis. I am also fortunate to have friends in earlier time zones that have offered telephone support during the middle of the night. (I was always careful to maintain the anonymity of participants and others who might be involved.) I was also careful not overburden any one source of support (Brackenridge, 1999), and used a variety of coping strategies to manage the emotions arising over the course of my research.

10.4 Participation in the Real World

During times of frustration, my participation in child protection in sport as a tutor, guest participant on the ASA's Working Party, and research member on the CPSU Research Task Force helped keep me motivated and grounded. Interactions

with coaches, policy makers, and researchers served to remind me that I was researching important and practical issues. Comments from the coaches on the Football Association's and Sports Coach UK's child protection courses helped to verify that my analysis had ecological validity. My participation on the ASA Child Protection Working Party allowed me to stay in touch with developments within swimming (e.g., educational requirements and reports on Swimline). I also felt like my work was making a difference as I was able to feed back some of the coaches' concerns directly to the Working Party. I found these experiences to be extremely valuable in the development of my thesis and in maintaining motivation.

10.5 Getting Access

Throughout this project I was aware of the advantages and disadvantages of being funded by an agency. The ASA/ISTC and BSCTA provided access to coaches, insider knowledge, and credibility that would have been difficult for me to obtain on my own. To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 initial letters inviting coaches and convicted coaches were sent out by the BSCTA and ASA on my behalf. This was very much appreciated but, at the same time, limited my control over when the task was completed. I had to dismiss feeling as though I was nagging the ASA legal department when I repeatedly rang asking whether or not they had received any responses from the convicted coaches and if the addresses of the non-respondents had been verified. Neither the ASA/ISTC nor the BSCTA ever pressured me to produce particular results. Yet, because I was receiving funding, I felt indebted to properly represent the voice of the coaches and report relevant findings. I frequently reflected on my interpretations to assure that I was not unduly being influenced by the support I was receiving from the swimming organisations.

Gaining access to convicted coaches seemed to be an ongoing struggle. On one occasion, as I was stepping off the train to deliver a child protection workshop, I received an unexpected telephone call from the governor's office of one of the prisons I had contacted. The officer was outraged, he assumed my letter was an obnoxious prank. I can think of two possibilities that led to his response. The letter was written by me, but printed on CPSU letterhead and posted by the CPSU. Mr.

Steve Boocock, the director of the CPSU, and a former probation officer with significant experience in conducting risk assessments of sexual offenders, had kindly agreed to assist me in conducting the interviews with convicted coaches. I had been advised by a colleague researching incarcerated females to follow the hierarchical protocols within the prison system and contact the governor first, before contacting the prisoner. Mr. Boocock on the other hand had been advised by a probation officer working inside that particular prison to send the letter directly to the prisoner, copy it to the governor, and only to ask formal permission from the governor *after* the prisoner had agreed to participate. Unfortunately, the copied letter arrived in the governor's office without a cover letter, thus it may have appeared as though we were trying to circumvent traditional procedures. Also, in the letter, I stated the interview would be conducted by "Ms. Joy Bringer and Mr. Steve Boocock." At the time, I did not think about the implication of our names. Any 15-year-old could have advised me that our combined names would not assist in establishing researcher credibility for a study on sexual abuse! I assured the prison officer that my study was indeed authentic and asked permission for Mr. Boocock to contact the officer directly. Mr. Boocock helped to allay his fears but, ultimately, the prisoner denied our request for an interview. One of the governor's aims is to maintain homeostasis within the prison, and anything that might upset a prisoner may adversely affect that homeostasis (Steve Boocock, personal communication, 19 July 2001). It is difficult to know the extent to which the prisoner was influenced by the prison officer advising him not to participate.

10.6 What Counts as Data? - Ethical Dilemmas

My research journal became an output for recording ethical dilemmas about 'what counts as data.' On several occasions I received confidential information about swimming coaches that I could not count as data because no consent had been given for its use. It was also second hand, so the reliability of the data could be considered questionable. But, according to the constructivist epistemological approach that I had adopted, the important element of these disclosures was the perception of the person disclosing it to me that the coaches' actions were

inappropriate. In one instance, I was directly asked if I thought the coach's poor practice was appropriate. I had an ethical obligation to report suspected abuse arising from the interviews or focus groups, but this was a slightly different situation. To become involved would have compromised my position as a researcher (Brackenridge, 2001). As previously planned by my supervisors and me, I advised the person that my judgement was irrelevant and that it was their responsibility to contact Swimline if they had any concerns.

Information given to me informally (as in the above situation) and my own informal observations of sport coaches had the potential to influence the interpretation of my data. I noted these observations, and in some instances they provided the basis for reflective questions about my data. For instance, in my pilot study with tennis coaches, they were open about flirting with their students (and I have witnessed instances of such flirting). The swimming coaches in the focus groups adamantly denied such flirting, although I had been told differently by an informant. I examined the data for definitional examples of flirting. In one of the individual interviews, I questioned the discrepancy and gained more information about how some coaches try to maintain a balance between creating a fun environment, not overstepping professional boundaries, and not creating jealousy amongst teammates. It is unrealistic to expect a researcher to dismiss informal observations and confidential disclosures in an attempt to maintain objectivity. However, by reflecting on these observations and disclosures, I was able to use the information to assist my data analysis by providing areas for further inquiry.

10.7 Grumblings About Grounded Theory

Learning and following the procedures of Grounded Theory became a growth experience in itself. The advice provided by Glaser (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) to delay the literature review contributed to the emergence of categories that I may not have recognised if I had been overly influenced by the literature. It also saved me from spending countless hours writing a review of offender profiling when my results indicated that I needed to review the concept of role conflict and role ambiguity. I tried to trust Glaser (1967) and Strauss and

Corbin (1998) that my core category would emerge from the data. I suspended my disbelief and over a period of 8 to 9 months, I finally acknowledged its emergence. As illustrated in chapter 7, it was not easy to ‘let go’ and allow the data to dictate the focus of my thesis. Equally, I was not prepared for the frustration and feelings of self-doubt about my perceived lack of progress. When I conducted my master’s study, there was comfort in knowing that when I started my data collection, half of my thesis was already written. The end of the data analysis (as it was a quantitative study) was also more clearly marked than in my current study.

As explained in chapters 4, 5, and 7, the end of a Grounded Theory study is marked by saturation, when no new categories emerge from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The difficulty with this definition is that it does not clearly specify the level of saturation necessary for completion. Nor does it help the researcher decide when to collect more data in the hope of further developing a category, or when to simply declare it an area for future research. The constraints of time and money can help in this decision (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Due to these constraints, in the current study I have recommended that future researchers interview coaches who have withdrawn from coaching as a result of child protection procedures.

10.8 What Would I Do Differently?

As is common for doctoral students (Kerlin, 1997; Phillips & Pugh, 1994), my journey over the past three and half years has been marked by periods of insecurity about my academic abilities. I look back at my research and think, “I could have done that better, I should have analysed that more quickly, I wish I had read that earlier...” Through the course of my studies, my supervisors and peers reminded me that the doctoral degree is an apprenticeship for becoming a researcher; the research study is not an end in itself. Now that I am nearing the end of the process and can reflect on the last several years, I realise how much I have learned about research.

To say what I would do differently if I were to begin again would be to devalue the learning that occurs through process. What I can reflect upon, however,

is what I have learned from these experiences that will assist me in future research projects. First, I now have a more realistic view of how long data analysis can take and the value of allowing time for analysis between data collections. Secondly, now that I have more confidence in analysing qualitative data, I think that I would be less resistant to change and be quicker to follow an emerging theme.

10.9 What Would I Do the Same?

Critical reflection also includes acknowledging 'what worked' so that success can be replicated in the future. Cultivating relationships with the key stakeholders in the ASA and the BSCTA provided me with opportunities and information that as a complete outsider, I would have missed. My ability to be persistent saw me through periods of frustration when I was having difficulty scheduling the focus groups, then my first two focus groups were cancelled, and later I was having little luck recruiting convicted coaches. If I were to conduct interviews with convicted coaches again, I would definitely do these in tandem with an expert such as Steve Boocock. This reduces opportunities for manipulation by the interviewee and increases researcher safety (Hearn, 1993).

The Grounded Theory approach was beneficial in developing a research focus with practical relevance to the swimming coaches. Although delaying the literature review was daunting, and required a leap of faith, it helped me to meet my objectives. A common question for those conducting interviews and focus groups is whether or not they need to do their own transcription. The answer depends on the purpose of the project and the desired outcome. My own experience was that, although it was time consuming, it added to my understanding of the coaches and it facilitated analysis. Interestingly, Glaser (1992) suggested that there is an over-reliance on the transcribed word and suggested that good note taking would suffice. I personally find it distracting to take extensive notes during an interview and prefer to listen attentively, knowing that I can return to the recorded interview later.

I found the three-item quality assurance form that I asked coaches to complete after the interviews or focus groups extremely beneficial (see Appendix J). Coaches reported being satisfied to very satisfied with the way they were contacted

for the study and the way in which the focus group or interview was conducted. Not only did this communicate my respect for their involvement but it also allowed the coaches to add any confidential comments that they had forgotten or did not want to discuss openly. One coach took advantage of this and wrote, “Good idea for a study, we need more clarification of ‘what do we mean by coaching.’”

I would also definitely advocate the use of computer assisted qualitative analysis software programmes. My use of NVIVO facilitated organisation, frequent memo writing, and critical thinking (see chapter 5 and 7). Other students have often asked me about the time to learn NVIVO and whether or not it would be a worthwhile endeavour. The ESRC clearly values the benefits of computer assisted qualitative analysis software programmes and they now recommend that graduate students receive research training in this area (Economic and Social Research Council, 2001). The answer to the question about how long does it take to learn NVIVO depends upon the student. I consider myself an intermediate computer user and learn new programmes relatively quickly. When NVIVO was first launched, the two practical books (Bazeley & Richards, 2000; Gibbs, 2002) on how to use NVIVO were not yet written. My learning was facilitated by trial and error, training with the software developers, and co-tutoring workshops with my supervisor on how to use NVIVO. In addition to forcing me to extend my knowledge of NVIVO, these workshops constantly reminded me of the importance of methodology. One of the main messages that we try to communicate in the workshops is that methodological assumptions (and the research questions), rather than the tools of the software programme, drive the data analysis.

Finally, oral presentations of my work, writing for publication, keeping a research journal, and creating a support structure were all central to the completion of my thesis. Taking time out to prepare conference papers or research seminars can be annoying and appear distracting. However, I found that these pushed my thinking forward. Often, what I presented was abandoned after questions from my colleagues and myself challenged my thinking further. Without these challenges I would not have progressed. The research journal gave me a place to track my progression and, in times of frustration, I re-read the journal and realised how much I had actually accomplished.

10.10 Summary

This reflective chapter has given me the opportunity to step back and evaluate my progress over the past several years. It has also given me the space to declare details about my personal and research background which might have influenced my interpretation of the data. In the next chapter, I will bring this thesis to a close with a discussion of possible limitations and directions for future research.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Suggestions for coach education that may help reduce role conflict and role ambiguity are discussed in this chapter. (Specific recommendations for the ASA and the BSCTA are provided in Appendix O.) I then offer several recommendations for preventing a backlash to child protection in sport (see also chapter 2) with specific recommendations for swimming. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

11.1 Implications for Coach Education

Researchers and educators alike, encourage reflective practice as an integral step in continual professional development (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Adams, 1994; Crouch, 1998; A. Miles, 2001; Sockett, 1993). Sockett (1993, p. 163) describes it as “a paradigm for educational transformation,” which, “if it is systematic, it is a form of moral self-education that will enhance the person.” Identifying one’s own strengths and weakness through reflective practice can be used to adapt to role pressure without undermining one’s motivation for coaching. Engaging in reflective practice encourages the coach to put the development of the performer at the centre of his role definition. Evaluating current practices from this perspective may highlight instances of poor practice or, at the very least, areas of improvement. Child (and athlete) protection thus becomes central to the definition of coaching, rather than some external force to which coaches must accommodate. Coach mentoring and peer evaluations can also be beneficial in improving practice. Similar methods have been successful for improving teachers’ practice (e.g., Adams, 1994; Ellington & Ross, 1994; Hodgkinson, 1994).

Despite all of the participants being qualified coaches, only half of the coaches who participated in this study reported having received child protection training. Well-designed child protection workshops and resources could help reduce role ambiguity and role conflict if information is presented in a manner that clarifies appropriate behaviours and professional boundaries. (The theoretical limitations of this statement are discussed below.) On recommendation from the CPSU, Sports Coach UK recently revised their 'Good Practice and Child Protection' workshop (Ian Smyth, personal communication, 19 March 2002). In an effort to better define the coaching role, all workshops conducted from April 2002 include a detailed section on the Code of Conduct for Sports Coaches (Sports Coach UK, 2001). Child protection training for coaches should also focus on helping coaches realise their role in setting new behavioural norms that will also serve the purpose of teaching parents and swimmers what to expect as acceptable practice. By setting professional boundaries and new behavioural norms, coaches will enhance the external inhibitors for abusers (Finkelhor, 1984) making it more difficult for ill-intentioned coaches to groom athletes for abuse.

One caveat must be mentioned in respect to coach education. A simple solution for reducing role conflict and role ambiguity would be to categorise all possible coaching behaviours and coach/athlete interactions as acceptable or unacceptable. However, this solution is too simplistic and could not possibly take into account all of the iterations of socio-cultural, situational, athlete, and coach variables that could contribute to abuse. Nor does it take into account behaviours, generally labelled as poor practice, which are neither abusive nor good practice. A more effective method is to educate coaches about what makes an interaction abusive, poor practice, or good practice. By focusing on the reasoning behind such complex decisions, the coach can then apply such reasoning to his own coaching situations (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Furthermore, a rigid set of role definitions artificially separates the person from the role and inhibits autonomy needed for the development of professional moral responsibility (Sockett, 1993). Over legislating behaviour assumes that behaviour can be judged universally and out of context.

It is important to note that whilst role ambiguity and role conflict may be uncomfortable experiences, the consequences need not be negative (Kahn et al.,

1964). These experiences challenge the conceived role and encourage flexibility and change that can facilitate an improvement in a coach's role. Sockett (1993) defines the question of identifying the ideal role of a teacher as a moral question that needs to be answered but not in a rigid form. He states,

I have characterized the ideal in teaching as a commitment to serve developing persons, with the rider that since those persons are constantly changing, there must be a commitment to changing and improving practice. (Sockett, 1993, 137-138)

Thus by constantly re-evaluating the ideal and discussing the difficult, often unanswerable, questions it is possible to create and maintain professionalism (Sockett, 1993).

11.2 Implications for the Individual Coach

The coaches in this study expressed frustration about the pressures to change their coaching behaviours to match expectations of child protection advocates. When faced with role conflict or role ambiguity, coaches need not feel hopeless. Rather, coaches should seek role clarification with their executive committee, parents, and swimmers. Clarifying roles at the start of a coaching job (and re-clarifying as the coaching relationship develops) will help to alleviate misunderstandings, for example, with parents who expect the coach to perform the role of driver, babysitter, and sport teacher, but not necessarily disciplinarian.

Securing professional indemnity insurance (for example, through a coaching union) should also reduce some of the concerns about financial loss due to false allegations. Coaches are advised to examine the limits of the policy with regards to cover for loss of employment and whether the entire policy is negated by a guilty verdict. Having said this, it is important to note that the low conviction rate for child abuse as compared to estimated prevalence rates (see for example, Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999) is such that it is a rare occurrence for someone to be convicted as a result of a false accusation. Facts about conviction rates need to be communicated to coaches so that they do not harbour unrealistic fears about false allegations.

11.3 Practical Outcomes from This Thesis

One of the reasons for selecting Grounded Theory as my methodology was for its ability to generate relevant theory based on a research question that holds meaning for the research participants. As a researcher, I believe it is important to conduct meaningful research and report findings back to the research participants. In accordance with my research grant contract with the ASA, I am developing a coaching workshop and writing an article for their national magazine, *Swimming Times*. Initial findings were reported to the ASA's Child Protection Working Party and to the BSCTA's national representative. An executive summary will also be sent to the ASA and the BSCTA with suggestions for improving coach education and communication with coaches.

11.4 Recommendations for Preventing a Backlash to Child Protection in Sport

As discussed in chapter 2, Finkelhor made recommendations aimed at child protection advocates who want to avoid backlash to the child protection movement. The first was to "maintain strong ties and extend its powerful social base" (1994, p.15). Within sport, it is important that the coalition with groups like the NSPCC remain and that different sports continue to work together and form stronger allegiances. The CPSU is well placed to provide a means for helping sports share information and expertise with each other. The social base can be strengthened by encouraging other sport professionals such as biomechanists, sport physiologists, sport medicine providers, and sport psychologists to support efforts to protect children in sport. High quality research will prove invaluable in gaining the trust and support of these professionals.

It is important that a research base is developed in which to base advocacy claims. The main concern here is that taken for granted assumptions will be presented by child protection advocates without the research evidence to back up their statements. For example, the public was quick to dismiss child abuse claims once researchers were able to demonstrate that children were susceptible to leading questions (J. E. B. Myers, 1994b). This came about because child testimonies of

abuse were initially accepted without question nor with research support (J. E. B. Myers, 1994b).

There is a popular belief amongst some in sport that sexual abusers are infiltrating sport with a main objective of abusing. Brackenridge (2001) has vehemently challenged this assumption. However, a recent draft report from researchers within swimming concluded that sexual abuse was committed “in the majority of cases by male coaches who have entered the profession with the intention of abusing.” The text was modified in the final version (J. Myers & Barrett, 2002) after I advised the researchers that their study did not measure coaches’ intent, nor was it able to investigate the men’s history of abusing before beginning their coaching career. Such conclusions are common in sport but are unfounded and are detrimental to the movement of child protection in sport. Furthermore, such claims only distance ‘nonabusing’ coaches from ‘those paedophiles,’ and obscures the aim of coach educators to help all coaches improve their coaching style. Research does not yet exist to support statements about the aetiology of abusers in sport. Until good quality research exists, professionals must be conservative in their statements about abusers in sport.

One way of combating potential backlash and reducing coaches’ role conflict arising from child protection measures is to promote success stories that demonstrate the positive impact of child protection services (J. E. B. Myers, 1994b). In sport, it will be important for sport governing bodies to find ways to demonstrate measurable successes and report these to coaches. Some quality measures they may wish to examine are changes in athletes that are related to changes in coaching attitudes and styles. For example past research has correlated positive coaching styles with decreases in attrition and increases in athlete enjoyment (e.g., Barnett et al., 1992; Smith, 1993; Smoll et al., 1993). It would also be beneficial to report the number of children who stay in sport because the coach recognised abuse that was occurring outside of sport. Satisfaction ratings of coaches who have been investigated and allegations subsequently dropped or found to be unfounded would further contribute to evidence based practice. Publicising the successes of child protection in sport will be difficult because child abuse conjures negative associations, but failure to celebrate the benefits of child protection will only allow

backlash movements to progress unchecked. In summary, positive publicity for child protection in sport may help to convince coaches that child protection is central to good coaching, just as business has started to recognise that environmental protection is good business management.

11.5 Limitations of the Study

A common limitation of conducting research with humans is that it is difficult to ascertain whether participants are responding openly, or if they are only responding in a socially desirable manner (Ballard & Crino, 1988; Marlowe & Crowne, 1982). The use of focus groups potentially increases the likelihood of such responses when participants may be concerned about the perceptions of the other participants. While this may have happened to some degree in the focus groups there was sufficient variability in responses to indicate that this was not a serious problem. In two of the individual interviews, however, I felt as though the participants were withholding information. This was certainly true for the convicted coach who denied that the abuse happened. In the case of the coach who was cleared of allegations, he was reluctant to talk about the situation, and I therefore did not pressure him into discussing the details of the case.

Similarly, a potential limit of Grounded Theory is that participants may lead the researcher into being a voice for their cause, rather than providing information that may assist in the critical analysis of a relevant research question. The researcher must be aware of such issues when allowing the research question to emerge from the data. "Going native" or adopting the views of the participants and thus losing the ability to critically analyse the data is a danger here, as well as within other methodologies such as ethnography (Tedlock, 2000). Continual reflection in my research journal prevented me from losing my ability to critically analyse the data. What is required in Grounded Theory is the ability to immerse oneself in the data enough to be sensitive to emergent themes and relationships between concepts but not so much that it is impossible to produce an accurate interpretation of events (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Techniques for Grounded Theory analysis, such as making comparison and selectively sampling (as described in chapters 5 and 7),

facilitated analytical distance. My experiences as a tutor for Sports Coach UK's and the FA's child protection workshops also helped to authenticate my findings in that coaches attending the workshops often expressed a similar range of concerns as the swimming coaches in this study.

A further possible limitation is that, given more time, the model could be further developed. A Grounded Theory study is ideally completed when saturation has been met, that is variation in the main themes is accounted for, and no new themes appear to be emerging from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Strauss and Corbin are more pragmatic in defining the end of a study. They wrote,

Saturation is more a matter of reaching the point in the research where collecting additional data seems counterproductive; the 'new' that is uncovered does not add that much more to the explanation at this time. Or, as is sometimes the situation, the researcher runs out of time, money, or both. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 136)

In the current study, saturation was reached in the sense that focus groups or interviews with similar coaches were unlikely to reveal any new themes. I did however, discover areas for future research that are discussed in section 11.6.

A strength of this study is that it has provided a unique contribution to knowledge in a substantive area. As an exploratory study, however, it is important to remember that the participants' responses presented in this thesis are not generalisable to the wider population of swimming coaches. The model presented in chapter 8, is empirically grounded but requires further testing before claims about causality can be made. However, the *process* of experiencing role ambiguity and role conflict in relation to child protection may perhaps be related to the wider population of swimming coaches in the UK.

11.6 Future research

There is scant research examining sexual harassment and abuse in sport and the impact of child protection policies on sports coaches, so there are many possibilities for future research. Theory development in this area will benefit from research examining cross-sport differences, female coaches, and recreational level

sport. This would help to establish if perceptions of appropriateness vary according to these variables.

Secondly, as child protection policies become embedded in all government funded youth sports programmes, it will be important to examine whether different groups of coaches also experience role conflict and role ambiguity in the same way as the coaches in this study have done. Studies examining coaching burnout have found that female coaches may be more susceptible to burnout (Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Kelley & Gill, 1993). It will be interesting to see if similar gender differences would be found in relation to role conflict and role ambiguity. Male coaches might actually experience more role conflict and role ambiguity from child protection measures than female coaches because male coaches may feel more scrutinised than females. A study of male carers of foster children found that the male carers were more concerned about false allegations of abuse than the female carers (Swan, 1997). Horn (1992) argued that researchers should not go looking for gender differences without theoretical justification. In this case, the justification would be based on societal norms that tend to acknowledge males, not females, as abusers (Saradjian & Hanks, 1996).

It would also be useful to interview coaches from a sport that does not yet have a well-developed child protection policy, or from other countries with different cultural norms. This would allow for the impact of cultural awareness on perceptions of appropriateness, role conflict, and role ambiguity to be examined. Adding to this, a longitudinal study to follow a group of coaches within a sport that is developing and implementing a child protection policy would provide insight into the development of role conflict and ambiguity and might highlight strategies for decreasing the experience of conflict and ambiguity.

The child protection in sport movement could also benefit from pedagogical research examining the best methods for raising awareness and improving coaching practice without contributing to role conflict and ambiguity. It is important that this research be done relatively soon so that detrimental effects of role conflict and role ambiguity can be avoided. As theory develops in this area, it will be possible to develop evidenced based practices that will encourage positive sporting experiences for both athletes and coaches.

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Appendix A. Definition for Abuse of Trust

These notes are verbatim excerpts from the Explanatory Notes (Home Office, 2000) referring to the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 (c.44) which received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000.

Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000

EXPLANATORY NOTES (Excerpts only - bold emphasis added)

INTRODUCTION

1. These explanatory notes relate to the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 which received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. They have been prepared by the Home Office in order to assist the reader in understanding the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by Parliament.
2. The notes need to be read in conjunction with the Act. They are not, and are not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the Act. So where a section or part of a section does not seem to require any explanation or comment, none is given.

Abuse of trust

7. During the debate on the Crime and Disorder Bill on 22 June 1998 Alun Michael, the then Home Office Minister of State, announced that an inter-departmental group, set up to identify additional safeguards needed to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, would also be looking to identify the measures necessary to protect 16 and 17 year olds who might be vulnerable to abuse by those in a position of trust (Hansard col.787). The inter-departmental working group on preventing unsuitable people working with children and abuse of trust conducted a short consultation exercise in England and Wales in August and September 1998. The Scottish Office conducted a similar consultation exercise in Scotland in October and November 1998. The interim report of the working group was placed in the library of both Houses on 25 November 1998. This proposed a new criminal offence specifically targeted to protect those who may be particularly vulnerable or where the relationship of trust is particularly strong, together with an initiative to strengthen codes of conduct.
8. These recommendations form the basis for the proposed offence of abuse of trust contained in the Bill introduced in December 1998 and in the present Act. The Government also committed itself to strengthening codes of conduct generally to protect 16 and 17 year olds from sexual advances, both homosexual and heterosexual, from those in positions of trust. In accordance with this commitment, on 17 September 1999 the Government produced the booklet "*Caring for young people and the vulnerable: Guidance for preventing abuse of trust*", copies of which were placed in the library of both Houses.

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Sections 3 to 6: Abuse of position of trust

13. *Sections 3 and 4* create a new offence of abuse of trust, which would apply to the whole of the United Kingdom. It would be an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse or engage in other sexual activity with a person under that age where they are in a “position of trust” in relation to the younger person. The definition of position of trust is limited to particular circumstances where the young person is particularly vulnerable or the relationship of trust particularly strong.

14. The test as to whether conduct amounts to “sexual activity” is whether a reasonable person would in the circumstances regard the activity as sexual. So for instance, a normal gynaecological examination by a doctor is an activity which it is envisaged a reasonable person would not regard as “sexual activity”. Behaviour which a reasonable person would only regard as sexual activity if he was aware of the parties’ intentions, motives or feelings is specifically excluded. Thus, behaviour which is non-sexual in nature, for example a sports trainer tackling a pupil on a rugby pitch, may not be challenged because of alleged hidden motives.

15. A person aged 18 or over is said to be in a "position of trust" in relation to a younger person if one of four conditions is met:

- the younger person is detained in an institution under a court order or under any enactment and the older person is regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under 18. This would include where the young person is detained as a result of the criminal justice system or penal system under the Immigration or Mental Health Acts or under military law;
- the younger person is resident in and provided with accommodation (or accommodation and maintenance) by a local authority, an equivalent Northern Ireland body or a voluntary organisation in a home or other place, and the older person is regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under 18 there. This would apply to the full range of settings in which such young people might be accommodated, including foster care; residential care (local authority, private or voluntary, including secure accommodation); and semi-independent accommodation;
- the younger person is in any of the following:
 - a) a hospital
 - b) a residential care home, nursing home, mental nursing home or private hospital
 - c) a community home, voluntary home, children’s home or residential establishment
 - d) a home provided under section 82(5) of the Children Act 1989

and the older person is regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under 18 there. This would include some young

people with physical or learning disabilities, mental illness or behavioural problems; it would include NHS and private and voluntary accommodation;

- the younger person is in full time education in an educational institution and the older person is regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under 18 there. Where the younger person is registered as receiving full time education at one establishment but attends another establishment as part of his or her course, the older person is treated as in a position of trust at either establishment.

The word ‘persons’ can include a single person, for example where only one child is in the care of foster parents.

16. Section 4 also provides that the four conditions above may be added to by an Order which may be made by the Secretary of State and which would have to be laid before and be approved by both Houses of Parliament. In Scotland, any such order would fall to be considered by the Scottish Parliament, by virtue of section 7(2) of the Act and section 118 of the Scotland Act 1998.

17. It is a defence for a person charged with such an offence if at the time of intercourse or sexual activity:

- he did not know or could not reasonably have been expected to know that (i) the younger person was under 18 or (ii) that he was in a position of trust in relation to the younger person; or
- he was lawfully married to the younger person.

In addition, there is a transitional provision to ensure that the offence will not apply where the older person was in a sexual relationship with the younger person at a time when he was in a position of trust in relation to the younger person immediately before the commencement of this Act.

Appendix B. Recruitment Letters Sent to Coaches

1. Letter of Introduction from ASA, ISTC, and BSCTA

<< ISTC Logo>>

<<ASA Logo>>

<<BSCTA Logo>>

DATE

«Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
 «Title»
 «Company»
 «Department»
 «Street_Address»
 «State_or_Province» «Postal_Code»

Dear «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»:

Please take a moment to read the attached letter from Ms. Joy Bringer. You are invited to participate in research Ms. Bringer is conducting to benefit the education and protection of swimmers and swim coaches. Specifically, she is interested in listening to coaches' opinions about intimate and sexual coach-athlete relationships. The BSCTA and the ASA have reviewed a detailed proposal of Ms. Bringer's study and unreservedly endorse this research project. As organisations representing swimming and swim coaches, we believe this is an important research project which, with your participation, can make a valuable contribution towards protecting the future of swimming and swim coaches in Great Britain.

Ms. Bringer is conducting this study with the Leisure and Sport Research Unit at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education (CGCHE). The BSCTA and the ASA have been assured that this study will be conducted in a professional manner and adhere to ethical guidelines of CGCHE. Ms. Bringer is an avid sportswoman and is committed to the advancement of sport. Please join her in her quest to advance swimming to a higher level.

If you have any concerns about this study, do not hesitate to contact Ms. Bringer at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Education, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GLOS, GL50 4AZ, tel. 01242 07941 193340 or by email: jbringer@chelt.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,
 Brian McGuinness
 National Organiser GMB/BSCTA

David Sparkes
 Chief Executive, ASA

2. Introduction Letter from Myself

<<CGCHE Logo>>

DATE
 «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
 «Title»
 «Company»
 «Department»
 «Street_Address»
 «State_or_Province» «Postal_Code»

Dear «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»:

You are invited to participate in a study I am conducting for my PhD thesis at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education. I am interested in studying coaches' views about intimate and sexual relationships between coaches and athletes. The BSCTA and the ASA have both endorsed this project.

I am specifically interested in coaches' experiences and perspectives because there is no research yet in this area. Sport specific information on coach-athlete intimate relationships is either anecdotal or from interviews with athletes. To be effective in protecting coaches, swimmers, and the reputation of swimming, I believe it is vital to listen to what coaches' have to say on the matter.

Over the next several months, I will be conducting interviews and focus groups with male swim coaches. You have been selected by the BSCTA and ASA to be invited to take part in this study because your experiences and perspective as a development, national or international level coach is highly valued.

Your attendance at a focus group with 4 to 6 other swim coaches of a similar level would be extremely appreciated. I recognise that your duties as a swim coach are time consuming; therefore, every effort has been made to schedule the focus group at a location and time convenient for all the coaches involved. The focus group session will require no more than one hour of your time, and responses will only be reported anonymously. This is an ideal opportunity to voice your views. Please use the attached card and postage paid envelope to RSVP for the scheduled focus group:

<<Date>>

<<Time>>

<<Location>>

If you have any questions, please feel free to ring me on 07941 193340 or email me at jbringer@chelt.ac.uk I look forward to your contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Joy Bringer

PhD Candidate, Social Psychology of Sport

3. *ASA Letters to Convicted Coaches*

DATE

«Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
 «Title»
 «Company»
 «Department»
 «Street_Address»
 «State_or_Province» «Postal_Code»

(NB: Replace “you” or “your” with “your client” or “your client’s” where appropriate, if the letter is to be sent to a solicitor rather than directly to the coach.)

Dear «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»:

The ASA would like to invite you to participate in an interview regarding your conviction. This interview would be conducted by Ms. Joy Bringer, a research student, as part of a larger study on intimate and sexual coach/athlete relationships. This would provide you with an opportunity to express your views and tell your side of the story. The research will be strictly confidential. Any reports (including to the ASA) resulting from this study will only include anonymous data. No information will be reported which could reasonably identify you with the data.

The interview will include:

- a discussion of your experiences and perspectives about coach/athlete relationships
- an opportunity for you to explain your particular circumstances

As an organisation representing swimming and swim coaches, the ASA believes this is an important research project which, with your participation, will allow both sides of the story to be voiced. Ultimately, this will provide the ASA with a balanced perspective towards future policy development.

Please reply, using the enclosed response form and postage paid envelope, indicating whether you accept or decline the ASA’s invitation to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Grey
 ASA, Legal Affairs

I, «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»,

[Accept] **[Decline]** *(Please circle appropriate option)*

the ASA’s invitation to be interviewed for a research project.

If you have **accepted** the invitation, you will be contacted shortly to schedule an interview time. If you are happy for Ms. Bringer to correspond with you directly, please sign in the box below authorising us to pass on your contact details to Ms. Bringer.

I authorise the ASA to give Ms. Bringer my contact details so that she may contact me to schedule an interview.		
Print Name	Sign Name	Date

18 June, 2001

«Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
 «Title»
 «Company»
 «Department»
 «Street_Address»
 «State_or_Province» «Postal_Code»

Dear «Courtesy_Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»:

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), and the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA) would like to invite your client, Mr «Last_Name», to participate in an interview regarding his conviction. This interview would be conducted by Ms Joy Bringer, a doctoral level research student, and Mr Steve Boocock, director of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), as part of a larger study on intimate and sexual coach/athlete relationships. This would provide your client with an opportunity to express his views and tell his side of the story. The research will be strictly confidential and follow ethical guidelines set forth by the British Psychological Society. (A copy of the informed consent form to be signed by the interviewee, and ethical protocol will be provided upon your request.) Any reports (including to the ASA/BSCTA/NSPCC) resulting from this study will only include anonymous data. No information will be reported which could reasonably identify your client with the data.

The interview will include:

- a discussion of your client's experiences and perspectives about coach/athlete relationships
- an opportunity for your client to explain his particular circumstances

As an organisation representing swimming and swim coaches, the ASA and BSCTA believe this is an important research project which, with your client's participation, will allow both sides of the story to be voiced. Ultimately, this will provide the ASA and BSCTA with a balanced perspective towards future policy development.

Please reply, using the enclosed response form and postage paid envelope, indicating whether your client accepts or decline this invitation to participate in this research. Alternatively, would you be willing to provide us with the necessary information to approach the prison directly for an interview with Mr. «Last_Name». If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Ms. Bringer (07941 193340).

Yours sincerely,
 Steve Boocock
 Director, CPSU
 NSPCC/SportEngland

My client, Mr «Last_Name»,

[Accepts] **[Declines]** *(Please circle appropriate option)*

the invitation to be interviewed for a research project.

If your client has accepted the invitation, please provide details below regarding how to best initiate contact with your client. Thank you.

4. Update Letter to Working Coaches

December 2000

Coach / Swimmer Research Study Update

Happy Holidays. I would like to thank all of the coaches who have already participated in focus group discussions as part of the research I am conducting with the endorsement of the BSCTA, ASA, and ISTC.

As you may remember, the intention is that this project will benefit the education and protection of swimmers and swimming coaches. Specifically, I am interested in listening to coaches' opinions about intimate and sexual coach-athlete relationships. I am particularly interested in coaches' experiences and perspectives because there is no research yet in this area. Sport specific information on coach-athlete intimate relationships is either anecdotal or from interviews with athletes. To be effective in protecting coaches, swimmers, and the reputation of swimming, I believe it is vital to listen to what coaches' have to say on the matter.

I am currently analysing a large amount of data from these focus groups and will soon be moving onto the second phase of the research project. For those of you who have already received a letter or phone call from myself or Brian McGuinness of the BSCTA, thank you for considering participating in this project. In the early spring I will be contacting some of you who have not yet had the opportunity to share your views and perspectives. At this time, I will be inviting coaches to participate in individual interviews. If you are particularly interested in speaking with me, please feel free to contact me at:

Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Education,
Leisure and Sport Research Unit,
Francis Close Hall,
Swindon Road,
Cheltenham, GLOS, GL50 4AZ,
tel. 07941 193340
or by email: jbringer@chelt.ac.uk

Best Wishes for the New Year,
Joy Bringer, MSc
PhD Candidate, Social Psychology of Sport

Appendix C. Correspondence to/from Research Ethics Sub-Committee*1. Email from Ethics Sub-Committee*

From: WOODWARD, Diana
Sent: 28 July, 1999 10:50
To: BRACKENRIDGE, Celia
Cc: BRINGER, Joy
Subject: FW: Ethics Committee

Dear Celia,

As you know, there was an ad hoc meeting last week comprising the Chair of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee plus one other member, to consider Joy Bringer's RD1, which you had asked it to consider. (We met as an ad hoc panel in order to provide a speedy response so that research students did not feel in limbo until the autumn term, awaiting a response.)

The panel could see a basis for ethical concern, which we invite Joy to consider carefully, about the potential mixing of coaches in the focus groups who **had** or **had not** perpetrated abuse, and about the potential for informants' anonymity to be breached and sensitive data subsequently disclosed about them (particularly by members of focus groups, who cannot be held to any confidentiality agreement about passing on information accrued in that context). We would urge Joy to be clear about the nature (and limitations) of any guarantees of confidentiality which she provides for informants. (These issues are covered in detail in the College's Ethics Handbook which is currently being produced.) The project therefore might raise issues about damage to participants' reputations and the researcher's responsibilities about holding guilty knowledge.

Since the focus groups seem to raise particular concerns, Joy might wish to consider whether their advantages outweigh these risks, and to justify them, as well as addressing the other concerns raised above, in a note attached to the RD1 which explains that it addresses issues raised by the Ethics panel. (This need not count against the word length.) In our experience, an added commentary/explanation of this sort can forestall comment later, by indicating that the issues have been carefully considered.

With good wishes,

Diana Woodward, on behalf of Mike McNamee (Chair)

2. Response to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee

This addendum to the RD1 addresses issues raised by the College Ethics Committee. After careful consideration of the potential limitations of conducting focus groups with this sensitive topic, I am still convinced that the benefits merit use of this research method. Focus groups are advocated as a particularly effective research method when trying to elicit attitudes about sensitive topics (Krueger, 1994; Zeller, 1993). My justification for examining attitudes is based on the supposition that attitudes are socially influenced and ultimately influence behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Focus groups are an ideal method for observing attitudes influenced by social norms (Albrecht et al., 1993). The specific concerns raised by the College Ethics Committee are addressed below.

1. *Concerns about potentially mixing coaches who have and have not perpetrated abuse in one focus group.*
 - a) Participants will be recruited from a pool of working coaches. It is conceivable that some of these coaches will have perpetrated abuse. On the one hand, this could be an excellent opportunity to understand the attitudes of abusive coaches. However, there is also the danger of other participants breaching confidentiality (see # 2 below) and/or condemning the abusive coaches based on limited information. Zeller (1993) provides a number of practical suggestions, which will be followed for this study, for conducting focus groups on sensitive topics. This advice is based on focus groups conducted with female teenagers discussing the topic of sexual decision making.
 - b) Additionally, I am currently corresponding with Dr. Kathy Rospenda who has provided me with practical advice based on her experience of conducting focus groups and interviews with victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment (Rospenda et al., 1998).

2. *Concerns about potential breach of confidentiality by group members.*
 - a) One advantage of focus groups is the rich, personal examples that participants bring to the discussion. To preserve anonymity and still allow for concrete examples, a list of alias names and sports will be provided for participants to use in their discussions.
 - b) A set of “discussion rules” will be presented at the beginning of each focus group.
 - c) In addition to a voluntary informed consent form, participants will be required to sign a confidentiality statement. (This option has been discussed with Philippa Giles, CGCHE Insurance and Contracts Officer; see attached email.)
 - d) Finally, participants will be discouraged from inappropriately disclosing personal information (Zeller, 1993).

3. *Concerns about “holding” guilty knowledge.*
 - a) Because I will be asking participants to use alias names and sports, I should not be privy to identifying details of child sexual abuse.
 - b) However, participants may come to realise during the focus group, that they are in position of guilty knowledge. Therefore, at the conclusion of the focus groups, I will provide each participant with a debriefing packet that will include the NSPCC definitions of child abuse, phone numbers for child abuse reporting, and phone numbers of local mental health counsellors.

3. Email with Legal Advice about Confidentiality in Focus Groups

From: GILES, Philippa
Sent: 19 August, 1999 11:19
To: BRINGER, Joy
Cc: BRACKENRIDGE, Celia; JOHNSTON, Lynne
Subject: Confidentiality in research

Dear Joy

There are a couple of issues here that I can help you with.

Anyone signing a statement (whether confidentiality or witness or other) is stating that they will be bound by their signature - this of course is a legal document. (If they should subsequently breach this agreement they would be at fault - not the College).

However, it would be very very costly to bring an action against a person who had breached such a condition - the College insurance only protects the College for any action brought against us - it does not cover the costs of suing somebody else.

If another coach felt that he/she had been 'defamed' (this can only occur if the allegation was not true!) by a coach's revelation within your focus group, then the liability would rest squarely with the one who had breached the confidentiality.

For a successful action to be brought against the College, the College would have to be found to be negligent. As all the possible procedures have been taken to protect people I do not feel that a claim would be successful against the College or yourself.

I hope this answers your query.

Philippa

Appendix D. Consent Forms, Confidentiality, Demographics

1. Coaches' Focus Group - Voluntary Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine sexual/intimate coach-athlete relationships. This study has the support of the BSCTA, ASA, and the ISTC. Joy Bringer, is conducting this study under the direction of her advisors, Professor Celia Brackenridge and Dr. Lynne Johnston. Joy is a Ph.D. student at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education in the Leisure and Sport Research Unit, and this study will be her thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you coach swimmers at either a developmental or elite level. YOUR SIGNATURE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE INDICATES THAT:

1. You consent to participate in this study.
2. You understand that:
 - You will be a participant in a focus group comprised of other swim coaches;
 - The focus group may cover topics of a sensitive nature and may remind you of personal experiences. If you feel uncomfortable, you may choose to take a break, or to not participate in any part of the discussion without penalty or pressure from the focus group leader;
 - Because of the nature of this study, there could be violations of your privacy. To prevent violations of your own or others' privacy, you have been asked not to talk about any of your own or others' private experiences that you would consider too personal or revealing;
 - You will be allowed to stop participating at any time without penalty; and
 - Choosing to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the sport governing body.
3. You understand that any disclosure of illegal behaviour may not be subject to confidentiality, and will be reported to the police or social services as appropriate.
4. You understand the focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. Do you give permission for anonymous sound clips to be used from this tape for academic presentations?
 Yes No
5. You understand the following procedures will be followed to ensure confidentiality:
 - The focus groups will be administered by Joy, NOT by a member of your governing body.
 - You have an obligation to respect the privacy of other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during the discussion;
 - All participants will be required to sign a legally binding statement of confidentiality;
 - Participants will be instructed to use alias names and sports when describing coach-athlete relationships;
 - Any information that might identify with your person will remain confidential; and
 - During transcription, names and identifying information will be replaced with aliases.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joy Bringer, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 4AZ, tel: (01242) 543311, jbringer@chelt.ac.uk Please keep the second copy of this form for future reference.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understand the information provided above, may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your participation without penalty, will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

2. Focus Group Statement of Confidentiality

As a participant in this focus group on sexual/intimate coach-athlete relationships, you are requested to sign a statement agreeing to maintain confidentiality. YOUR SIGNATURE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE INDICATES THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:

1. Any information shared by participants shall not be discussed outside of this focus group.
2. Names of participants in this focus group shall not be shared with anyone not attending today.
3. All participants will be required to sign this legally binding statement of confidentiality.
4. Failure to maintain confidentiality is a legal breach of this contract.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joy Bringer, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 4AZ, tel: (07941) 193340 or email jbringer@chelt.ac.uk Please keep the second copy of this form for future reference.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years old and agree to maintain confidentiality as outlined above.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

3. *Voluntary Informed Consent (Coach Interview)*

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine coach-athlete relationships. This study will be conducted by Ms. Joy Bringer, under the direction of her supervisors, Professor Celia Brackenridge and Dr. Lynne Johnston. Ms. Bringer is a Ph.D. student at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education in the Leisure and Sport Research Unit, and this study will be her thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your involvement in the sport of swimming. KINDLY READ THE FOLLOWING AND SIGN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, INDICATING THAT:

1. You consent to participate in this study.
2. You understand that:
 - You will be asked in an interview about your views, perspectives, and experiences about coach-athlete intimate relationships;
 - Sometimes talking about past experiences can make us feel uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable, you may take a break, or choose to withdraw from the interview without penalty or pressure from the interviewer;
 - Choosing to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the sport governing body; and
 - The results from this study will be used to help governing bodies develop and promote good practice; however, the researchers cannot guarantee that you will gain any direct benefit from participating in this research.
3. You understand that any disclosure of illegal behaviour may *not* be subject to confidentiality and will be reported to appropriate authorities.
4. You understand the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.
5. You understand the following procedures will be followed to ensure confidentiality:
 - The interviewer will be Ms. Bringer, NOT an employee of the ASA, ISCT, or BSCTA;
 - Any information that might identify you will be anonymised;
 - Data will be kept in a locked file and audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Joy Bringer, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, FCH, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 4AZ, tel: (07941) 193340. You may also contact her supervisors on (01242) 532971. Please keep the second copy of this form for future reference.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understand the information provided above, may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue

your participation without penalty, will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

4. *Voluntary Informed Consent (Convicted Coach Interview)*

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine coach-athlete relationships. This study will be conducted by Ms. Joy Bringer, under the direction of her supervisors, Professor Celia Brackenridge and Dr. Lynne Johnston. Ms. Bringer is a Ph.D. student at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education in the Leisure and Sport Research Unit, and this study will be her thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have been convicted for illegal activity with an athlete you coached. **KINDLY READ THE FOLLOWING AND SIGN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, INDICATING THAT:**

1. You consent to participate in this study.
2. You understand that:
 - You will be asked in an interview about your experiences in relation to your conviction including governing body responses to this;
 - Objective information surrounding your conviction will be verified;
 - Sometimes talking about past experience can make us feel uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable, you may take a break, or choose to withdraw from the interview without penalty or pressure from the interviewers;
 - Choosing to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the sport governing body;
 - Choosing to participate or not will have no effect on probation decisions; and
 - The results from this study will be used to help governing bodies develop and promote good practice; however, the researchers cannot guarantee that you will gain any direct benefit from participating in this research.
3. You understand that any disclosure of illegal behaviour that you have not already been prosecuted for may *not* be subject to confidentiality and will be reported to appropriate authorities.
4. You understand the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.
5. You understand the following procedures will be followed to ensure confidentiality:
 - The interviewer will be Ms. Bringer and one of her colleagues, NOT a member of the probation service, or anyone employed by the ASA, or BSCTA;
 - Any information that might identify you will be anonymised;
 - Data will be kept in a locked file and audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Joy Bringer, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 4AZ, tel: (07941) 193340. You may also contact her supervisors on (01242) 532971. Please keep the second copy of this form for future reference.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understand the information provided above, may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your participation without penalty, will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

5. Background Information (Demographic Questionnaire)

The following information will help me fully describe who you are as a group of coaches. Your individual responses will be confidential.

(Please tick where applicable)

1. MALE FEMALE

2. Birthdate: Month _____ Year _____

3. What is your ethnic background?

<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Black (Caribbean)
<input type="checkbox"/> Black (UK)	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> White (UK)	<input type="checkbox"/> Euro-National
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Information Declined		

4. What is your **highest** level of education completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> some school	<input type="checkbox"/> HNC/HND/NVQ	<input type="checkbox"/> some post-graduate
<input type="checkbox"/> GCSE's	<input type="checkbox"/> some Uni.	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> A Levels or equiv.	<input type="checkbox"/> BA/BSc degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____

5. What is your marital/relationship status?

<input type="checkbox"/> single	<input type="checkbox"/> living with partner/spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
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6. Do you have children? yes no

7. What sports do you coach in addition to swimming?

<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming Only	Other Sports: _____
--	---------------------

8. How long have you been coaching swimming? _____ years

9. How would you describe your coaching status?

<input type="checkbox"/> full-time, paid	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time, paid	<input type="checkbox"/> voluntary
--	--	------------------------------------

10. Please tick the organisation(s) that you are currently a member of, and which district(s) you coach in:

<input type="checkbox"/> ASA	<input type="checkbox"/> ASFGB	<input type="checkbox"/> BSCTA	<input type="checkbox"/> ISTC	<input type="checkbox"/> S. ASA	<input type="checkbox"/> W. ASA
<input type="checkbox"/> Midland District	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Counties	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Counties			
<input type="checkbox"/> North-Eastern Counties	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Counties				

11. Please tick the coaching qualifications that you hold for this year:

- Lane Coach Coach ASA Senior Coach
 Club Coach Masters Module Other _____

12. Have you ever received training in Child Protection? Yes No
 If yes, through which agency?

- NCF workshop Home study pack
 NSPCC workshop ISTC workshop
 Other _____

13. Are you aware that the ASA has a Child Protection Policy? Yes No

14. Have you skimmed/read the ASA's Child Protection Policy? Yes No

15. Approximately how many male and female swimmers do you coach right now?

UNDER 16 YEARS OLD

of MALE swimmers (U16) = _____ # of FEMALE swimmers(U16) = _

16 YEARS AND OLDER

of MALE swimmers (16+) = _____ # of FEMALE swimmers(16+) = _

16. What is the age range of swimmers that you coach right now? _____

17. Approximately how many swimmers do you coach at each level right now?
 (don't count a swimmer in more than one category)

Interclub _____ County _____ District _____

National _____ International _____ Olympic _____

18. On average, how many hours a week do you spend coaching:

Time spent with swimmers (e.g., training/competition coaching) _____hrs/week

Time spent preparing/planning _____ hrs/week

19. What is your main occupation? _____

Thank you!



Appendix E. Debrief Statement

NSPCC & NCF Define Sexual Abuse as: occurring when adults (male or female) use boys or girls to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling,
- showing children pornographic books, photographs, or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.

Sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g., supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

The Home Office recommends that a relationship of trust (e.g., sport coaching) should be ended before any sexual relationship is developed with a young person of 16 or 17 years old.¹

The Sexual Exploitation Continuum²

SEX DISCRIMINATION	SEXUAL HARASSMENT	SEXUAL ABUSE
I N S T I T U T I O N A L		P E R S O N A L
<i>"the chilly climate"</i>	<i>"unwanted attention"</i>	<i>"groomed or coerced"</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vertical & horizontal job segregation - lack of harassment policy and/or officer or reporting channels - lack of counselling or mentoring systems - differential pay or rewards or promotion prospects on the basis of sex - poorly/unsafely designed or lit venues - absence of security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - written or verbal abuse or threats - sexually oriented comments, jokes, lewd comments or sexual innuendoes, taunts about body, dress, marital situation or sexuality - ridiculing of performance - sexual or homophobic graffiti - practical jokes based on sex - intimidating sexual remarks, propositions, invitations or familiarity - domination of meetings, play space or equipment - condescending or patronising behaviour undermining self-respect or work performance - physical contact, fondling, pinching or kissing - vandalism on the basis of sex - offensive phone calls or photos - stalking - bullying based on sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exchange of reward or privilege for sexual favours - groping - indecent exposure - forced sexual activity - sexual assault - anal or vaginal penetration, by penis, fingers or objects - physical/sexual violence - incest - rape

Contact Numbers for Further Training and Support

- National Coaching Foundation Workshops 0845 601 3054
- ASA Customer Services 01509 618 719
- British Swim Coaches and Teachers Association 0121 550 4888
- ISTC 01509 264357
- British Association for Counselling 01788 578328
- NSPCC 0800 800 500 (24 hr help line - for abused, concerns about abuse, or referrals for offenders)
- ChildLine 0800 1111 (Free national helpline for children and young people (up to 18) in danger or distress.
- SwimLine 0808 100 4001 (Free help line - for those concerned about the welfare of child swimmers)

¹ The Home Office (1999). *Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? A Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust*. For further information contact Mr. Matthew Foote: 0171 217 8559, Home Office, Voluntary Organisations: Active Community Unit.

² Brackenridge, C. H. (1997) In G Clarke, & B Humberstone (eds.) Researching Women in Sport. Macmillan, London: 129.

Appendix F. Mandated Reporting

Before entering into research which has the potential to reveal abusive relationships, ethical issues must be considered. The primary issue to be considered in this study is what action would be taken if information was revealed which indicated a child was in danger of sexual abuse from a coach in the study. Secondly, coaches in this study could have named and accused a coach not present in the study. The issue of mandated reporting is complicated because it results in a breach of researcher confidentiality. Arguments advocating and contradicting mandated reporting for researchers are examined here. Some examples are provided from the United States, because there is an extensive review of these issues in academic literature from there.

The main benefit of reporting abuse is the potential for reducing the risk to any children involved. The benefits of mandated reporting, however, are not as clear as they may first appear. Potential risks include the consequences of unfounded allegations, reducing co-operation of an abuser already in treatment, and an overloaded social services system.

Under the Children Act (Department of Health, 1989) in England and Wales, “local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their areas who are in need” (Baginsky, 2001, p. 8). The Act also makes it a statutory duty for Local Authority Social Services Departments to investigate all reports of child abuse. In the United States, failure of mandated reporters to report suspected abuse is a Class B misdemeanour under United States’ federal law. One benefit of the law is that it protects mandated reporters from any lawsuits resulting from unfounded allegations. There is, however, confusion about which professionals are covered by the law as the definition of mandated reporters varies from state to state. Furthermore, whilst psychologists and teachers are specifically named as mandated reporters, researchers are not. Yet, many American university ethics review boards interpret the mandate to include researchers. The university requirement may not necessarily exempt researchers from liability in

lawsuits arising from unfounded allegations, although it is likely that liability would lie with the university.

In the United States, Certificates of Confidentiality, which restrict research data from being subpoenaed by the courts, can be obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services when researchers are investigating sensitive issues such as information about sexual attitudes, preferences or practices, the use of addictive substances, illegal conduct, or an individual's psychological status. It is unclear whether this certificate also protects the researcher from divulging knowledge or suspicions of child abuse. As of 1999, there had not yet been cases to legally test this exemption (Steinberg, Pynoos, Goenjian, Sossanabadi, & Sherr, 1999). Some human research review boards state that, whilst a Certificate of Confidentiality may protect a researcher from disclosing child abuse, it does not supersede the ethical issue of reporting to protect victims of abuse. Following this recommendation, it is ethical to inform research participants of the researcher's obligation to report suspected abuse.

One of the struggles with mandated reporting is that the definition for what is deemed necessary for reporting is ambiguous. Furthermore, there is disagreement between therapists and child protection workers on what is reportable (Deisz, Doueck, & George, 1996; Finkelhor & Zellman, 1991; Zellman, 1990). The main reasons for this schism seem to lie in the professional remit of the two occupational roles. That is, whilst therapists, covered by mandated reporting laws, must report suspicion of child abuse, child protection workers must investigate the reports. Therefore, the child protection worker must be able to collect legal evidence to substantiate a report. In England and Wales, where social workers are required to investigate *every* report of suspected abuse (Department of Health, 1989), it is easy to understand how social services have become overwhelmed with child abuse investigations. With practical experience in what is necessary in order to substantiate a report, child protection workers are going to be less likely to report abuse when there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the report or when evidence would not be readily obtainable with an investigation (Deisz et al., 1996).

Therapists, on the other hand, are less concerned with the ability to substantiate and are heavily influenced by complying with laws requiring them to

report suspected abuse. Therapists are more likely than child protection workers to report suspected abuse in the absence of evidence. For example, a therapist might report a parent's noncompliance with treatment as a *potential* threat to the well-being of a child (Deisz et al., 1996), whereas a child protection worker would only report this situation if clear evidence indicated that abuse was occurring.

Definitional ambiguity and professional judgement are reflected in the statistic reported by Finkelhor and Zellman (1991) that up to 40% of mandated reporters have violated reporting laws at least once. It is important to note that the majority of these professionals are not "non-reporters" but are discretionary reporters, that is, they report most of the time but occasionally choose not to (Zellman, 1990). Thus, Finkelhor and Zellman (1991) recommend flexible reporting laws for qualified professionals, who could base mandated reports on the threat of imminent danger to a child. The benefits of flexible reporting would increase compliance with the law, decrease the burden on overworked child protection workers who must investigate allegations, allow professionals to continue working with offenders in treatment, and reduce danger to children who would be in greater danger if the abuse was reported (Finkelhor & Zellman, 1991). Whilst flexible reporting may be an ethical option to explore for clinical professionals, it does not necessarily address reporting by researchers.

Researchers are still debating the ethics of mandated reporting. Scientific importance, respect for autonomy, justice, beneficence, and nonmaleficence, are some of the key issues facing researchers deciding whether or not to report abuse revealed during research (King & Churchill, 2000; Kotch, 2000). Nonmaleficence is a state of not being hurtful or criminal, whilst beneficence is the state of doing good, being generous, or actively kind. Runyan (2000) asserts that nonmaleficence must have priority over beneficence. That is, ethically, it is more sound to not harm someone by attempting to "fix" an abusive relationship, than it is to intervene and potentially save someone from further abuse.

Calculating the amount of risk involved for all parties is as feasible as predicting the winner of the lottery. Yet, researchers must seriously consider the consequences to the research, the accused and the child when reporting suspected abuse. For example, in one longitudinal study of child abuse and maltreatment, the

confidentiality of the data was deemed superior to reporting suspected maltreatment based on child self-reports of maltreatment (Kotch, 2000). This controversial decision, however, was not made without first examining issues of justice, autonomy, and beneficence.

Steinberg et al. (1999) recommended that researchers report abuse when there is enough information from the data collection to support reasonable suspicion of child abuse. This recommendation was made with the acknowledgement that research methods range from anonymous questionnaires to in-depth clinical interviews. The types of research will obviously influence the level of information available with which to assess possible instances of child abuse. Definitions for reporting often are ambiguous; thus, Steinberg et al. (1999) also recommend that researchers adhere to mandatory reporting by institutional policies which could provide training and consultation, rather than professional associations. Furthermore, it was recommended that principal investigators have a policy in place to monitor information leading to suspected abuse, rather than situating reporting responsibilities with junior researchers (Steinberg et al., 1999). Finally, Steinberg et al. (1999) recommended that researchers in the United States are added to the list of mandated reporters so that they are protected by law from liability arising from unfounded accusations. The decisions I made about reporting abuse are discussed in chapter 5.

Appendix G. Focus Group Discussion Rules

Privacy

- To maintain the privacy of yourself and others not present here, please use alias names and sports when describing specific situations.
- Do not discuss private experiences that you would consider too personal or revealing.
- Remember that what is discussed in the focus group is to remain confidential.

Respect

- Please do not “speak over” someone else.
- Whilst everyone is encouraged to give their opinion, no one shall be forced to speak.
- Challenge opinions, not people.

Appendix H. Pilot Focus Groups

Three pilot focus group sessions were conducted with the following aims: to find a suitable design for the structure of the groups, to find an appropriate way to start the discussion, and to test recording equipment. After each pilot test, I recorded my thoughts on the organisation, content, and group dynamics of the focus group. I also reflected on possible changes for the next focus group.

Pilot Focus Group # 1.

Four coaches, who were also research students, agreed to attend this first pilot focus group in a university meeting room. This focus group is discussed in relation to the physical set-up of the room, the focus group content, and group dynamics.

Upon reflection, I decided to make three changes in the physical set-up of future focus group rooms. First, I had removed the table under the assumption that it would be beneficial to remove physical barriers. This meant that I had to put the microphone on an upside down rubbish bin in the middle of the group. Not only did this look awkward, but it also contributed to a poor recording. Secondly, people are accustomed to meeting around a table, and thus I felt a little uncomfortable without one. Thirdly, one participant did not arrive resulting in an extra chair that increased the distance between the participants and myself. Upon reflection, I could have kept the table, placed the microphone on the table, and removed any unnecessary chairs.

One of the main reasons for conducting the focus groups was to determine an appropriate way for starting and focusing the discussion without asking any leading questions. After asking the coaches to introduce themselves and the sport they coached, I introduced the topic with a statement about how there has been considerable discussion in sport since the Hickson case about what should be appropriate and inappropriate coaching behaviours. I then asked them how they would define sexual abuse in sport. They responded first with silence and acknowledged that it was a difficult open question. The conversation very quickly focused on instruction related touching. After about ten minutes of discussion, I

refocused it by asking if they knew of or had read about romantic coach/athlete relationships. After several frivolous responses I gave an example of a particular relationship between a 20-year old athlete and a 29-year old coach. This opened up more debates, and one coach even recounted a situation when he had to dismiss an employee for pursuing a relationship with an athlete of the same age. The participants discussed themes of age, maturity, and power. Finally, the content of the focus progressed towards defining elements of appropriate and inappropriate relationships.

The third main element of the focus group that I was interested in observing was any obstacles in communication related to background variables. Age, coaching level (e.g., coach of novice performers versus an Olympic coach) and occupational hierarchical relationships were background variables which had the potential to influence group dynamics. Researchers (Rospenda et al., 1998) examining sexual harassment in the workplace separated groups according to sex and occupational power structure. Rospenda felt that the separation facilitated group discussion on sensitive topic such as sexual harassment (K. M. Rospenda, personal communication, 26 August, 1999).

This pilot study included coaches ranging from 22 to 51 years of age with varying amounts of coaching experience. Although the coaches appeared to be contributing evenly and openly, one coach commented afterward that he felt intimidated by the coaches who had many more years experience than himself. It was this comment combined with advice from the ASA and BSCTA that influenced my decision to separate the swimming focus groups according to coaching level. This also influenced my decision to use a written demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D), rather than having the coaches announce their coaching level and number of years experience to the group. Some members may already know each others' coaching positions and experience, however through the use of a written demographics questionnaire members will not be openly reminded of member differences. This was designed to reduce the likelihood of people falsely agreeing with a superior.

I partially transcribed the first focus group to test the efficiency of voice recognition software. My typing speed was twice as fast as the voice recognition

software; therefore I decided to transcribe all of the transcripts without the use of specialist software.

Pilot Test # 2

The second pilot test was conducted to test the demographic questionnaire and to experiment with a different start to the discussion. Five coaches from a single sport participated in the focus group. The written demographics questionnaire was used for this pilot focus group and seemed to accomplish the goal of not focusing the participants' attention to member differences. Despite a wide range of coaching experience (from 1 year to 25 years), even the less experienced coaches freely expressed divergent opinions. The group also included coaches ranging in age from 19 to 55 years but this did not seem to inhibit group discussion.

In the previous pilot test my decision to ask coaches at the beginning of the focus group how they defined sexual abuse seemed to stifle the conversation. It was too direct and too open a question for an abstract concept. I opened the second pilot test by asking the coaches to disclose what motivated them to start coaching. Next, I asked them to discuss how they saw their role as a coach. Then, I asked them what came to mind when they heard the words "athlete protection, or child protection." This question started to bring in more of the ideas I was interested in, but it took about 30 minutes to reach this point. I needed to design a method to focus the group quickly, without stifling the conversation, or introducing bias. After reflecting upon the second pilot test, I decided to try to use vignettes, or short scenarios, to get coaches discussing the issues openly. This method would enable the coaches to talk about specific examples of coach/athlete relationships and to discuss what made a relationship appropriate or inappropriate. Using concrete third-person examples of relationships would also provide them with "safe" examples as opposed to feeling pressured to disclose their own experiences.

I was also interested in whether or not the fact that coaches knew each other would affect the level of discussion. These coaches all knew each other, coached in

the same region, and often at the same location. This did not seem to inhibit the conversation, as there were still many divergent views expressed.

Pilot Test # 3

I searched through media reports of abuse in swimming for real examples that I could anonymise and amalgamate for the vignettes. I created 7 scenarios each of one or two sentences in length and printed them on large index cards (see Appendix K). The third pilot test was conducted with a group of 15 coaches attending a child protection workshop. I split the coaches into three groups of five and asked each group to sort the scenarios from least appropriate to most appropriate. I circulated the room to observe the discussions. I was less interested in the ordering of the cards than I was in the discussion. However, by asking them to order the scenarios that were sufficiently vague, the coaches were forced into discussing the underlying factors influencing their ratings. Using vignettes proved to be a very successful way of focusing the conversation and eliciting constructions of appropriateness within a very short time period.

Summary

The three pilot tests allowed me to test recording methods, the structure of the groups, and methods for focusing the discussion. Based on the pilot tests, I created a demographic questionnaire, decided to separate groups by competition level, and created vignettes as a way of starting the focus groups without introducing bias.

Appendix I. Examining Different Focus Group Methods

The appendix provides a review of the origins of focus groups and three options for structuring focus groups: brainstorming, Delphi technique, and nominal group technique. It was important for this thesis to find a structure that matched the epistemological underpinnings of the constructivist revision of Grounded Theory. To meet the criterion of allowing the participants' concerns to focus the research question, I was searching for a focus group method that was not too directive, nor too unstructured. Three pilot test focus groups (see Appendix H) were conducted to explore different approaches to focusing the discussion without leading the discussion. The third and most successful test used vignettes to initiate discussions about appropriateness. The use of vignettes in research more generally, and with focus groups specifically, is discussed after this review of focus group techniques.

Broadly defined, a focus group is an organised meeting of a small group of participants brought together with a skilled moderator, in a comfortable environment, to discuss a specific topic (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups, from their first mention in the social sciences in the 1940s and through the 1980s, were used mainly as a tool within market research (Madriz, 2000). In the 1980s, and more so in the 1990s, more social scientists began to use focus groups as a method for data collection (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Feminists found this method especially beneficial for its potential to shift the power balance from researcher to participants (Wilkinson, 1998, 1999).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) suggests that attitudes and behaviours are significantly influenced by social norms. Writing on the utility of focus groups, Albrecht, Johnson, and Walther (1993, p. 54) suggested that, "opinions about a variety of issues are generally determined not by individual information gathering and deliberation but through communication with others." That is, people form their own opinions according to others and, furthermore, may base decisions to act according to expected social reactions. Therefore, it was deemed important to incorporate social behaviour into the research method. The focus group is one such method that allows for group discussion and offers the

potential to enhance current understanding of coaches' attitudes about intimate/sexual coach-athlete relationships and how these attitudes are influenced.

Focus groups were selected as the method for data collection because they are an effective way of gathering information which includes a mix of complex attitudes, behaviours, and past experiences (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). It might seem that focus groups are not suitable for the exploration of sensitive topics; rather, if conducted properly, focus groups can be beneficial for investigating sensitive issues (Zeller, 1993). In fact, numerous studies have used focus groups to examine sensitive topics, such as sexual intercourse decisions amongst teenage females (Zeller, 1993), sexual harassment in the workplace (Rospenda et al., 1998), definitions of sexual assault (Leonard, 1999), and facilitators and barriers to adult prevention of child sexual abuse (Chasan-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999).

Because focus groups have only more recently become accepted as a method for scientific inquiry, many of the manuals and instructions for how to conduct focus groups are based on personal experience rather than controlled scientific experimentation. This is not necessarily a limitation though. The type of controlled experimentation traditionally relied upon to ascertain the effect of mixed ages, genders, ethnic groups, races, socio-economic groups as well as power differentials between and amongst the researcher and participants is often what researchers are trying to avoid by employing focus groups. The effect that gender, race or other variables might have on a focus group discussion is likely to vary by topic. Thus, any attempt to set "rules" for conducting focus groups may not generalise to a wide range of topics.

In an effort to increase scientific knowledge about the effects of focus groups on opinions, a group of researchers conducted an empirical study (Dolan, Cookson, & Ferguson, 1999) examining public opinion about prioritising patient care (e.g., who should be treated first). Sixty participants distributed across 10 focus groups, which met twice, completed a questionnaire before the first discussion and after the second discussion. The researchers concluded that discussion and deliberation of the topic resulted in a greater understanding for the complexity of the issues. Overall, this study demonstrated that focus groups encourage well thought through responses, rather than reflexive responses which are often

generated by questionnaires which encourage “the first answer that comes to your mind.”

Whilst the study conducted by Dolan and colleagues (1999) was a reasonable attempt to examine the effect of focus groups it is not without limitations. The change in participant opinion cannot reliably be accredited to focus group discussion as there was no control group. The questionnaire may not have test-retest reliability in the absence of focus groups. Furthermore, the researchers do not justify, or even discuss, the decision to have participants meet twice. Opinions may have been sufficiently altered after the first focus group. Finally, the change of opinion may be attributed to a prioritising task that occurred in the second meeting, rather than merely the discussion of issues. The structure of the focus group meeting may have been more important in changing opinion than the meeting itself.

Because of the empirical difficulties in establishing steadfast “rules” for focus groups, focus group manuals and articles generally focus on guidelines (e.g., Kitzinger, 1999; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1998; Morgan & Krueger, 1993). Issues that were considered when planning the focus groups for the current study are outlined in Table AI.1. These are grouped into participant variables, researcher variables, environmental variables, and structure of the focus group discussion.

Table AI.1 Issues to Consider When Planning Focus Groups

Participant variables:	age range, gender, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, role (work, family, etc.), familiarity with the topic, number of participants, participant availability, recruitment strategies, etc.
Researcher variables:	homogeneity with important participant demographics, power relationship with participants, familiarity with participants, facilitation/moderation skills, etc.
Environmental variables:	location, timing (e.g., before or after a pre-existing meeting), interruptions, refreshments, recording devices, etc.
Discussion structure:	introduction, rapport building (ice-breaker), topic, researcher’s role, type of questioning (ranging from highly structured with specific questions, semi-structured with an interview guide, to participant driven), etc.

This discussion will focus mainly on the structure of the focus group, as consideration for participant, researcher, and environmental variables are discussed in chapter 5. Aside from suggesting a short introductory period for rapport building, little is mentioned in the literature about the structure of focus groups beyond describing advantages and disadvantages of a very structured interview schedule with pre-selected questions versus a less structured interview guide with a list of key concepts and prompts. Even in a chapter dedicated to focus groups (Madriz, 2000) in the *Handbook for Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000c), the only mention of structure reflects on the interview guide.

The structure of focus groups is examined through Fontana and Frey's (2000) categorisation of the different types of group interviews based on four dimensions: setting, role of interviewer, question format, and purpose. Focus groups are described as formal, with a directive interviewer, structured questions, and aimed at exploratory or pilot research. Brainstorming, an exploratory technique, can either be formal or informal, with the researcher in a non-directive role yet maintaining the focus of the group often through very structured questions. Nominal group technique and Delphi technique, as discussed below, are classed together as formal, with a directive interviewer style, and structured questioning aimed at pre-testing or exploring ideas. Natural fieldwork occurs in an informal or spontaneous environment, with a moderately to non-directive interviewer, but with very structured questions to gather information for an exploratory or phenomenological study. Finally, formal fieldwork occurs in a prearranged field setting, requires a somewhat directive interviewer asking semi-structured questions within the paradigm of phenomenological research.

Before deciding on the structure for the focus groups in this study, several methods for initiating a focused discussion on exploratory topics were reviewed. The aim was to find a focus group method that would be exploratory, not prescriptive, and would encourage participants to stay focused on the topic of appropriate and inappropriate intimate relationships between coaches and athletes. These methods reviewed included the nominal group technique, the Delphi technique, and vignettes as an ice-breaker. A brief overview of these methods is now presented.

The Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique, named for the interpretation and foresight skills of the Delphi oracles, is a procedure for contacting and eliciting expert opinions in an area of research interest (Flink, Kosecoff, Chassin, & Brook, 1984; J. Jones & Hunter, 1999). The main goal of the Delphi technique is to refine opinions, thus there is an emphasis on developing consensus. This research method is beneficial in areas of research where empirical evidence is sparse or conflicting.

The Delphi technique is often conducted by mail thus facilitating participation by a group of geographically distant participants as well as allowing for inter-participant anonymity. Generally, the method includes three steps or rounds. In the first round, responses are sought to broad questions. If the Delphi technique had been used in my study, the first round might have asked broad questions about perceptions, identification, and factors influencing decisions of appropriateness. In the second round, the coaches would have received a summary list of everyone else's statements which would then be rated in terms of agreement and importance. These scores would be collated, ranked by percentage and returned to the participants. In the third round, the coaches would re-rate the statements with knowledge of the group norm. One advantage of this method is that responses can become less broad and more discriminating over the three rounds, suggesting deeper cognitive analysis by the participants (Stephens, 2000). Yet, if the purpose of the research is not to achieve group consensus, then this method is not the most appropriate. In summary, the Delphi technique was not selected for this thesis because it does not fit with the Grounded Theory aim of developing grounded theory in a substantive area.

Nominal Group Technique

Similar to the Delphi technique, nominal group technique is designed to gather expert opinions from group members. This process, however, tends to be organised to allow participants direct interaction with each other, rather than anonymous participation, over a delayed time period. This technique has been

useful for moving towards concrete definitions of ambiguous topics (Sumsion, 2000) and for selecting high priority research agendas (Vella, Goldfrad, Rowan, Bion, & Black, 2000).

The nominal group technique is a type of focus group meeting, generally with 9 to 12 members, which is highly structured (J. Jones & Hunter, 1999). If this had been selected for the current study, coaches would have been introduced to the research topic, and then asked to silently brainstorm circumstances that influence decisions of appropriateness with regard to coach/athlete intimate relationships. Next, I would have asked each participant to name one item off their idea list. This would continue with one coach contributing one item, until all items had been listed. From this brainstormed list, participants would discuss, clarify, defend, and dispute the items. After a short break, participants would individually prioritise the items along an established continuum (e.g., from “most important” to “least important”). These rankings would be collated, discussed, and then as a group, voted upon. As a final stage after the focus group, the coaches would be asked to re-rate the priorities.

How does this technique compare with other methods of establishing group norms? In a study comparing the priority rankings of medical research topics between nominal group participants and those individually completing a larger scale survey, researchers (Vella et al., 2000) found that the two methods were moderately correlated ($r = 0.73, p = <.01$). Furthermore, the overall order of the rankings was very similar between the two groups. Even though the nominal group participants were not instructed to come to a consensus, after deliberation the group increased in agreement. Interestingly, individual responses became more polarised, moving from “moderate support” of a research topic towards either “strong support” or “no support.” With discussion, the individuals in the group thus became more definite about their answers. Overall, the researchers (Vella et al., 2000) advocated the use of nominal group technique, stating that at an estimated cost of running one nominal group with 10 physicians, and 2 nurses (£5000 plus £5000 for the time of the clinical participants) is a cost effective research tool. Unfortunately, the researchers did not state the cost of their comparative survey which was mailed to 313 intensive care units with 244 responses returned and analysed. Cost, however, was not the

deciding factor in excluding the nominal group technique from my list of possible methods. This technique, as with the Delphi technique, is ideal for creating group consensus but not for illustrating a broad range of perspectives, including the under-represented but relevant minority voice. Again, this technique did not meet the aims and objectives of Grounded Theory.

A strength of both the Delphi and the nominal group techniques is that participants' views are initially produced independently thus reducing the opportunity to be influenced by others in the group or the researcher. Whilst this may reduce groupthink (MacDougall & Baum, 1997) it does not necessarily reduce socially desirable responses. Participants may very well be influenced by the presence of their peers, or the knowledge that their peers will read or hear all responses. Identification may be especially prevalent in mixed hierarchical group, as the lower status members may feel professionally obliged to conform to their higher order peers (Albrecht et al., 1993). Socially desirable responses are perhaps less likely in the Delphi technique compared with the nominal group technique as the Delphi technique can maintain participant anonymity. One variant on the nominal group technique, to increase respondent anonymity, would be for the facilitator to read the responses.

The choice of which technique to use depends on the desired outcome. Jones and Hunter (1999) suggest that the Delphi technique is more suited to eliciting opinions where no empirical evidence exists, whereas nominal group technique is more suited for establishing professional opinions where empirical scientific evidence is conflicting and experts will benefit from debating the relevant issues. In some instances, it may be beneficial to employ both techniques. For example, Sumsion (2000) first used the Delphi technique followed by the nominal group technique in a project aimed at creating a British definition of client-centred practice in British Occupational Therapy. Neither technique was selected for the current study because developing group consensus was not the objective of the thesis. After pilot testing with vignettes, it was decided that they would be used to focus the group discussion. (Details of the vignettes used in this study are presented in chapter 5.)

Designing Vignettes

The following guidance was heeded in the development of the vignettes for the current study. The design of vignettes should facilitate, not detract from, addressing the research question. Vignettes should be plausible and real (Barter & Renold, 1999). It is suggested that eccentric characters or disastrous events be avoided as topics for vignettes, yet unusual, controversial stories may reduce respondents' inhibitions about responding (Barter & Renold, 1999). The vignettes should be specific enough to communicate context yet vague enough to encourage "it depends" discussions.

Vignettes may be in written, audio, video, photographic, computer, or musical form. The form, however, should be appropriate for the intended audience and research question. If the research question involves group comparisons, it is useful to have a control vignette. For instance, in a study examining sexually abused and non-abused children's perceptions about body safety, one item depicted a traffic accident (Miller-Perrin, Wurtele, & Kondrick, 1990). Significant differences were found in the children's perceptions of personal space but both groups rated the traffic accident similarly. Vignettes should be easily understood and changes to context should be limited to no more than three, as more changes can strain memory stores and increase the complexity of the vignette (Barter & Renold, 1999). Finally, socially desirable responses can be overcome by asking participants how they think the character in the vignette would feel, think, or act, and why (Barter & Renold, 1999).

Whilst vignettes are a creative way for eliciting opinions, it must be remembered that opinions do not translate into action. That is, just because someone *says* they would act in a certain way given the vignette situation, this does not translate into how they might respond in reality (Barter & Renold, 1999). The relationship between responses to vignettes and real life behaviour is an area requiring research.

Combining Vignettes and Focus Groups

Similar to the prioritising that occurs in nominal group and Delphi techniques, another technique for initiating focus group discussions is to ask participants to sort or categorise ideas or scenarios. Card sorts, where words, ideas, or pictures are placed on separate cards and participants are asked to sort them, often in self determined, categories has been used successfully in individual interviews when the goal is to examine underlying conceptual systems (Canter, Brown, & Groat, 1985). Card sorts allow for subjective and personal meaning to be examined. Similar to card sorts, another way of initiating a rich discussion in focus groups is to present the group with vignettes, or brief scenarios, which participants might rate or rank on some criteria (Barter & Renold, 1999, 2000; Kitzinger, 1999; Leonard, 1999). Unfortunately, there is little empirical research on the use of these methods in focus groups, but what is known about the use of vignettes in focus groups is examined here.

Although vignettes are often used as an exercise to encourage participants to start talking during focus groups, there is little written about how to use them in focus groups (Barter & Renold, 1999). Jenny Kitzinger's (1999) chapter on focus groups in health care is one of the few instructional texts that discusses vignettes in focus groups. The pilot test that I conducted with vignettes confirmed Kitzinger's recommendation that statements on cards are an effective means for encouraging participants to focus on interacting with each other rather than with the facilitator. Generally, participants are encouraged as a group to rate the cards in a specified way, thus requiring participants to explain or justify their differing perspectives to each other. Ultimately, the discussion becomes more important than the final layout of the cards. An alternative to having participants rank vignettes at the beginning of the focus group is to record statements that arise from the focus group throughout the meeting onto cards. As a summary technique, participants can be asked to sort these statements (Kitzinger, 1999).

Appendix J. Quality Assurance Questionnaire

FEEDBACK

Thank you for participating in this research project.

It is important to the researcher, ASA, ISTC, and BSCTA that this research is conducted in a professional manner; therefore, could you please take a moment to comment on the following:

5. How satisfied are you with the way you were approached for this study?

Not Satisfied			Moderately Satisfied					Very Satisfied		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

6. How satisfied are you with the way the focus group was conducted?

Not Satisfied			Moderately Satisfied					Very Satisfied		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

7. **If you have any anything else you want to add that you did not discuss in the focus group, please feel free to comment here** (all comments will be kept anonymous):

Appendix K. Vignettes Used in Focus Groups

Drive home

Simon sometimes drives several of the swimmers home after training. He is becoming friends with one swimmer, Adi, who is more mature than the others. He drops Adi off last, and they often sit in front of Adi's house talking about swimming, politics, religion, etc.

Attracted to swimmers

Tim has been coaching swimming for many years. Sometimes he finds himself attracted to a swimmer. He says "maybe it's infatuation, but at the end of the day, I keep it to myself."

Moving in

After swimming for Max for 4 years, Chris was very attracted to Max. Upon retirement from competitive swimming, Chris agreed to "see" Max outside of swimming. Within a month, they were living together.

Flirtatious swimmer

Pat felt that the coach might be interested in more than a coaching relationship. Pat isn't interested in anything romantic, but often flirts with the coach, knowing that the coach's interest might result in more attention during training.

Marriage

Trevor kept a sexual relationship with one of his swimmers secret. When the club found out, he was asked to resign, but half of the parents were keen for him to stay. He went on to have a sexual relationship with another swimmer whom he married. They had 2 children before divorcing 4 years later.

Rationalising “It’s Love”

Explaining his sexual relationship with an under-aged swimmer, one coach said, “When you have someone you spend hundreds of hours with, when they give you blood, sweat, tears, their lives, you become close. You become attached to them. I think that’s human nature, and I don’t think it has anything to do with being fifty or being fifteen. It’s human nature to love someone who gives themselves to you” (Burton Nelson, 1994, p. 182).

Sexual misconduct conviction

After coaching a number of swimmers to elite standards, Mark pleaded guilty to an accusation of sexual misconduct with an underaged swimmer from 12 years earlier. In addition to a prison sentence, Mark was banned from NGB funding and endorsements.

Appendix L. Focus Group Prompts

Prompts	Themes (notes for self)
What was your reaction?	flirt
How did it make you feel?	age
How would you explain this?	gender
What do you base your decisions on?	
Can you think of any other reasons?	
Can you elaborate?	
Can you give an example?	
What are the issues?	
What do other people think?	
Have other people experienced this?	
What are other people's perspectives on this issue?	
Can you summarise the important issues?	power
	trust
When does it cross the line?	SH
How do you differentiate?	
Under what circumstances?	SA
Can you tell me more?	
What do you mean?	
What are your concerns?	fear
Which is most important?	
What can coaches do?	
What makes a good coaching relationship?	
How do your swimmers interact with you?	
If one thing could be done to reduce SA in sport, what would you choose and why?	
swimline	

Summarise - to summarise where would you draw the line between a s.a. relationship and a non abusive relationship?

-What are the most important points?

Debrief

Appendix M. Transcription Guide

Header to include:

Focus Group Code Number:

Day, Date:

Location:

Occasion:

Members- location of seat to me Alias name (description of voice)

Joy - in blue font and bold (then for emphasised words - type in CAPS) (blue for on screen; bold for easy reading in black off-line print)

Transcription Key	Explanation
bold	emphasised word
...	short pauses
(Xs pause) (e.g., (10s pause))	if pause greater than 4 seconds
(laugh, sigh, body language, direction of speaker)	
## alias name ##	names of identifiable people
## alias name ##	names of identifiable places
(ag?) (T9 04:19)	not sure if this is agreement or disagreement; tape marker
(Start TX 0000)	start of new track
(End TX 00:00)	end of track
Rule on starting new track?--haven't decided yet	-every new card; every new string of ideas?
(cut off)	if speaker cut off
(Joy!!)	notes to self about interview style
(unclear text in brackets followed by) (unc)	(unclear)
(questionable text in brackets followed by) (und)	not sure I understood correctly
(chuckles)	brief laugh
(laughs)	normal laughter
hm	questioning sound
um	conversational pause
mm, mm	agreement sound
(jbt:)	JB's thoughts
--	cut self off to change word/thought.

1. Transcribe as soon after interview/focus group as possible.
2. Re-read whilst listening to tape, to check for accuracy
3. Spell check
4. Format for NVIVO
 5. put my writing in bold and blue
 6. (create new style "jbNvivo" with blue and bold text; replace "JB:" with "style=jbNvivo)
7. put each person's text on a separate line from their initial & put initials = Heading 2 (replace "JB: " with "JB:^p style Heading 2, font=blue"; replace "C:" with "C:^p style Heading 2 font=auto")
8. text = Normal
9. Topic Titles = Heading 1 (Intro, Post Sport, Convicted Abuser, Married, Athlete Flirting, It's Love, Car, Attraction, Misc, Summary)
10. Focus group location, time, etc. = Heading 2
11. Focus group event and names = Normal
12. change identifiers to alias names and places marked by ## on either side of name.

Appendix N. Interview Prompts

How did you become involved in swimming?

- former swimmer?
- former clubs
- training/CPD
- challenges?
- arrangements with club/contract
- describe typical session

What ages do you generally coach?

What influences your first impression of swimmers? particularly this one?

When did you first meet this swimmer?

Explain in detail the process. What caused you to start? progress? stop?

Describe

- ◆ relationship w/swimmer/parents/others
- ◆ your feelings/thoughts
- ◆ swimmers response/feelings/reaction
- ◆ interactions w/swimmer/others
- ◆ club/ASA/BSCTA/other response

Do differently now?

Advice for other coaches?

Describe the ideal coach-swimmer relationship.

What sorts of things did you discuss with other coaches?

When did you first find out about Paul Hickson? What was your reaction?

What policies were in place at the time?

Do differently?

How did he establish/negotiate boundaries?

Did he see any external inhibitors/how did he overcome those?

Courting?

Appendix O. Recommendations for the ASA and BSCTA

Implications for the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA)

The main recommendation for the ASA is to enhance communication about child protection policies and procedures. Some of the ambiguity experienced by the coaches is a result of misinformation or insufficient information. For example, two of the Olympic level coaches were unaware of the existence of Swimline. When another coach in the focus group informed them of the purpose, the coaches immediately assumed it was just another mechanism for parents to complain about coaches. On the contrary, half of the calls that are received through Swimline are from people within swimming raising concerns about suspected abuse happening to swimmers in non-sporting contexts (J. Myers & Barrett, 2002).

As mentioned previously, one response to role conflict is mistrust of the person, or organisation, responsible for imposing role pressures (Kahn et al., 1964). Publicising information about how Swimline is used should help reduce coaches' feelings of alienation and mistrust. The recent publication of an analysis of cases from Swimline (J. Myers & Barrett, 2002) will assist with communication, as will the presentation of these results at the Commonwealth Games Conference in July 2002.

Dissemination must also be aimed at coaches, and this is perhaps one area where the ASA can be slow to act. Last year, after presenting my preliminary results to the ASA Child Protection Working Party the committee discussed re-launching the Swimline and the need to design other approaches for minimising the alienation felt by the coaches in this study. This has not yet been accomplished. However, the recent appointment and training of regional and county level child protection officers within the ASA has the potential to significantly increase grass roots communication with coaches.

Distrust of the ASA and fears of false accusations are also likely to be reduced as the ASA Legal Department improves its investigation procedures. Both the convicted coach and the accused coach in this study reported that the ASA did

not communicate effectively with them throughout the investigation. Legal constraints and criminal investigations may inhibit how much information can be shared with the accused, however, every effort should be made to treat accused coaches as innocent, and keep them fully informed when possible. Fear of false allegations could be allayed by providing coaches with accurate information about the number of unfounded accusations made in relation to accusations that lead to convictions. The ASA legal department is currently revising its procedures Child Protection in Sport Unit (ASA Committee Minutes, 23 November 2001), these improvements should also be communicated to coaches to help alleviate fears of mishandled investigations.

Implications for the Coaches' Trade Union

Whilst some coaches felt that the ASA only represented the swimmers and parents, many of the coaches expressed gratitude for representation provided by the coaches' trade union, the BSCTA. The BSCTA has an important role in representing the views of coaches in investigations and ASA policy development. They also provide educational opportunities for the coaches in the form of conferences, newsletters, and individual consultations. One source of role conflict and ambiguity experienced by the coaches was a result of concerns about poor practice behaviours being reported as abusive. Development of a programme for peer observation and reflective practice (A. Miles, 2001), or a coach mentor programme, would provide coaches with a forum for improving poor practice. The second recommendation for the BSCTA is to be aware that the use of emotive language when publicising position statements in response to allegations can contribute to a backlash against child protection in sport (see chapter 11).

Implications for Coach Education

Despite all of the participants being qualified coaches, only half of the coaches who participated in this study reported having received child protection training. Well-designed child protection workshops and resources could help reduce role ambiguity and conflict if information is presented in a manner that clarifies

appropriate behaviours and professional boundaries. (The theoretical limitations of this statement are discussed in the next paragraph.) On recommendation from the CPSU, Sports Coach UK recently revised their 'Good Practice and Child Protection' workshop (Ian Smyth, personal communication, 19 March 2002). In an effort to better define the coaching role, all workshops conducted from April 2002 include a detailed section on the Code of Conduct for Sports Coaches (Sports Coach UK, 2001). Child protection training for coaches should also focus on helping coaches realise their role in setting new behavioural norms that will also serve the purpose of teaching parents and swimmers what to expect as acceptable practice. By setting professional boundaries and new behavioural norms, coaches will enhance the external inhibitors for abusers (Finkelhor, 1984) making it more difficult for ill-intentioned coaches to groom athletes for abuse.

One caveat must be mentioned in respect to coach education. A simple solution for reducing role conflict and ambiguity would be to categorise all possible coaching behaviours and coach/athlete interactions as acceptable or unacceptable. However, this solution is too simplistic and could not possibly take into account all of the iterations of socio-cultural, situational, athlete, and coach variables that could contribute to abuse. Nor does it take into account behaviours, generally labelled as poor practice, which are neither abusive nor good practice. A more effective method is to educate coaches about what makes an interaction abusive, poor practice, or good practice. By focusing on the reasoning behind such complex decisions, the coach can then apply such reasoning to his own coaching situations (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Furthermore, a rigid set of role definitions artificially separates the person from the role and inhibits autonomy needed for the development of professional moral responsibility (Sockett, 1993). Over legislating behaviour assumes that behaviour can be judged universally and out of context.

In a critique of the American educational system, Sockett (1993, pp. 59-60) noted "the system has moved from working with a conception of *due process* and away from a conception of *in loco parentis*, so the teacher's individual exercise of his or her role has been circumscribed." The coaches in this study expressed similar concerns about this happening within sport in the UK. Trust, which is integral to the

teacher/student, coach/athlete relationship has been disregarded as national sports governing bodies are being held accountable for the actions of individual coaches.

Before Hickson's sentencing in 1995, parents and swimmers lost trust in the ASA after lodging complaints with the ASA about Hickson and little action was taken. In addition to strengthening its own systems for accountability, the institution of sport in the UK has responded by withdrawing its trust in coaches. Similar reactions to child abuse have occurred in the Catholic church. In the wake of 21 of 5,600 Catholic priests in England and Wales being convicted of child abuse from 1995 to 1999, Eileen Shearer the director of the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, is quoted in the Independent as saying, 'people might find it difficult but things have got to change. Too much is at stake. It is not safe or appropriate for a priest to be on his own with a child' (Pepinster, 2002, p. 8).

Withdrawing trust from teachers, coaches, and priests may reach the aim of reducing *opportunities* for abuse, but could this aim be met through other means that do not compromise the benefits of trusting relationships? Might assisting coaches to develop professional standards, teaching them how to care and be professionally friendly without overstepping the boundary into friendship (see Section 12.4.2), whilst also teaching parents and athletes how to recognise inappropriate coaching behaviour achieve both the objective of protecting and developing children?

It is important to note that whilst role ambiguity and role conflict may be uncomfortable experiences, the consequences need not be negative (Kahn et al., 1964). These experiences challenge the conceived role and encourage flexibility and change that can facilitate an improvement in a coach's role. Sockett (1993) defines the question of identifying the ideal role of a teacher, as a moral question that needs to be answered, but not in a rigid form. He states,

I have characterized the ideal in teaching as a commitment to serve developing persons, with the rider that since those persons are constantly changing, there must be a commitment to changing and improving practice. (Sockett, 1993, 137-138)

Thus by constantly re-evaluating the ideal and discussing the difficult, often unanswerable questions, it is possible to create and maintain professionalism (Sockett, 1993).

Implications for the Individual Coach

The coaches in this study expressed frustration about the pressures to change their coaching behaviours to match expectations of child protection advocates. When faced with role conflict or ambiguity, coaches need not feel hopeless. Rather, coaches should seek role clarification with their executive committee, parents, and swimmers. Clarifying roles initially (and re-clarifying as the coaching relationship develops) will help to alleviate misunderstandings, for example, with parents who expect the coach to perform the role of driver, babysitter, and sport teacher, but not necessarily disciplinarian.

Securing professional indemnity insurance (for example, through a coach's union) should also reduce some of the concerns about financial loss due to false allegations. Coaches are advised to examine the limits of the policy with regards to cover for loss of employment and whether the entire policy is negated by a guilty verdict. Having said this, it is important to note that the low conviction rate for child abuse as compared to estimated prevalence rates (see for example, Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999) is such that it is a rare occurrence for someone to be convicted as a result of a false accusation. Research is needed to measure the prevalence of false allegations in order to ascertain whether coaches are over-exaggerating the risk of false allegations. Knowledge of prevalence rates, rather than anecdotal evidence, may reduce coaches' fears.

Researchers and educators, alike, encourage reflective practice as an integral step in continuing professional development (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Adams, 1994; Crouch, 1998; A. Miles, 2001; Sockett, 1993). Sockett (1993, p. 163) defines it as "a paradigm for educational transformation," which, "if it is systematic, it is a form of moral self-education that will enhance the person." Identifying one's own strengths and weakness through reflective practice can be used to adapt to role pressure without undermining one's motivation for coaching. Engaging in reflective

practice forces the coach to put the development of the performer at the centre of his role definition. Evaluating current practices from this perspective may highlight instances of poor practice, or at the very least, areas of improvement. Child (and athlete) protection thus becomes central to the definition of coaching, rather than some external force to which coaches must accommodate. Coach mentoring and peer evaluations can also be beneficial in improving practice.