

It is the responsibility of those charged with supervising others to understand what steps must be taken to ensure everybody's safety in a variety of possible scenarios. Likewise, the institutions which employ such people must ensure that their employees are properly trained for these situations since the mistakes made by an employee will have repercussions for the entire institution. The mistakes made by two such employees in the scenario studied resulted in an unfortunate injury to a little girl.

Doug and Christie's first mistake was not properly taking into account the risks associated with the dodgeball game that was proposed. The first, and most obvious, risk was the one incurred by not completely taking down the volleyball net's equipment. While the net was removed, the posts were not. Despite their warnings to the players, this was an incredibly careless mistake. In the heat of the game (it is even noted how Doug "enjoyed the adrenaline rush and competitive nature" of dodgeball), the children were likely to not have their guard up against the danger the posts posed or to forget they were there entirely. The second risk was posed by the weather. The heat had taken its toll on a number of the players making the children more susceptible to injury. The third risk in the scenario was mixing the 6th and 8th graders together. The physical disparities among the children of different ages also could have heightened the risk of injury, namely the risk of an 8th grader contributing to the injury of a 6th grader.

However, while these risks existed, risk exists everywhere and the mitigation of risk is what must be taken into account. The easiest way to eliminate the most obvious risk would be to have completely taken down the equipment for the volleyball net. Despite the assertion that it would take too long, the posts should have been removed and stowed in their proper place. Limiting the risk associated with the heat is the next step. While taking the children inside was a good move, Doug should have ensured that the children were adequately recuperated before beginning another game. Perhaps taking the time to completely remove the volleyball equipment would have afforded them that. Frequent water and rest breaks should have also been incorporated. As for the combination of the 6th and 8th graders, the two instructors took a good first step by ensuring each team had an equal number of each grade's students. Another possible way to mitigate that risk would be to alternate games among the grades. Dodgeball games do not usually last that long; a game could be played by the 8th graders while the 6th graders watched then vice versa. This would automatically allow breaks by everyone to rest and rehydrate. Also, this would lessen the risk of a stronger, older child injuring a smaller, younger child. In this case, the force of the 8th grader's throw knocked the victim off balance. This could also happen from a ball thrown by a 6th grader but it is probably less likely to happen.

While the aforementioned risks were recognized in some nascent form, unfortunately, Doug and Christie continued to make mistakes when it came to the care of the victim, Suzie. Their first deficiency seemed to be with their level of training regarding head injuries. The severity of head injuries are often not able to be judged based solely on external appearance and yet that is what they used to determine Suzie's initial condition. This led to their second mistake which was allowing her to continue playing the game. She should have immediately been removed from the game and either Doug or Christie should have sat with her and monitored her condition continually from that point. This lack of judgment stemmed from the fact that neither instructor knew the program policy regarding head injuries (if there even was one). The lack of attention paid to Suzie's injury factored into the instructor's final two mistakes, beginning with not seeking additional medical attention until after the game was over. By not monitoring her condition from the moment she sustained her injury, they did not realize that her condition had

gotten worse. This delayed needed medical help for 20-30 minutes whereas if one of them was with her, they would have heeded her worsening condition much sooner. The final mistake was Christie's inability to call 911 in a timely manner. Due to her unfamiliarity with the phone system's requirements for obtaining an outside line, the medical care that Suzie needed was delayed a further 10 minutes. The 30-40 minutes that Suzie's care was delayed was the direct result of the mistakes that the two instructors made in their care of her head injury.

How can such mistakes be prevented from reoccurring in the future? By implementing a few plans and policies, some problems could be solved or mitigated. To begin, a policy must be implemented regarding the use of sports equipment. Specific to this case is to ensure that all equipment not in use by the sport currently being played is put away in its proper place; the fact that the volleyball poles were still up directly contributed to this injury. Also, risk management training for each employee should be a recurring requirement. Another policy should be put into place mandating first aid training at regular intervals; possibly formal certification annually with a semi-annual refresher course. Had the instructors been better versed in the care of somebody with a head injury, they might have made better decisions once Suzie's happened. Emergency action plans should also be put into place regarding a variety of scenarios, including a head injury. This would solve Doug's problem of not knowing the policies relevant to a student with a head injury or Christie's problem of not knowing how to use the phones. Many instructors carry binders or tablet computers with them on a regular basis; these plans can be put into the binders or loaded electronically into the computers for ease of reference. Also, these plans could possibly have a boldface approach- this is something from the U.S. Air Force, among other places, where the first two or three critical steps of many emergency checklists are required to be memorized by those who work on a premises in case their checklist is not within easy reach. In this scenario, the instructors would have known to remove Suzie from the game, monitor her directly, and call 911 upon the first signs of worsening symptoms. These plans should be practiced regularly through drills and reminders of these policies should be posted throughout the area- signs in the gym regarding equipment usage and stickers on the phones about obtaining an outside line, for example. Together, implementing some new policies and plans could have shaped Doug and Christie's actions for a better outcome and would hopefully prevent a repeat occurrence.

Doug and Christie did not intend for Suzie to be harmed. However, through their actions and inactions they contributed to the factors leading to her injury and to the level of harm she sustained. They should have used sound risk management to lessen the likelihood of an injury. Policies should have prevented them from using the gym in the configuration it was in. By having plans in place, and through repetitive training and drilling on those plans, they should have known how to properly respond to an injury of this type and known how and when to seek additional medical assistance. By enacting steps like these, instructors will be better prepared to encounter such situations and to better protect the children in their charge.