

Four ways to explore Ethical Decision-making



ETHICAL DECISION MAKING TOOL

Students can develop an understanding of these four concepts and schools of thought, Principles/Rules, Consequences/Outcomes, Agreements/Group decisions, and Virtues/Character traits, to help make ethical decisions.

<p>Principles/Rules</p> <p>Principles are like duties or rules that apply to any set of circumstances. So, for example, when we argue that it is never right to tell a lie, we are thinking about principles. Principles are useful for dealing with large groups of people. Many laws are based on principles. Some common principles are: Always tell the truth. Keep your promises. Be fair. Respect others' rights.</p>	<p>Consequences/Outcomes</p> <p>What makes an action right is whether it has good consequences. That is, whether it increases the welfare of those affected by it. If large numbers of people are affected, we might try to consider the greatest good for the greatest number. By 'good', we might mean happiness, well-being, pleasure, interest or satisfaction</p>
<p>Agreements/Group decisions</p> <p>A good way to decide the best way to treat people is to ask them how they want to be treated. People can then come to agreements about how to treat each other. A group of friends might agree to play sport on Saturdays, or a community might make laws.</p>	<p>Virtues/Character traits</p> <p>Virtues are character traits. A virtuous person does the right thing out of habit. To put it the other way around, the right thing to do is what a virtuous person would do. Some commonly recognised virtues are integrity, courage and compassion.</p>

Teachers can decide for themselves how they provide the above descriptions to their students.

Reference: Jewell, P, et al, Care, Think and Choose, Hawker Brownlow Education, Melbourne, 2011, p. 11.



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Describe the action or decision which is under consideration:

Does the action or decision involve any of the following?

<p>Principles/Rules</p>	<p>Consequences/Outcomes</p>
<p>Agreements/Group decisions</p>	<p>Virtues/Character traits</p>

Which of the above is more important in making the 'right' decision in this case? Why?

