

ASSIGNMENT #1 - Ethical Dilemma Case Assignment¹

This assignment offers you the opportunity to explore the ethical decision-making process introduced in the seminar and apply the steps to a current ethical dilemma that you are facing.

INSTRUCTIONS

Deadline: Your assignment must be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm the night before our third seminar meeting (For exact date and time see the seminar schedule for your section).

You MUST also bring 2 printed copies of your draft to meeting 3.

Note: A thorough and reflective draft must be completed in order to attend meeting 3 and continue in seminar. Your writing does not need to be formal. You may use notes and bullet points, but we want you to apply the ethical decision-making steps we practiced in seminar to your own life in a meaningful way.

Writing will help you to do this, so be sure to write complete thoughts and answer all questions for Steps 1-6. You will be discussing your responses in meeting 3 with your group, which will be easier once you think through and write about the steps beforehand. There is no word count minimum, but your assignment will probably be at least two pages long.

No outside sources, including GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, are allowed on this assignment. All content will come from your own life and be in your own words.

Step 1: Choose your Ethical Dilemma

Think of an ethical dilemma that **you are currently involved in** (this is not about your integrity violation and cannot be a situation that you have already resolved!). An ethical dilemma is a conflict between two (or more) “rights” (e.g. honesty, trust, responsibility, respect, comfort, security, happiness, freedom). We all face multiple ethical dilemmas throughout our lives and there is no doubt that you are facing some right now! These may be short, immediate issues, or on-going, spread over years. They may be small or large and may involve school, work, homelife, relationships, or any other aspect of your life.

If you are having trouble thinking of a dilemma, communicate with your Peer Educator or instructor so they can help you.

The situation you choose should be one that is not easy to work through. You should not be sure what to do. The point of this assignment is to practice thinking through the dilemma and to get consultation on what you should do---if it isn't difficult, it wouldn't be a dilemma and you wouldn't need consultation.

Make sure it is a current dilemma involving you, where you are conflicted between multiple right options and there is not a clear right answer.

Step 2: Describe the Dilemma

- Why is it an ethical dilemma? Identify and discuss all conflicting values, principles, and/or interests.

¹ This assignment was developed by Tricia Bertram Gallant, Ph.D. and adapted by Amanda Brovold and Allison Riley.

Sources used in crafting this assignment:

- Johnson, C.E. (2007). *Ethics in the workplace: Tools and tactics for organizational transformation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Kidder, R. (1995). *How good people make tough decisions: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living*. NY: Simon & Schuster.
Rest, J.R. (1986). *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. New York: Praeger.

- Discuss any rules or behavioral standards that could be violated by taking one action or another.
- What are the contributing factors that led to the situation?

Step 3: Identify the stakeholders (those involved in and potentially affected by the dilemma)

- Who is involved (it is probably more people than you think at first!) Think about the ripple effect of choices and actions in regard to this dilemma. List all the possible stakeholders.
- Next to each stakeholder, explain how that person could be affected (both positively and negatively) by this situation.

Step 4: List possible options for resolving your ethical dilemmas.

- Think up as many choices for action as you can. What is within your power to do?
- List at least 6 or 7 options here (even options that you don't think you would do).

Step 5: Review your Options

- Of all the options for action you listed, identify and discuss 2 or 3 that might be the “right” course of action. What could happen if you take that action? For each action, discuss the following:
 - What would be the possible consequences, both positive and negative, and which stakeholders could be affected?
 - What values or principles would this choice likely undermine or uphold (e.g. honesty, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, or fairness)? *How* would these values be upheld or undermined?
 - What rules, standards, codes of ethics, policies, and/or guidelines might each choice uphold or violate?

Step 6: Prepare Questions

During Meeting 3, your Peer Educator and group will discuss your dilemma, answer your questions, and develop your ideas. This process will help you think more clearly and carefully about your situation and will help you choose the “right” course of action.

Write down at least 5 questions you want to ask your Peer Educator and your group that may help you navigate the ethical dilemma. Think about:

- What would help you clarify the situation?
- What issues would you like input on?

Focus on questions that could help you see new perspectives and ways of handling your dilemma (e.g. What do you think this dilemma suggests about my values/perspective? Do you think I have any “blind spots” when discussing this dilemma? Have I missed any stakeholders? Are there options that I am not seeing? Etc.).

Step 7: Upload your draft to Canvas by 11:59pm the night before our 3rd seminar meeting and bring 2 printed copies of your draft to meeting 3.