

ASSIGNMENT #2

Recognizing and Responding to Justifications

This assignment offers you the opportunity to think more deeply about an incident, an unethical choice, in your life; either your AI incident or some other time in your life when you *knowingly* violated one of the core principles of integrity (honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and trustworthiness). You will look at the contributing factors including personal weaknesses and external obstacles as well as justifications for the incident. You will also respond to those justifications while drawing on your personal values and the values associated with integrity.

PART I

To begin, decide what incident of unethical behavior in your life you would like to explore further: your academic integrity violation or a different past incident in which you knowingly violated a core principle of integrity. In just one or two sentences, explain the incident. Explicitly state what you did and which value(s) of integrity your action(s) went against.

PART II

A. Contributing Factors

Looking at the incident, write about what *external* frustrations, challenges or obstacles (ie. circumstances beyond your control such as being ill for two weeks) might have contributed to your choice(s) and interfered with your ethical decision-making? *Detail at least two.*

Thinking about yourself, what weaknesses did/do you have that may have contributed to your choice(s) and interfered with your ethical decision-making? *Detail at least two.*

B. Justifications

When we make a choice that is inconsistent with our core beliefs and values, we often try to justify the behavior to make ourselves feel better.

How did you justify your choices and lack of ethical decision-making? What did you say to yourself before, during and after the incident to make yourself feel better or correct in your course of action (eg. “I needed a good grade because I want to get into grad school”, “It is none of my business so I won’t get involved”)?

List at least three. Write several sentences for each justification, exploring them in detail, explaining how each is connected to the action you took.

Do these justifications sound familiar to you? Have you used these before in other situations (is there a pattern)? *If not, write about at least two other justifications that you have more typically used to try to excuse choices or behavior.*

PART III

A. Responding to Justifications

Thinking about your core beliefs and values as well as the values associated with integrity, respond to at least three of your most common justifications, writing at least a paragraph for each. Answer the following questions as part of your response:

- Are there assumptions (eg. “I will fail if I don’t do this”) or lies (eg. “No one else will be hurt by this) underlying those justifications? If yes, explain. Or perhaps there is actually truth in the justifications (ie. You *were* really overwhelmed with other work at the time), but that truth does not excuse or justify the behavior/choice. Explain why.
- Also, think about what you could have done instead in this situation and explain.
- Lastly, write about what you can do in the future to confront justifications before they lead you to an unethical choice.

**The ASSIGNMENT is due uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm the night before our fourth seminar meeting.
You MUST also bring 2 printed copies of your draft to meeting 4.**