

Ethical Decision Making
(Maryland Leadership Workshops www.mlw.org)

Objectives:

1. Identify personal values and sources of personal values
2. Define ethics as it relates to personal values
3. Develop and utilize an individual and group decision making model
4. Discuss how ethics and values influence the personal and group decision making process
5. Analyze how being able to make ethical decisions can make one a more effective leader

Materials and Handouts: newsprint/chart paper and markers, scenarios, handout of list of values, handout of personal decision making model, handout of group decision making models

Visuals: class title banner, objectives, concept attainment chart with items to reveal, definition of ethics, decision making models with definitions

Introduction: Order in the Court! Welcome to Ethical Decision Making with Judge (*facilitator name*) and Judge (*facilitator name*)!

Objective 1: Identify personal values and sources of personal values

Activity: Concept Attainment [5-8 minutes]

Students will be asked to define the columns for the set of concepts with which we are working. The concepts (Values vs. Things you Value) will remain “secret” and will be labeled “Exhibit A” and “Exhibit B”. Students must figure out how to classify our items before we can admit them into evidence. Examples of things to put in each column:

<u>Exhibit A</u>	<u>Exhibit B</u>
Equality	family
Honesty	money
Respect	health

After students notice a pattern they may raise their hand and add things into either column. Then they can try to guess what the columns represent. We will then give students a full list of values including:

cooperation, justice, democracy, self reliance/independence, equality, individuality, honesty, team work, respect, creativity, including everyone, achieving goal, ambition, competency, individuality, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, accuracy, respect, dedication, diversity, improvement, enjoyment/fun, loyalty, credibility, innovativeness, teamwork, excellence, accountability, empowerment, quality, efficiency, dignity, collaboration, stewardship, empathy, accomplishment, courage, wisdom, independence, security, challenge, influence, learning, compassion, friendliness, discipline/order, generosity, persistency, optimism, dependability, flexibility

Activity: Ranking and Small Group-Share [8 minutes]

Students will then choose five values and rank them in importance on a handout (1 being most important and 5 being least important). Next to each ranked value students will also put the source where they have gotten that value (family, peers, media, past experience, religion, etc.). Alternate between calling on students to share for large group and having students share with small group.

Other possible activity: Take a Stand – where students stand around the room next to the source of their top 3 values - will take more time

Objective 2: Define ethics as it relates to personal values

[5 minutes]

Transition: Bring students back to the idea that the workshop is about “ethical” decision making...So, what do our values have to do with our ethics?

Ethics: A system of values, rules, or standards that govern the conduct of group members OR – the decisions we make or actions we take based on our values

Questions to check for understanding of the definition: Under this definition, what determines someone's ethics? Ethics can be either personal or can be pre-determined by a group that one belongs to (or wants to become a member of). Is it important as a leader to find out about the ethical code of an organization or group before joining?

Objective 3: Develop and utilize an individual and group decision-making model

Transition → One thing that our definition of ethics implies is that ethics relates to making a decision (generally a decision guided by one's values). How do we make decisions?

Personal Decision Making Model – Walk students through handout. Have them identify a time when they've had to make a personal decision. Ask them questions about it.

Processing Questions: Identify one time when you've had to make a personal decision – did you use these steps to make it? What may be some of the difficulties in making an ethical decision under the personal (individual) model? Do you think it is important, as a leader, to make ethical decisions on a personal level? Why or why not? [5 minutes]

Group Decision Making Strategies – Introduce models on the handout. [5 minutes]

Activity: Court Cases [15 minutes for scenario work time, 10 mins for processing]

Students will be split into ___ groups. They will have one of three (3) scenarios to work on in each group. For their ethical dilemma (court case) they will have to identify two (2) possible outcomes for that situation and the values that guided each outcome. In addition, students will have to identify the best decision making model to use in each case and list the pros and cons of each (they may be given two to choose from). Students will share, with each group sharing only one of their outcomes so each of the six groups has a chance to share.

OR – Students could be split into ___ groups and each given one of 3 scenarios (cases). They would not be told what decision they had to make but would be given a different decision making model to work with on their scenario card. They would still identify/explain the values that influenced that decision.

Your basketball team has only had one loss the entire season and is preparing to go to the quarterfinals in two days, where you are expected to do very well. You have suspected for a few weeks that your team captain and star player has a substance abuse problem, and this is confirmed by a few of your friends on the team who say they see him binge drinking almost every weekend. They view you as a leader on the team and want to know how they should handle the issue. The school has a zero tolerance policy for student athletes and each member of the basketball team had to sign a pledge to stay drug and alcohol free for the playing season. How do you handle the situation?

You are the drum major of your school's marching band. The team wants new uniforms and instruments, however the school has only allocated funds to pay for a couple new instruments. You know about a fourth of the band members won't be able to afford the uniforms out of pocket and a few have approached you about it. Other band members feel that they should not be held back by the financial shortcomings of some of the group and want to purchase the items anyway. You are the leader and a decision needs to be made. How do you handle the situation?

Your school has an honor code that states that cheating is unacceptable and that anyone caught cheating will receive a zero and fail the course. Furthermore, anyone who witnesses cheating and does not report it is also in violation of the honor code. During the midterm exam, you notice one of your friends in the row next to you using a cheat sheet. When you look up you make eye contact with two of your other classmates and it becomes clear to you that they have witnessed your friend cheating as well. How do you handle the situation?

Processing: Processing will focus on what the pros and cons of each decision making model were for that situation and give other factors (e.g. time). For example, when is it most appropriate to use consensus? What could some of the drawbacks be of making an autocratic or democratic decision? Also, how do differing values lead to conflicts in the group decision-making process?

Objective 4: Discuss how ethics and values influence the personal and group decision-making process

Activity: Journaling [5 minutes]

Think back to the ranking activity we did - did everyone always have the same values? When you shared in your small group did everyone have the exact same ranking? How did this impact making ethical decision in a group? Have students journal this response in 1-2 sentences and then call on a few students to share with larger group.

Handout: Scenarios

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- a. Autocratic
- b. Democratic
- c. Compromise
- d. Consensus

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What are your VALUES and where do they come from?

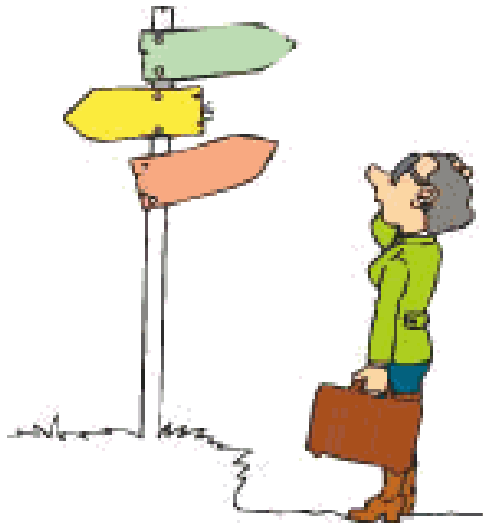
Values List *(add additional values if needed)*

cooperation, justice, democracy, self reliance/independence, equality, individuality, honesty, team work, respect, creativity, including everyone, achieving goal, ambition, competency, individuality, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, accuracy, respect, dedication, diversity, improvement, enjoyment/fun, loyalty, credibility, innovativeness, teamwork, excellence, accountability, empowerment, quality, efficiency, dignity, collaboration, stewardship, empathy, accomplishment, courage, wisdom, independence, security, challenge, influence, learning, compassion, friendliness, discipline/order, generosity, persistency, optimism, dependability, flexibility

What are Your Top 5 Most Important Values?	Where do they come from? (What are the sources of your values?)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Personal Decision Making Model

- ✓ Identify the problem
- ✓ Identify SMART goals
- ✓ Identify possible solutions – weigh the pros and cons of each
- ✓ Think about the consequences of each solution
- ✓ Choose the best solution
- ✓ Evaluate the decision



Group Decision Making Strategies

Autocratic – Decisions are centrally made by one person or central body

Democratic – Decisions are made by the people, usually by a vote

Compromise – finding the middle ground between different opinions

Consensus – the group comes to a unanimous decision

Think About It...

What may be some factors that would influence which decision making model is the appropriate one for your group to use? What are some of the pros and cons of each model?