



Lesson 5. Ethical Decision Making



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Visual 5.1
Decision Making and Problem Solving (IS-241.b)

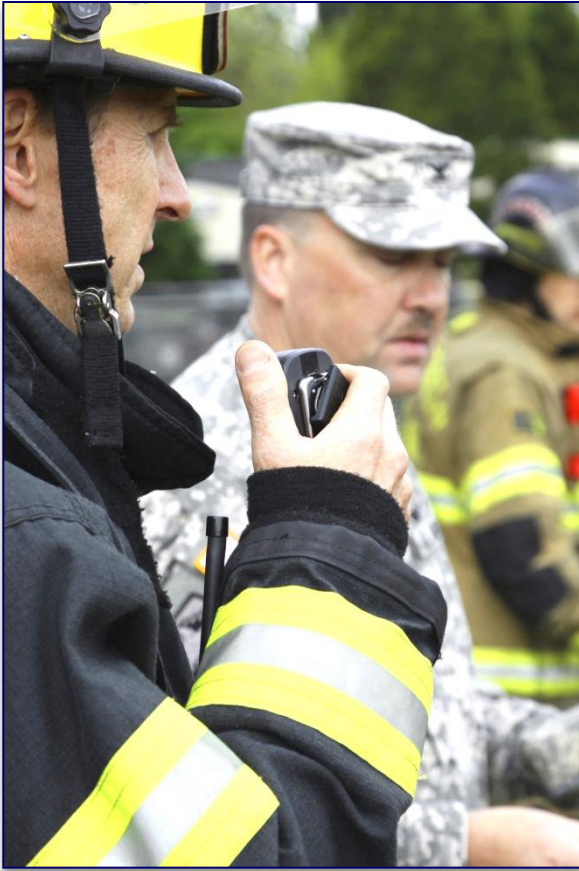
Lesson 5 Objective

- Describe how ethical considerations impact decision making.



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A Professional Responsibility



- Members of the public and coworkers count on you to carry out your responsibilities professionally.
- Public officials must avoid even the appearance of impropriety.



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What Are Ethics?

- **Standards that guide our behavior, both as individuals and as members of organizations.**
- **Based on values—core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions.**
- **The golden rules we learn as children.**

“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ‘em all over everything you do.”

— Elvis Presley



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Raising the Stakes

A poor decision with ethical implications can escalate an emergency into an unmanageable situation.



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Characteristics of Ethical Dilemmas

Examples:

- **Uncertainty about the consequences**
- **Rule book does not apply**
- **No good options**
- **Disagreement, with no time for consensus building**



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Scenario Activity: Train Derailment

**What is the ethical
issue involved?**



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Solving an Ethical Dilemma

Involves:

- Using your own and your organization's ethical values as a guide.
- Sensitivity to the impact of your decisions.
- An ability to evaluate complex, ambiguous, and/or incomplete facts.

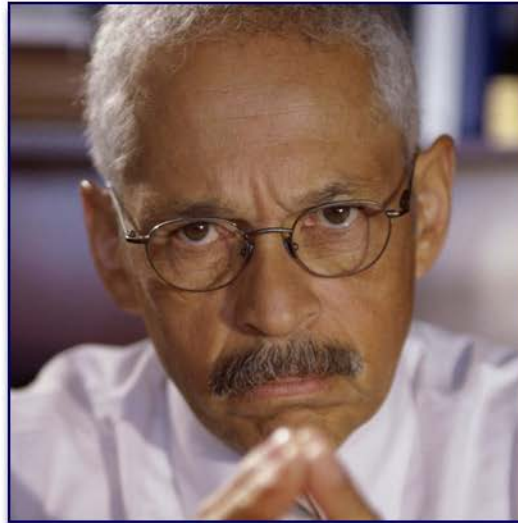


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Components of Ethical Decision Making



Ethical
Commitment



Ethical
Consciousness



Ethical
Competency



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Ethical Commitment



- Demonstrating a strong desire to act ethically and to do the right thing.
- Especially when ethical action imposes financial, social, or psychological costs.

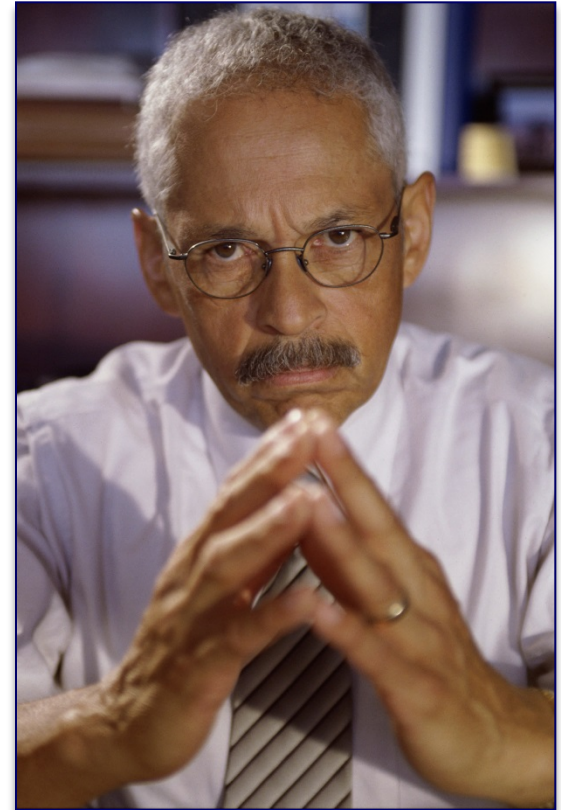


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Ethical Consciousness

- **Seeing and understanding the ethical implications of our behavior.**
- **Understanding that other people's perceptions are their reality.**



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Ethical Competency

Developing certain ethical decision-making skills, which include:

- Evaluation.
- Creativity.
- Prediction.



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Ethical Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Place the law and ethical principles above private gain.
- Act impartially.
- Protect and conserve agency/organization property.
- Put forth an honest effort in everything even remotely connected to your official position.
- Avoid even the appearance of ethical violations.

Don't

- Use your position to seek personal gain.
- Use agency/organization resources for personal reasons.
- Appear to favor one group over another.
- Exceed your authority or make promises that can't be kept.



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Action Review Activity

Instructions:

1. Review the short action descriptions listed in your Student Manual.
2. Identify which decisions appear ethical and which do not.
3. Be prepared to explain your responses.



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Applying the Problem-Solving Model

- Avoid decision paralysis.
- The problem-solving model can help you make difficult decisions.
- When selecting alternatives (Step 3), eliminate any alternatives that are or appear to be unethical.



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Considerations

Be sure to consider:

- **Who is affected.**
- **What is at stake.**
- **Stakeholder needs and values.**
- **Your values and those of your organization.**
- **All ethical perspectives that apply.**



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Know Your SELF

- Take the time to ensure that your decisions are consistent with your moral standards and values.
- Apply the “SELF” standard.

Your decisions should:

S	... withstand <u>S</u>crutiny	... by the community, the public, and the media.
E	... <u>E</u>nsure compliance	... with policies and the code of conduct.
L	... show <u>L</u>eadership	... through integrity, accountability, and consistency.
F	... be <u>F</u>air	... to those we serve, staff, stakeholders, and yourself.



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Simple Scrutiny Test



**Could I explain my
decision to Mom?**



**How well will I
sleep?**



**What's the likely
headline?**



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Summary

- In Lesson 5 you examined how ethical considerations impact decision making.
- Lesson 6 summarizes this course.



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