



Educate & Motivate!

Ethical and Professional Case Studies for Youth Development User's Guide

Extension professionals are challenged regularly to use ethical decision-making to ensure that every participant has the opportunity to be fully engaged in programming efforts. Being an ethical decision-maker requires us to be reflective and not reactive. Many of these case studies are real life accounts of what Kansas 4-H professionals have encountered in the field. We would like to acknowledge these professionals and thank them for their contributions. These case studies are designed to encourage you to think outside the box and go outside your comfort zone. The goal is to find a solution that will both support diversity efforts and prevent causing harm to any parties involved.

Group Dynamics and Creating an Engaged Group

It is advisable to have a group facilitator for this ethical decision-making activity. The facilitator can break the group into pairs or small groups. Small groups should not exceed 12 people per group. If possible, a recorder can be assigned to each group to document the group process and how the group has reached a solution.

The Importance of Group Rules

To help all participants feel comfortable sharing and to create a feeling of safety in the group discussing ethical decisions, it is a good practice to have the group develop

common goals before beginning the activity. In this way, group members can be encouraged to refer to the group rules throughout the exercise if they feel the need to do so. Make sure the group rules are placed in an area visible to the entire group as they are working through their ethical decision-making activity. Some examples of group rules are as follows, but are not limited to this list: be respectful, you can pass, uphold the dignity of all involved even those who are not present, be honest with yourself and others, have fun, it's OK to disagree, share what you learn about ethical decision-making but remember that personal experiences are private, etc.

Steps of Ethical Decision Making¹

1. Identify the problem.
2. Identify the potential issues involved.
3. Know the applicable laws and regulations (K-State Notice of Nondiscrimination).
4. Reference 4-H Code of Conduct.
5. Consult with another group, the facilitator, and/or a cultural specialist.
6. Consider possible courses of action based on information gathered.
7. Explore the consequences and various decisions.
8. Decide on what appears to be the best course of action.

