

We will begin an activity in a few minutes. Your participation in it will count for your points for the day. If you do not participate you will lose those points.



Moral Reasoning Activity

In groups of three or four:

1. Read each of the four moral dilemmas
2. Come to a group consensus regarding the three best solutions to each
3. Rank order your three choices
4. Are there gender differences in opinions regarding the appropriate solutions or their order?
5. Choose a spokesperson to report your choices, describe the reasoning your group used in making them, and describe any gender differences you encountered.

1. Vehicles of Destruction

Ms. Isakson is a cost-control analyst at the corporate headquarters of an automobile manufacturer. She has become aware of a serious safety issue with one of the manufacturer's vehicles that is the result of a design problem. The report that described this design flaw noted it would cost more than \$300 per vehicle to fix the problem if the vehicles were recalled. Since approximately 8-million vehicles have the problem, the total cost would be more than 2.4-billion dollars! The report estimated that over the next five years, approximately 1000 people may die or be seriously injured because of the problem. However, the average settlement for each wrongful death or injury lawsuit related to this problem would be approximately one-million dollars. Therefore, the total costs that the company would face without a recall would be about one-billion dollars – less than half the cost of a recall! Since the company is already in financial trouble and may have to file for bankruptcy if a recall of this magnitude is issued, the report recommended that the company not issue a recall. Corporate management has decided to follow this recommendation and simply deny any problem exists. Ms. Isakson met with those who made this decision and tried to convince them to issue a recall, but they refused. She is morally troubled by this situation. What action, if any should she take?

1. Ms. Isakson should drop the issue because she is a single mother and is afraid of being fired if she goes any further.
2. She should try to work within company policies and procedures in an attempt to change the decision regarding a recall. If the decision could be reversed, the company, its employees, and the general public would all be better off.
3. Since not issuing a recall is a clear violation of state and federal law, Ms. Isakson must report the situation to the proper authorities.
4. She must not press for a recall because her immediate supervisor told her not to.
5. Ms. Isakson should not pursue the issue any further because she knows that many of her co-workers would be unhappy with her if she does.
6. She should drop the issue because a recall might push the company into bankruptcy, and many employees, including her, may lose their jobs.
7. Ms. Isakson must report the design flaw to the proper authorities because she truly cares about the people whom the design flaw might effect.
8. Ms Isakson must report the design flaw to the proper authorities human life is much more important than company profits or keeping her job.
9. She should follow her heart and make whatever decision her conscience dictates regardless of the consequences.
10. Ms. Isakson should contact the press and tell them about the situation because such an action is likely to result in her being seen as a hero.

2. Drugs and Money

Mrs. Johnson is 35 years old and has three children ranging in age from four to eleven. She was recently diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. Without treatment, it is predicted that she has less than two years to live. However, a pharmaceutical company has developed a new drug that preliminary studies have found to be very effective in treating this form of cancer. Unfortunately, the medication must be taken for more than a year, and it is quite expensive (about \$12,000 a month). The family was able to pay for three months of treatment with the medication, and Mrs. Johnson appears to be improving. However, they have exhausted their savings; the pharmaceutical company will not provide the drug at a reduced cost, and the Johnson's health insurance provider will not pay for it because they have ruled this form of treatment to be "experimental." They have tried to borrow money to pay for the drug but have been unsuccessful. Mr. Johnson works in housekeeping at the local hospital which has enough of the drug to meet his wife's needs. Should he attempt to steal the drug?

1. Johnson should not attempt to steal the drug because stealing is illegal, and it is important that a society's laws be upheld.
2. Johnson should not try to steal the drug because he might get caught and go to jail.
3. Johnson should try to steal the drug regardless of the consequences because a person's right to life is far more important than upholding any of society's laws.
4. Johnson should try to steal the drug because medical discoveries such as this one should be shared with society as a whole, and the good of society is far more important than the rights and profits of any corporation.
5. Johnson should try to steal the drug because he does not believe that he can get along without his wife.
6. Johnson should try to steal the drug because no child should have to grow up without a mother.
7. Johnson should not steal the drug because his coworkers would be very disappointed in him if they were to find out.
8. Johnson should not try to steal the drug because his wife told him not to.
9. Johnson should try to steal the drug because not only could he save his wife's life, but he could also sell the drug and pay all of the medical bills with the profits.
10. Johnson should not steal the drug. Rather, he should sue his insurance company to try and obtain it legally.

3. Hijabs and Hiring

Mr. Schmitt is the principal of a rural high school in central Minnesota which has a position open for a science teacher. The start of the school year is rapidly approaching, and the only qualified applicant (with secondary science licensure) is Ms. Abdula, a Shiite Moslem, and a recent Iraqi immigrant. Though Ms. Abdula has excellent credentials and would like to teach in the school, she is devout in her faith and wears a Hijab (shawl), covering her head whenever she is out of her home. There is a relatively strong anti-Moslem sentiment in the community as three members of the local National Guard Unit have been killed in Iraq, and several area residents are currently serving in the Middle East. Three members of the school board and several members of the community liaison group are strongly against hiring Ms. Abdula. They would prefer that the district hire someone without science licensure and apply to the state for a special exemption. The committee of teachers who interviewed Ms Abdula has recommended that she be hired, but the final decision is up to Mr. Schmitt. What should he do?

1. State and federal law prohibits discrimination in hiring. Thus, Schmitt must hire Ms. Abdula or he will be breaking the law.
2. Schmitt must think about his family and his own employment first. He has two children in college and cannot afford to lose his job. He should not hire her if he feels his own job could be in jeopardy.
3. Mr. Schmitt should act on the basis of his own conscience and face whatever consequences might occur as a result of his decision. Therefore, he should hire Ms. Abdula if he believes that is the right thing to do.
4. The most important issue in this situation is Ms. Abdula's right to be employed and support herself and her family. Thus, Mr. Schmitt should hire Ms. Abdula if she is the best candidate for the position.
5. Schmitt should hire Abdula because ethnic prejudices must be overcome for the good of society. Once everyone gets to know Ms. Abdula and sees that she is a good teacher, they would not be as prejudiced against Iraqis and Moslems, and the entire school and community would be better off.
6. Schmitt should not hire Abdula because several members of his church will not talk to him if he does.
7. Schmitt should hire Abdula because no decent person would deprive an individual of the right to make a living.
8. Schmitt should not hire Abdula because two school board members called and told him not to hire her.

4. Copy Kat

Sara is a junior at a state university. Her roommate, Katie, is currently enrolled in Educational Psychology (a course that Sara took last spring). The day after Katie turned in her second paper in Educational Psychology, Sara was straightening up their apartment and found what appeared to be her Ed. Psych paper from last semester. However, as she looked at it closely, the paper had Katie's name on it but was identical to the paper Sara had turned in last semester! Obviously, Katie had simply copied and pasted Sara's paper, changing only the name and date. This put Sara in a difficult situation because she knew that Katie was falling behind in her classes because of some personal problems she was experiencing, yet she had obviously committed plagiarism. What should Sara do?

1. The university Sara and Katie attend has a zero-tolerance policy regarding plagiarism, so Sara is obligated to contact the teacher and tell him/her that Katie had plagiarized her paper.
2. Sara should contact the teacher right away because the teacher might think that she had allowed Katie to copy the paper, and she (Sara) might also get punished along with Katie.
3. Sara shouldn't say anything because Katie is experiencing some personal problems, and confronting her about the paper wouldn't be a nice thing to do.
4. Sara shouldn't confront Katie about the paper because she might lose her friendship.
5. Sara shouldn't say anything about the paper because Katie is a big woman with a bad temper!
6. Sara should tell Katie that she knows about the paper and tell her that she (Katie) **must** tell the teacher what she did. If she does not, Sara will go and talk to the teacher.
7. Sara should tell the teacher that Katie copied her paper because plagiarism is a big problem on campus, and it would be best for everyone to take action to stop it.
8. Sara should report Katie's plagiarism to the department chairperson because she may need a letter of recommendation or some other help from her, and if she does report the incident, the chairperson will owe her a favor.
9. Sara should tell Katie that she knows what she did, that she is really worried about her, and offer to go over to the Counseling Center so that she can get the help she needs.