

Leadership and Ethics

Time: 60 Minutes

Materials

[Ethical Leadership Greek Life Prezi](#)

[Ethical Leadership General Prezi](#)

Ethical Dilemmas Activity (attached)

Greek Life Case Studies (attached)

Unintended Messages (attached)

Audio/Visual equipment

Description: *How do ethics relate to your leadership? How important is it to be an ethical leader? Use this session to learn how to be an ethical leader.*

Preparation

- Review and practice presentation beforehand
- Print enough handouts for participating members of the workshop

Instructions

1. Present Ethical Leadership Prezi Presentation
2. Group Activity #1: Ethical Dilemmas
 - Break students into small groups of 2-3
 - Allow groups 4 minutes to discuss their activity in regards to your review
 - Allow groups 3 minutes to revisit their dilemma
3. Group activity #2
 - Have students remain in their groups and allow them 3 minutes to fill out the unintended messages sheet.
 - Discuss student answers with aid of answer key
4. Greek Cases (If applicable)
 - Have students read the cases individually
 - Have students (with the same case) get into groups of 3
 - Allow groups 6-8 minutes to review and discuss the case
 - Travel from group to group, ask probing questions, challenge responses respectfully
5. Bring conversation back to a whole group wrap up—What was surprising? What was learned?

Ethical dilemmas – Group Activity

In most workplace situations, there is a clear-cut right or wrong way to act. However, we occasionally run into ethical scenarios where there are positive aspects to two differing actions and we are left with a dilemma. These “competing rights” situations can be extremely stressful.

Here are a few examples:

It’s **right** to communicate information that might help other people...

But it’s also **right** to respect the confidentiality of information if you have agreed to do so.

It’s **right** to follow through on commitments you’ve made...

But it’s also **right** to address a higher priority task that suddenly needs to be completed.

In this exercise, your group will think about situations where there are conflicting rights and develop strategies for resolving them.

Set up the Activity

Break the group into several smaller groups of 2-3 people and have each small group work on one of the following situations (or have them come up with one of their own).

- **Going to work when you’re obviously sick and possibly contagious.**
- **Telling an insecure co-worker (or subordinate) their work is good when it is not.**
- **Voicing support for a decision you don’t really believe in because everyone else is in favor of it and there is no more time for discussion.**
- **Ignoring an organization member/peers chronic tardiness because the student has a troublesome home life and you figure they’ve got enough to deal with.**

Review the Situation

Explain the issue they’ve selected, ask each group to discuss and take brief notes on:

- What are the competing “rights” in this scenario?
- What rationalizations might someone make in this situation (Examples might include, “it’ll just be easier this way”, “It’s not that big a deal.”, “I don’t have time...”)
- What outside influences might be in play?

Note: You may want to explain that influences can either be “supporting” (i.e. they help us make ethical choices- such as a manager who consistently demonstrates high integrity) or “distracting” (i.e. they potentially lead us toward unethical behavior—such as an emphasis on meeting a quota at all costs.)

At this stage, do not have the groups come up with a solution or final decision.

Resolve the Dilemma

Explain to participants that—as they have just seen- in the case of conflicting rights, both choices may be ethical to some extent, but one is better choice than the other. Dilemmas typically have “better” answers, but the decision process can be tough.

Introduce the following three steps to resolving ethical dilemmas:

- 1) **If possible, eliminate the conflict.** (Seek permission to grant an exception, make a special case, or otherwise change the conditions.)
- 2) **Decide what’s more right.** (Ask which option is most in line with laws or organizational values? Which provides the greatest benefit for the largest number of people? Which sets the best precedent for guiding similar decisions in the future?)
- 3) **Seek Assistance.** (Run the situation past your manager, HR or anyone who can listen and provide objective feedback).

Have each group revisit their dilemma and apply these 3 steps to their decision making process. What would their suggested course of action be?

Debrief

Ask a representative from each group to describe the course of action they decided on, and the rationale behind it.

Adopted From: <http://www.crmlearning.com/blog/index.php/2009/09/ethical-dilemmas-group-activity/>

Greek Life Cases

-Same Fraternity/Sorority, Different Rules

Your chapter tends to play by the rules. When hosting social functions, you, the chapter president, have a strict guest list, use a third-party vendor, and have designated drivers. You are invited to attend a chapter function at a neighboring college. Upon arrival, you are shocked to learn that this chapter is nothing like your own. The members are obviously partiers. Alcohol flows freely, no one is carded, and everyone is very intoxicated. When you return to campus, your members start to complain about your strict compliance to the national rules. They do not want to become as out of control as the other chapter; they just want to loosen up a bit. They don't understand why they always have to be the good-goody chapter.

- What are the issues in this case?
- What are your options for handling the situation? How might each option play out? Which option do you prefer?
- Should you contact your national office to inform it of the neighboring chapter's behavior? Why or why not?
- What will happen if you fail to adhere to the requirements of the fraternity insurance purchasing group (FIG) regulations and there is an incident in your chapter involving alcohol, such as an underage new member experiencing alcohol poisoning?

From Ethical Intelligence

Greek Life Cases

-Cocaine, Anyone?

Over the course of the semester, you learn that one of your brothers is regularly using cocaine. Other members of your chapter spotted him buying drugs and then using them at a local party. He has also encouraged other chapter members to try the drug. You know that he regularly smokes marijuana, but a handful of members in your chapter also do and no one says anything.

- What are the issues in this case?
- What are your options for handling the situation? How might each option play out? Which option do you prefer?
- What should you do if the member's drug use escalates to an addiction? What should you do if he does recruit other members to use drugs?
- In deciding whether or not to keep the member in the chapter, do you do what is best for him or what is best for the chapter? Do you think he was thinking of the chapter when he decided to use drugs?
- Would it make a difference if the member was doing drugs in the chapter house? What about in an off-campus apartment?
- What should you do if your chapter starts to get a reputation for having members who use drugs?

From Ethical Intelligence

Greek Life Cases

-Raise the GPA or Else

Your chapter's overall grade point average (GPA) is a 2.67. Although this is above the non-Greek average, it is in the bottom third among the other fraternities/sororities. Your national officer visits and puts the chapter on academic probation. It is expected that you will increase your chapter's GPA to a 2.8 within a year. The consultant does not give you any suggestions for increasing the GPA. You currently require a minimum of 2.5 GPA to remain in good standing. The first semester that brothers/sisters fall below the minimum, they are given a warning and have to attend mandatory study hours. The second semester, they are placed on social probation. The third semester, they may be released from the chapter. One of the strategies that the executive board decides to implement to meet the national mandate is to increase minimum GPA from 2.5 to 2.8. They argue that all the other chapters require only a 2.5 minimum GPA; if the executive board decides to raise the GPA for new members, this could impact your chapter during recruitment.

- What are the issues in this case?
- What are your options for handling the situation? How might each option play out? What option do you prefer?
- Do you have any other suggestions for increasing your chapter's GPA?
- Should you consider contacting the national office for its perspective on your chapter's GPA? Do you think it might offer suggestions or clarification regarding the consultant's mandate?

From Ethical Intelligence

Greek Life Cases

-BYOB

Your fraternity hosts a BYOB party with a guest list. One of the guests on the list drinks too much, gets into her car and starts driving home, and then gets into a car wreck. Some of the alcohol that she drank was her own, and some of it was given to her by chapter members. She tells the police that she was drinking at your chapter house. The police come to your chapter house and ask to see the president.

- What are the issues in this case?
- What are your options for handling the situation? How might each option play out? Which option do you prefer?
- What are the necessary components of FIPG that need to be followed when hosting a party? How will your national office support you if you are in compliance? How will it support you if you are not in compliance?
- At what point do you contact your national office?

From Ethical Intelligence

Greek Life Cases

-New Initiates Gone Wild

You are in your first semester as chapter president. The standards board typically meets after each chapter meeting. This week, there is a line of sisters waiting to meet with the standards board. All want to discuss two recently initiated members who allegedly sleep around. Members addressing the board claim that these two sisters often get drunk, strip at parties, kiss other girls, openly discuss their sexual escapades, and disclose elements of ritual. The standards board meeting quickly turns into a town hall meeting. Sisters start to cry. Many threaten to deactivate if the women are not released from the chapter. The board members thank the sisters for bringing the situation to their attention. After a lengthy discussion, the board members call in the two recently initiated sisters and release them from the chapter. Later, the big sisters of the two released members burst into the standards board meeting crying and demanding that the two new members be reinstated. The big sisters are two of your best friends. They inform you that the women are positive members of the chapter and that their behaviors are not as extreme as the others made them out to be.

- What are the issues in this case?
- What are your options for handling the situation? How might each option play out? Which option do you prefer?
- Are there any other options for disciplining the new initiates? If the accusations about their behavior are true, what should you do? If the sisters embellished the actions of the initiates, what should you do? Does it make a difference that their advocates are your good friends?
- Can you reverse your decision after you have released someone from the chapter? If so, what message would a reversed decision send to your chapter?
- If the removal holds, how will you face your two friends?

From Ethical Intelligence

Unintended Messages

Students Activities & Leadership Development

HANDOUT

Sometimes we say things about ethics without even knowing it. Read each statement and write in the potential unintended messages.

Statement	Unintended Message
"All that really matters is the bottom line."	
"What are the chances that anyone will find out?"	
"You don't know – everyone does it."	
"That's my story and I'm sticking to it."	
"I shouldn't be telling you this, but..."	
"You didn't hear it from me..."	

Unintended Messages

Students Activities & Leadership Development

ANSWER KEY

Sometimes we say things about ethics without even knowing it. Read each statement and write in the potential unintended messages.

Statement	Unintended Message
"All that really matters is the bottom line."	<i>Money is more important than ethics.</i>
"What are the chances that anyone will find out?"	<i>What we are doing is wrong, but if we don't get caught doing it, it's ok.</i>
"You don't know – everyone does it."	<i>It's ok to be unethical because others are.</i>
"That's my story and I'm sticking to it."	<i>I'm lying but I'll never admit it.</i>
"I shouldn't be telling you this, but..."	<i>I know it's wrong to tell you but I'm doing it anyway.</i>
"You didn't hear it from me..."	<i>You should lie about where you heard this because I will deny I said it.</i>