

# ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

When faced with an ethical dilemma, school counselors and school counseling program directors/supervisors use an ethical decision-making model.

**1** Define the ethical dilemma.

Identify potential cultural, religious and worldview factors and power dynamics that are present within a potential ethical dilemma.

**2**

**3** Apply the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors and the relevant district policies and procedures.

Consult with appropriate professionals (e.g., supervisors, other student service professionals, school counseling peers, cultural experts).

**4**

**5** Consider the student's chronological age and developmental level.

Consider parental/guardian and student rights

**6**

**7**

Apply the ethical principles of: **Beneficence:** working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being; **Autonomy:** fostering the right to control the direction of one's life; **Nonmaleficence:** avoiding actions that cause harm; **Justice:** treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality; **Fidelity:** honoring commitments and keeping promises, including fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in professional relationships; **Veracity:** dealing truthfully with individuals with whom school counselors come into professional contact.

Determine potential courses of action and their consequences.

**8**

**9** Evaluate the selected action.

Implement the course of action and analyze the outcome.

**10**

**11** Identify any inconsistencies in school/district policy for potential revision.

See other ethical decision-making models:

Intercultural Model of Ethical Decision Making, Luke et al., (2013)

Solutions to Ethical Problems in Schools (STEPS), Stone (2003)

Ethical Justification Model, Kitchener (1984)