



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.



Kansas State University Notice of Nondiscrimination²

Kansas State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, genetic information, military status, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations. The person designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: the Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, equity@k-state.edu, 103 Edwards Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506-4801, 785-532-6220. The campus ADA Coordinator is the Director of Employee Relations, charlott@k-state.edu, who may be reached at 103 Edwards Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506-4801, 785-532-6277.

Kansas 4-H Participant Code of Conduct

As a participant in the Kansas 4-H program, you have the responsibility of representing Kansas 4-H to the public. You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that will bring honor to you, your family and 4-H. To do that, you must:

1. Conduct yourself and your project work in a manner that is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and in good citizenship.
2. Be responsible for your actions by following the rules and being accountable. This includes being in assigned program locations/sessions, abiding by deadlines, times and housing arrangements. If you are unable to participate or need assistance, notify those in charge of the event/program.
3. Treat yourself, other people, animals and property with respect, using good manners, dressing appropriately and by not using profanity. You will be personally responsible for any damage caused as a result of your behavior.
4. Know that the use of tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescribed drugs by youth is illegal.
5. Demonstrate caring for people other than yourself. Know that harassment of any type is illegal and prohibited at all 4-H events.
6. Be a good citizen by participating fully, and helping those around you have positive experiences.
7. Use technology and social media in safe and appropriate ways for the good of 4-H Youth Development programs.

Kansas 4-H Volunteer Code of Conduct

The mission of Kansas 4-H Youth Development is "Kansas 4-H Youth Development uses unique strategies and opportunities to engage youth in reaching their full potential through partnerships with caring adults." Volunteers are key to fulfilling this mission. This policy establishes expectations of all those who work with children and youth. These statements represent a code of ethics that all volunteers and paid staff are expected to observe.

As a Kansas 4-H Volunteer, I will:

- Work within the 4-H program. As a 4-H volunteer, I am accountable to the local club, the appropriate Extension Unit, the Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program, K-State Research and Extension, and Kansas State University for my actions.
- Work as a "team player" for the good of the 4-H program. I will work cooperatively with youth, other volunteers and extension staff and treat them with respect.
- Honor my volunteer commitment.
- Keep records, distribute materials and support the 4-H system.
- Follow established guidelines for keeping financial records and handling 4-H funds.
- I will participate in meetings, self-study, or other training programs which will help me work more effectively with young people and adults.
- Make all reasonable efforts to assure equal access to participation for all youth and adults.
- Kansas State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer committed to non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other non-merit reasons.
- Provide a safe environment. I will not harm youth or adults in any way, whether through sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, or other harmful experiences.
- Not use alcohol or any illegal substances (or be under its influences) while working with or being responsible for youth, or allow youth to do so while under my supervision.
- Operate machinery, vehicles, and other equipment in a safe and responsible manner.

- When operating a motor vehicle, I will have a valid driver's license and the legally required insurance coverage.
- Role-model the character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.
- Promote and practice the responsible and ethical stewardship of livestock and/or companion animal projects.
- Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation and K-State Research and Extension and 4-H Youth Development policies and guidelines.
- Use technology and social media in safe and appropriate ways for the enhancement and promotion of the 4-H Youth Development program.

Kansas 4-H Volunteer Code of Ethics. Kansas 4-H Volunteer Service Application, October 2013

References:

- 1 Wilcoxon, A. P., Remley, T. P., Jr., & Gladding, S. T. (2013). *Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy* (5th ed.). Pearson.
- 2 <http://www.k-state.edu/nondiscrimination/>

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Case Study #1

You are a camp counselor assigned to a specific group. In the group, there is a 9-year-old White Euro American boy, Sam, who is very interested in talking to you and the other campers about insects. He does not seem comfortable talking about other things with the group and also shows signs of anxiety when changing from one activity to the next. He is also very sensitive to loud sounds. This morning was particularly challenging. The other children ate together and Sam ate by himself. How can you make Sam part of the group and work with his special needs?



Case Study #2

Johanna is a 7-year-old Latina American who has just registered for camp and uses a wheelchair to get around. There are some activities that are currently not wheelchair accessible. Camp activities start in 6 weeks. What do you do?

Case Study #3

Solomon is an 11-year-old boy from Colombia who is currently on a 4-H exchange program. His host brother and sister attend camp every year and the family would like him to participate in all the activities. Solomon does not speak English fluently and seems confused by the idea of camp. He has trouble communicating with the other children and seems to be very uncomfortable. How can you help Solomon enjoy his camping experience?



Case Study #4

Rebecca is a 13-year-old White Euro American girl who identifies as lesbian. She has recently moved from California because her mother has taken a new position at Kansas State University. She is excited about camp and has been a lifelong 4-Her. Some of the parents are unhappy that Rebecca is attending camp and don't want their children around "that girl." These parents have also suggested that there be a camp specifically for LGBTQ+ youth. How do you work through this situation? Please refer specifically to Kansas State's Nondiscrimination Policy when working through this case study.



Case Study #5

Brian is a 10-year-old Asian American boy who has shared with his fellow campers that he is Buddhist. The other campers did not understand what that meant and asked him to explain more about his culture. Brian asks you if he can share a Buddhist teaching with the group before dinner or before a group activity when everyone is together. What do you do?



Case Study #6

Monica is a 7-year-old White Euro American girl who received a scholarship to be able to attend camp. Even though the registration was paid for, you notice that Monica does not have some of the belongings necessary to fully enjoy the camping experience. For example, her swimsuit is a hand-me-down from her older sister and it is difficult for her to swim in it because it is too big. She also does not have appropriate shoes to wear. How can you support Monica in being able to fully participate in the camp experience?



Case Study #7

You are approached at a bilingual/bicultural 4-H club by a 4-H parent, Juana Gonzales, who wants to understand more about what a 4-H camp is. Juana, who is Latino American, seems genuinely interested until you tell her that her child is expected to stay overnight and that the rest of the family is not part of the camping experience. Juana seems very uncomfortable, immediately loses interest, and changes the subject. How do you figure out what just happened culturally and keep the connection with this parent?



Case Study #8

Sam is a transgender White Euro American child who plans on attending 4-H camp. His parents are open and affirming of Sam's gender identity and have been advised by medical professionals and psychologists that transgender individuals have the highest level of suicide attempts. These attempts could be related to transgender youth being bullied, the target of discriminatory words and actions, and not feeling a sense of belonging. As a result, LGBTQ youth often do not feel safe in environments that have not made a commitment to be open and affirming. Some of the other campers have given Sam strange looks and are asking if Sam is a boy or a girl. Sam responds that he is a boy, but you can tell that he is starting to feel alienated from the group because of all the questions. What can you do to help facilitate this diversity process?



Case Study #9

One of your campers, Hugo Montagne, a White Euro American youth, seems to have difficulty following directions and is easily distracted. You notice some of the camp counselors have started to label the child as a “problem child” and are getting more and more frustrated with him. You notice that flashing lights and sounds also make it difficult for him to concentrate and stay on task. He is not fully participating in activities because of these challenges and is struggling with connecting to the other youth. How can you help change perceptions about Hugo being a “problem child” and support his camp experience?



Case Study #10

Sarah is a 15-year-old White Euro American camp counselor who some of the other counselors suspect is lesbian. Sarah has been engaged in the camp experience from day one and has done a great job working with the youth under her care. Sarah has not shared her sexual orientation and is unaware that she is being talked about. Her co-counselor has gone to one of the agents on staff and told them that she no longer feels comfortable sleeping in the same room as Sarah. Additionally, the other counselor does not feel comfortable taking showers in the same area as Sarah. If you were an agent, how would you handle this situation?

Case Study #11

Julia is a 13-year-old transgender White Euro American youth who identifies as female. Julia is using the girls' restroom and expects to sleep in the same room with the other girls at camp. A parent catches wind of Julia's registration and calls your office. The parent is irate and yells into the phone, "I'm not having my child sleep with a male." How do you handle this situation?



Case Study #12

Two 16-year-old female counselors meet up at camp and realize that they have dated the same young man. One is still currently dating him. The realization that one of the counselors is dating her ex-boyfriend is difficult for the counselor to process. She also finds out that the two had been dating at the same time she was dating the young man. She ends up calling her co-counselor a “slut” during a heated argument. The counselor who was called the name calls her mother and the mother then calls the agent. How can this situation be resolved?



Case Study #13

Mindy is an 11-year-old, White Euro American camper who is deaf/hard of hearing. She communicates using sign language and is eager to go to camp for her first camp experience. In order to fully understand and partake in camp activities, Mindy will need a sign language interpreter. Her mother, who is fluent in sign language, offers to accompany her, but Mindy would like to experience camp like all the other youth. What can you do ensure that she has a similar experience as all the other campers?



Case Study #14

Juan, a Latino American youth, has come to camp with no diagnosis on his health form. It is apparent that he has certain behavioral challenges that need to be addressed. Juan gets overly stimulated around the other children and this normally ends with screaming, crying, wanting to hide, running around in the bushes, and general difficulty with social interactions. It is noted that Juan responds better to redirection from male counselors. After camp, Juan's mother was approached about his unique challenges, but she would not give a diagnosis. She did confirm that this type of behavior happens at school as well, but does not want to talk about it further. How can you prepare to support Juan with his camp experience the following year?



Case Study #15

Jimmy, a White Euro American youth, does not seem engaged in kitchen patrol even though he is very engaged in camp otherwise. He tends to let the other team members clean up and do the dishes after dinner. You approach Jimmy about it one night after dinner and ask him how he feels about kitchen patrol. Jimmy seems eager to share his feelings with you. He explains that in his family, his father told him that it is not a man's job to set up and clean the table or do the dishes. These jobs are reserved for the females in his family. Jimmy said that he doesn't feel like a man when he is asked to do these types of duties and feels really uncomfortable doing them. How would you help Jimmy understand camp rules while being respectful of his family's beliefs?



Case Study #16

You are an agent at 4-H camp. A mother arrives to drop off her daughter and her daughter's best friend. The mother realizes that her daughter and her friend will be housed in two separate cabins; the mother had been under impression that the two girls would be rooming together. Normally, it is not possible to make a last minute switch. When you inform the mother of this, she becomes irate. She begins to get upset and raises her voice. She tells you that this is the first disappointment her child has ever experienced and it is sad that this came from 4-H. She adds that the only reason why she was open to sending her daughter to camp was because she could go with her best friend. The family comes from a small town and this is their first camp experience. The situation worsens as the mother begins to cry and tells you that she is sure the girls will be crying every night because they will be by themselves. The mother isn't sure they should stay. Then, the youth begin to cry as well.

What should you do to promote a positive youth development experience for these two girls?



Case Study #17

A few months ago, you sent out a county fair club work schedule asking clubs if they would like to make any revisions before the schedule is finalized. No club responds to your request. Two weeks before the fair, club volunteers voice that they are unhappy with the food stand work schedule because of the following reasons:

- The work schedule conflicts with an awards ceremony.
- The times to work were the “hardest” times to work out of all the clubs’ schedules.

Some of the club members decide to compose a letter to voice their discomfort with the current food stand work schedule requesting that 4-H hire a company to come and run the food stand. It is important to note that working the food stand is the only fundraiser that this club participates in all year and that all the proceeds go to 4-H Council. In addition, only some of the club members agree with writing the letter. The other members do not feel that the letter is a good representation of the whole club’s views. Nonetheless, the letter has been sent.

How would you approach responding to this situation just two weeks before the fair?

Case Study #18

A parent calls you after camp. He is concerned that his son has been bullied by a camp counselor who the parent believes was “making fun of him.” When you inquire further, it sounds like the counselor was joking around with the youth and the child did not know how to process this type of communication. The camp counselor would joke around, then the child would bottle things up until he would explode and start yelling and screaming at the camp counselor. Apparently, this happened multiple times during camp. The father does not believe that this was a good situation for his child to be in; however, his son did not notify staff during camp that something was wrong.

You decide to check with the group’s co-counselor to ask him what his thoughts are. The counselor said that the other counselor seemed a bit “immature,” but did not seem to bully the child purposely. He did however, excessively joke with the kids. The co-counselor added that it seemed like it was not a good personality mix. You thank the co-counselor for his feedback.

You need to call the father back and address his concerns. How will you approach this situation?



Case Study #19

You are leading a monthly STEM activity at a 4-H club event that is geared for parents and youth to participate in together. You notice that a mother and her 10-year-old daughter have struggled to communicate during the activities. Sometimes, they begin to argue and even yell in front of the other participants. You have noticed that tensions have been running high since the parents of this 10-year-old have been going through a divorce. The arguments between mother and daughter have been happening more and more frequently and have started to be disruptive to the group activity.

How can you support all participants in having a positive youth development experience?

