

# Ethical Decision Making

Enter your emotional intelligence scores in the graph below:

Self-awareness	Managing emotions	Motivating oneself	Empathy	Social Skill
39	34	24	27	31

Answer each of the following questions fully with at least 1 paragraph containing at least 5 sentences for each question. **Answer 1 question at a time. Do not skip ahead. Nurses are known for their integrity. The Gallup Poll has ranked nursing as the #1 most honest profession for 18 years in a row!**

Imagine that you are involved in a shipwreck situation. A ship has started to sink in the middle of the ocean. Eleven people have jumped into a lifeboat that has been designed for a maximum of ten people only, and the lifeboat is also starting to sink.

1. What should the passengers do? - Brainstorm, type your thought processes.

The passengers should come to a decision of one person being the leader to hold a democratic discussion. This will eliminate some of the chaos that is occurring while trying to survive and pick who stays behind. The passengers should have a discussion on who falls under the highest priority of staying on the lifeboat such as a pregnant mother. They should see how many lifejackets are present and what food and water is available to them. The passengers should try to remain as calm as possible since this is a life or death situation.

2. Do you throw one person overboard to save ten lives? – Discuss benefits and losses of the possible choices.

I think you first must evaluate the supplies the ship has. If the ship has a certain number of life jackets and one person does not get one, that one person should be on the lifeboat. Also, they should discuss their health issues if any and assess mental health. If someone is severely injured and in critical condition, you must take that into consideration. Ultimately, you cannot save everyone and there will be one left behind.

3. Discuss your thoughts and arguments as if you were the one chosen to be thrown overboard.

First of all, I would respectfully refuse to be thrown overboard considering I am young and healthy. I would also argue that I am a student in nursing school and could help save civilians lives on the lifeboat. I have excellent communication skills and could help determine who is a high priority to stay on the lifeboat. Clearly, I would be of importance during this disaster. However, I would be emotional if the people volunteered me to be thrown overboard.

4. Discuss your thoughts as if you were the one to decide who will be thrown overboard; and you cannot volunteer yourself, you must pick someone, it is solely your decision.

I would obviously feel horrible for picking someone to not be on the lifeboat. However, I do think if nobody were to pick, the lifeboat would continue to sink and everyone would die. When mass casualties occur, nurses must assess who is a high priority and who is not. There are certain situations in which it is too late to save a patient and that might be the

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case on this lifeboat. This would be a shocking and angry time for everyone however I would want to fight for my life.

5. Or do you stick to the principle of "do not kill", which means that everybody will drown?

I do not think this is fair when there are healthy individuals who still have their entire lives ahead of them. If this was a real life scenario, survival of the fittest would occur. I would fight for my life and stay on the lifeboat. It is important to remember everyone is in a different state in their life and some might be suffering, however that should not sacrifice everyone else's lives. I believe it would be wrong for everyone to drown when there was something present that could save their lives.

Now consider a slightly different situation where lives are at stake. There is a global pandemic. This is still life and death scenario.

1. What are the benefits or needs of staying home?

The benefits of staying at home during the Covid-19 pandemic are that you are not putting yourself or others at risk by spreading the virus and you reduce your chances of getting Covid-19. However, staying home is not what humans were made for. We were made for human interaction and not isolation. I think there are multiple steps humans can take to reduce the need to stay home like wearing masks, social distancing, and always washing our hands. In this case, I think there are some benefits to staying at home however we were not meant to live our lives in isolation.

2. What are the benefits or needs of going out?

The benefits of going out during the pandemic are that you are still living your normal life with some restrictions. This allows us to continue to do normal day to day activities like go to work, go to school, go to the grocery store, go to sporting events, etc. Especially now since there is a vaccine out, people should not have a problem going out into the public. Everyone can do their part by getting the vaccine to reduce covid-19 and wear masks if you are immunosuppressed or feel the need to. As I said above, we were not made to be isolated at home and considering there are steps we can take to be in public and around other people, we should be able to.

3. You live with your family. Food supplies are exhausted, and water is contaminated, it is not suitable for drinking. There is no protective equipment, who goes for supplies? Choose only 1 family member and it cannot be you; you cannot volunteer.

I would send my father. He is in a healthy condition for his age and he is capable of bringing what we need to us. He is also vaccinated. All of these were important factors when deciding who to go to gather supplies.

4. The family member that went for supplies has returned but has also been exposed to the deadly pandemic. Do you allow them back in the house? If so, all will die from exposure.

I would not allow him in the house since my older sister is pregnant. Although we are all vaccinated, clearly this would not help us survive in this scenario. I would set up a place for him in the garage for 14 days to allow him to recover appropriately from the virus. He could leave the supplies at the house entrance door and then move the appropriate amount of

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distance away that way the people inside of the house would be able to utilize the supplies. These steps would allow all to live safely while exposure was present.

6. The family has decided to have a closed meeting to decide their fate. While left outside, what are the thoughts of the family member that gathered the supplies.

I am sure my dad would not sacrifice his life and give up because of the pandemic. Therefore, he would not be in this situation because he did his civic duty by getting vaccinated. However, if for some reason this were the case, my dad would be devastated because he loves us and would not want anything to happen to us. He would be disappointed that he was exposed and knowing the fate of his future would be tormenting.

7. While you were waiting for the return of the family member (it took several days), you had a little cabin fever and “needed” to get out of the house. So, you snuck out of the house and went to a party in the middle of the night and you were successful in staying undetected coming back in. What are your thoughts as you are sitting in this meeting?

I would inform my family of my escape and take in their opinions. Now, it would be vital to consider me as a possible site of exposure. If I was exposed, I obviously would be putting my family at risk and if that was the case my dad should be allowed back into the house. However, if I was not exposed, at the first sign of signs and symptoms I would need to leave the house. I would definitely feel guilty if I did not say something and everyone in my family started to get sick.

8. You realize that you can keep silent about sneaking out and push to allow the family member back in, no one will ever know; you can literally take this secret to the grave. What are your thoughts? What are your fears or concerns? What are your acknowledgements?

My thoughts are I would always feel guilty if I was responsible for getting other people sick. My fears and concerns would be some of my family members do get sick and it is at my expense. Also, I would potentially be exposing other people to covid-19. Then if I came forward after this occurred, my family would be disappointed in my decisions. I could keep this a secret but I think informing my family of my decision would be what's best.