

What considerations  
are relevant?



Business Ethics: Midterm Essays 10/23/2012 What considerations are relevant when we assign blame for injurious acts? What is the distinction between excusing conditions and mitigating circumstances? Some say that moral responsibility is directed towards doing what is right and what is wrong. Well that is not necessarily the case; moral responsibility can also be aimed at determining whether a person is morally responsible for doing something morally wrong. This is known as blame. Blame and moral responsibility can be used interchangeably.

If someone is to be blamed for a wrong doing than that person is also held morally responsible for that wrong doing. Not all people are responsible for their wrongful or injurious acts. Injurious acts are harmful acts that one freely and knowingly intends to do. People have to consider the circumstances under which the person was morally right or morally wrong for their actions. Excusing conditions are conditions under which a person causes an injury on accident and is “excused” from blame and should not be held morally responsible. There are 3 considerations under which a person is not held morally responsible for an injury or a wrong.

One is not held responsible if: “one did not cause or could not prevent the injury, one did not know he was inflicting injury, and if one did not inflict the injury out of his own free will.” When a person is morally responsible for an act of injury or wrong doing there are also 3 things to consider. A person is held responsible if: “one caused or helped cause it, or failed to prevent it, one did so knowing what he or she was doing and if one did so out of his or her free will.” Excusing is when a person’s moral responsibility is excused by the absence of causality, knowledge and freedom.

Mitigating factors can diminish a person's moral responsibility but it depends on how severe the injury or wrong is. In addition to the excusing conditions, there are also 3 mitigating factors that can lessen moral responsibility. One circumstance leaves a person uncertain about what he or she is doing. Another makes it difficult, but not impossible for the person to avoid doing it. The third circumstance minimizes a person's involvement in an act. In general, the more serious the injury is, the less the mitigating circumstances will diminish responsibility.