

Overview of what an ethical dilemma is



“ A student finishes a Ph. D. working on a problem that has aspects that are directly patentable and solve a major problem in the disk drive industry. His new job could be with Hitachi or Seagate, or some similar firm. He arrives at the new job and discovers that the work done as a student, which is in the patent process, will solve the problem at his new company. If he reveals what he knows to his new employer he will be an immediate hero, but will compromise the patent process at his original institution. This step could have important financial implications for the original institution in the form of royalties” There are three conditions that must be present for a situation to be considered an ethical dilemma. The first condition occurs in situations when an individual, called the “ agent” must make a decision about which course of action is best. Situations that are uncomfortable but that don’t require choices are not ethical dilemmas. The second condition for ethical dilemma is that there must be different courses of action to choose from. Third, in an ethical dilemma, no matter what course of action is taken, some ethical principle is compromised. In other words, there is no perfect solution. In determining what constitutes an ethical dilemma, it is necessary to make a distinction between ethics, values, morals, and laws and policies. Ethics are propositional statements (standards) that are used by members of a profession or group to determine what the right course of action in a situation is?

In the above case this is a pure ethical dilemma because two ethical standards conflict. It can be resolved by looking at Ethical Standard, which states that social workers should only accept employment on the basis of existing competence or with the intention to acquire the necessary

competence. The social worker can accept the case, discussing the present limits of his expertise with the client and following through on his obligation to seek training or supervision in this area.

However, there are some complicated situations that require a decision but may also involve conflicts between values, laws, and policies. Although these are not absolute ethical dilemmas, we can think of them as “ approximate” dilemmas. For example, An approximate dilemma occur when a social worker in the company is legally obligate to make a report of product value in the market, and the report from the market about the product value is negative, so then the information release by the social worker may be process. So looking to the above situation as student finishes a Ph. D. working on a problem that has aspects that are directly patentable and solve a major problem in the disk drive industry. So experienced person who know well about the action to the required situation can make a good strategy to a problem. The social worker experiences this as a dilemma of some kind and needs to reach some kind of resolution. Identifying the ethics, morals, values, legal issues, and policies involved as well as distinguishing between personal and professional dimensions can help with the decision-making process in approximate dilemmas.