ETHICS PRINCIPLES VOCABULARY

Ethics Café

2 December 2019

Have you ever wondered what exactly is meant by 'ethics principles'?

And where to find a list of such principles?

And how such principles may be defined?

Today's exploration is about fundamental ethics principles and, in particular, those in which NPOs are typically rooted.

A bit of realism: In the time we have available for our discussion today, we will make a start to building ethics vocabulary, but by no means complete the exercise. Please be encouraged to continue the work on your ethics vocabulary.

Let's start with basic vocabulary

Morality and moral

Ethics and ethical

Philosophy

Morality

"There does not seem to be much reason to think that a single definition of morality will be applicable to all moral discussions. One reason for this is that "morality" seems to be used in two distinct broad senses: a descriptive sense and a normative sense. More particularly, the term "morality" can be used either

- descriptively to refer to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (such as a religion), or accepted by an individual for her own behavior, or

- normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons".

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2002) (substantive revision Mon Feb 8, 2016). The Definition of Morality

Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/

Moral

STANDARDS AND INTENTIONS:

- A moral theory:

A theory is a structured set of statements used to explain (or predict) a set of facts or concepts. A moral theory, then, explains why a certain action is wrong -- or why we ought to act in certain ways. In short, it is a theory of how we determine right and wrong conduct. Also, moral theories provide the framework upon which we think and discuss in a reasoned way, and so evaluate, specific moral issues.

Available at: http://home.sandiego.edu/~baber/gender/MoralTheories.html

- A moral lesson:

A message embedded in a situation/story that teaches us about what is right thinking and action.

Available at: https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/moral

DOING:

- A moral action:

Behaviour that translates a moral standard into practice.

Ethics and ethical

"Ethics is the philosophical study of Morality".

Available at:
http://home.sandiego.edu/~baber/gender/MoralTheories.html

Ethical

"adjective

- pertaining to or dealing with morals or the principles of morality; pertaining to right and wrong in conduct.

- being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession:*It was not considered ethical for physicians to advertise".*

Available at: https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ethical

Philosophy

"… The word *philosophy* means "love of wisdom.""

Through philosophy, we are able to explore concepts like the meaning of life, knowledge, morality, … consciousness, politics, religion, economics, art, linguistics …

In a very broad sense, there are six major themes philosophy touches on:

- **Metaphysics:** The study of the universe and reality
- **Logic:** How to create a valid argument
- **Epistemology:** The study of knowledge and how we acquire knowledge
- **Aesthetics:** The study of art and beauty
- **Politics:** The study of political rights, government, and the role of citizens
- **Ethics:** The study of morality and how one should life his life".

Paul Kleinman (2013). *PHILOSOPHY 101*. Simon & Schuster: USA. Pp.5-6.

Ethics – field of study

Meta-ethics – questions about ethics

Normative ethics – questions within ethics

Normative Ethics

RIGHT ACTION

Consequences

Duty

Rights

CHARACTER

Virtue

What kind of person ...

VALUE

What matters?

Better/worse state of affairs?

Recognising ethics terrain in everyday situations

⚠️

Reaction of unease

right/wrong
should
must
ought to
better/worse state of affairs
justify

Language

⚖️ Thinking characterised by reasoning, weighing up, justifying

Ethics principles

Do good, do no harm

Fairness

Equality

Freedom

Care ethic

Do good, do no harm

Benevolence, beneficence

Conduct yourself in such a way so as to be of benefit to others and the world, to do no harm.

What is of benefit?

What is considered of value?

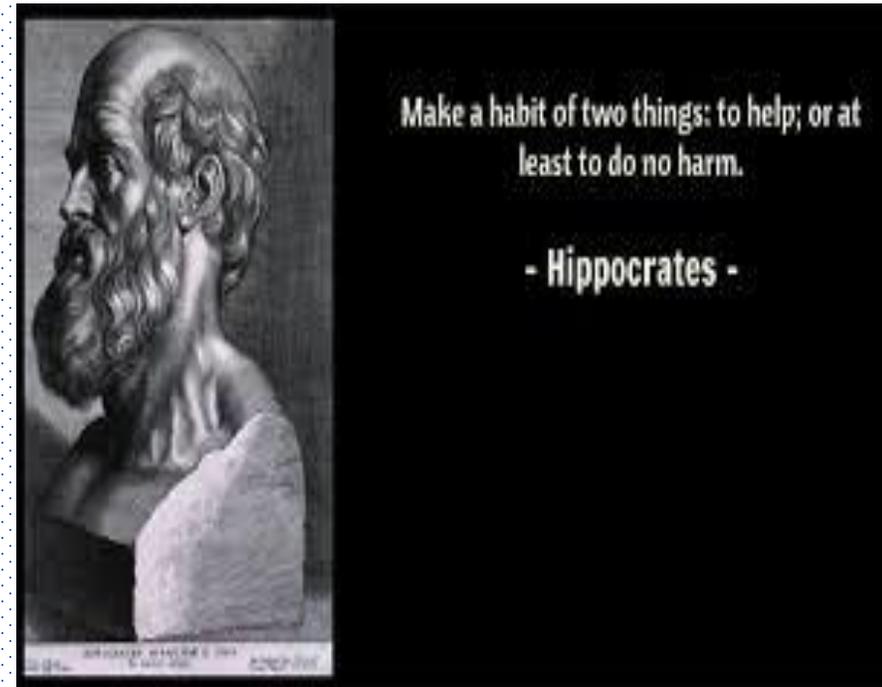What is considered a good/better state of affairs?

Tension between self-interest and others' interest.

Do not use others as a means to an end.

Duties and responsibilities

- Positive duties

- Negative duties

Notions of Care and Compassion

Make a habit of two things: to help; or at least to do no harm.

- Hippocrates -

Fairness is about justice

Justice

Giving each person their due (not more, not less)

- **Social justice**: equal opportunity, equal rights
- **Distributive justice**: fair distribution of resources (who, what, why)

    Dr Edwin Etieyibo (2014). Social Justice Course. WITS.

- **Restorative justice**: ",,, an approach to justice that aims to involve the parties to a dispute and others affected by the harm ... in collectively identifying harms, needs and obligations through accepting responsibilities, making restitution, and taking measures to prevent a recurrence of the incident and promoting reconciliation... "

    National Policy Framework

- **Retributive justice**: justice (fairness) is served through punishment of the person who did wrong.

Equality

Equal moral worth of each person

Equal opportunity

Discrimination works against equality

Freedom

Autonomy

Liberty

Self-determination

Care ethic

Who am I in relation to others?

Duties and responsibilities
- Positive duties
- Negative duties

Ubuntu

A work in progress …