Ethics: General Ethics

U of M mandates training in ethical conduct of research, scholarship, and teaching (see `www.research.umn.edu/ethics`).

> "Of all the traits which qualify a scientist for citizenship in the republic of science, I would put a sense of responsibility as a scientist at the very top. A scientist can be brilliant, imaginative, clever with his hands, profound, broad, narrow — but he is not much as a scientist unless he is responsible."
>
> *— Alvin Weinberg, "The Obligations of Citizenship in the Republic of Science," Minerva, 16: 1–3, 1978*

There are many sources of ethical principles: religion, philosophers, national leaders, etc. We'll discuss some universal themes, starting with those from the Western tradition.

Nonmaleficence Do no harm to yourself or others.

Beneficence Help yourself and others.

Autonomy Allow rational individuals to make free, informed choices.

Justice Treat people fairly; treat equals equally, unequals unequally.

Utility Maximize the ratio of benefit to harm for all people.

Fidelity Keep your promises and agreements.

Honesty Do not lie, defraud, or mislead.

Privacy Respect personal privacy and confidentiality.

For your group's principle, think of one situation from everyday life where that principle might influence a decision or action.

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Here are six Confucian virtues (taken from Southern Methodist stat ethics course).

– benevolence (ren，仁)
– righteousness (yi，义)
– ritual propriety (li，礼)
– wisdom (zhi，智)
– trustworthiness(xin，信)
– filial piety (xiao，孝)

For your group's virtue, which of the previous principles are related, and how?

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Think of a statistical situation (in business, science, or academia) where one (or more) these ethical principles might influence a decision or action

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Think of a situation (either general or statistical) where your principle or virtue conflicts with another principle or virtue.

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Name: _____

Think about a time you had to make an ethical choice. Describe the situation. Which principles or virtues did you consider?

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