



# Professional Ethics

## SS-301

### Lecture 5

## **Social Cognition, Moral Dilemma, Kohlberg's theory of Moral Development**

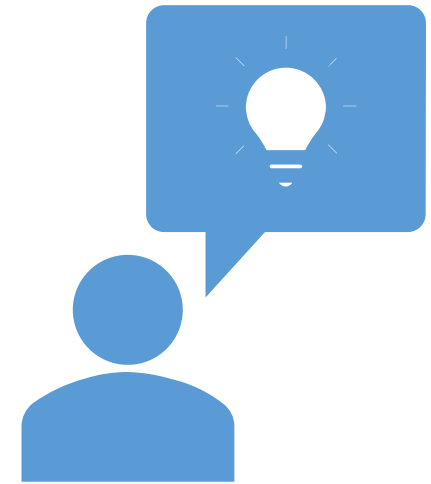
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# Social Cognition

- Cognition is a term referring to the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension
  - include thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and problem-solving
- **Social Cognition**
- how people perceive, think about, interpret, categorize, and judge their own social behaviors and those of others
- Refers to the manners in which we interpret, analyze , remember and use information about social world



# Nature of Social Cognition

- There are two basic ways to make sense of social world around us:

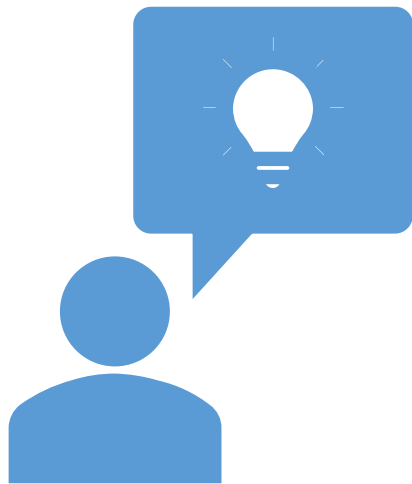
## 1. Automatic Thought / Processing

often our thinking about the social world proceeds on “automatic”—quickly, effortlessly, and without lots of careful reasoning.

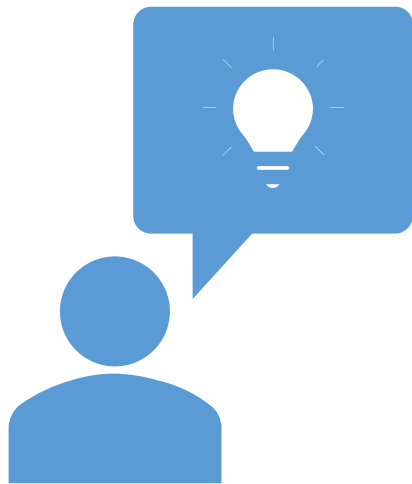
Basic advantages of Automatic Processing in Social Cognition are –

- It need very little or no efforts.
- It can be very efficient.
- It can lead to satisfactory judgements

But, It can also lead to major errors in conclusions.



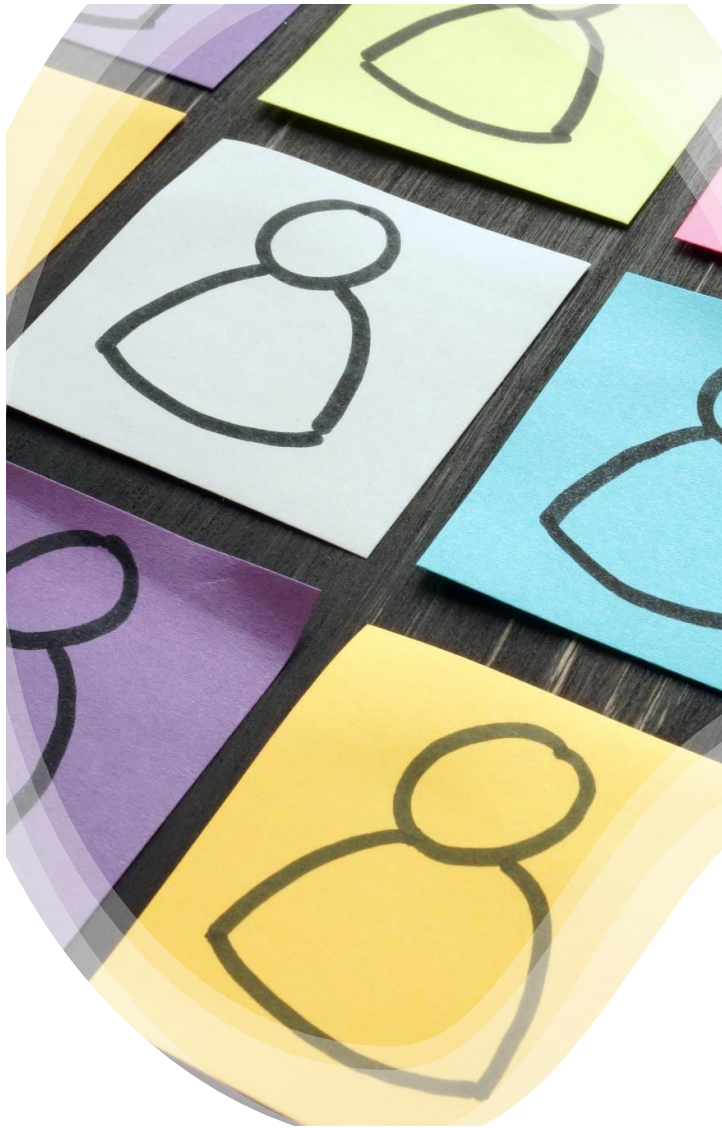
# Nature of Social Cognition



## 2. Controlled Thought / Processing in Social Cognition

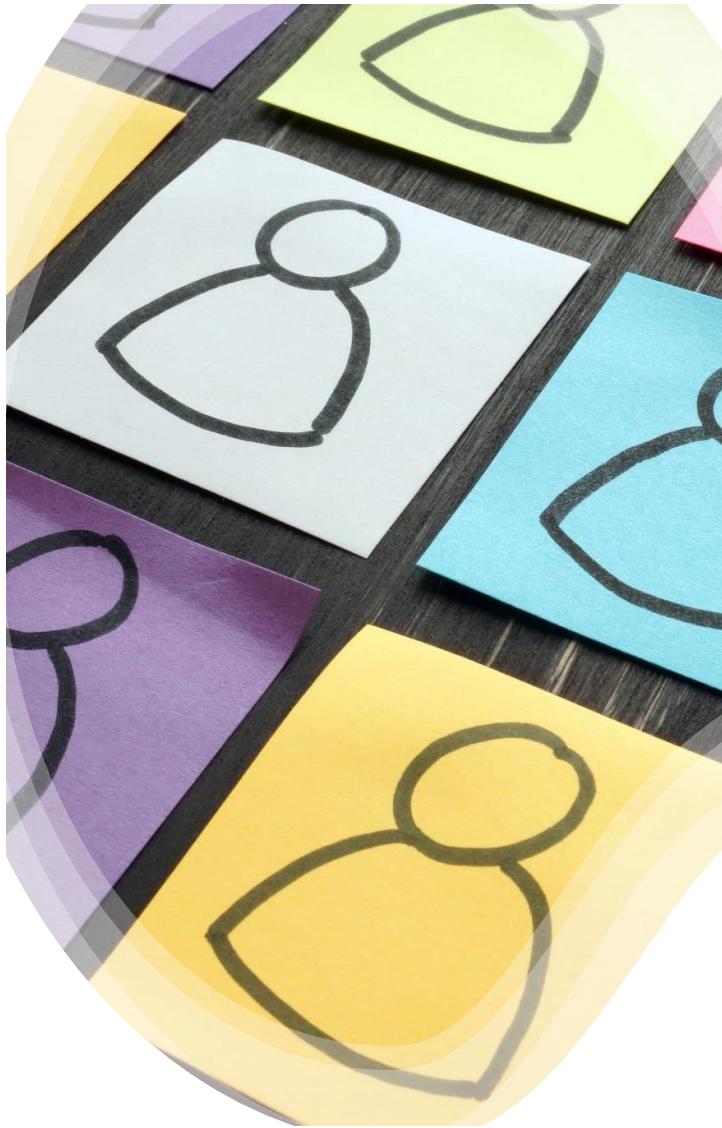
- It occurs when something unexpected happens.
- Unexpected events often triggers such careful, systematic, logical effortful thought.

# Social cognitive theory of morality



- This theory attempts to explain how moral thinking, in interaction with other psychosocial determinants, govern individual moral conduct
- Social cognitive theory adopts an "**interactionist**" perspective to the development of moral behavior
- **Interactionism states that individuals learn about society through interactions with other people, and that society is created by a multitude of individual interactions.**
- Personal factors of the individual, such as individual moral thought, emotional reactions to behavior, personal moral conduct, and factors within their environment, all interact with, and affect each other
- Social cognitive theory attempts to understand why an individual uses a lower level of moral reasoning when they are, theoretically, at a higher level
- It also attempts to explain the way social interactions help to form new, as well as change in existing, moral standards
- The influence of modeling and other such social factors are explored as functions of growth and development

# Social cognitive theory of morality

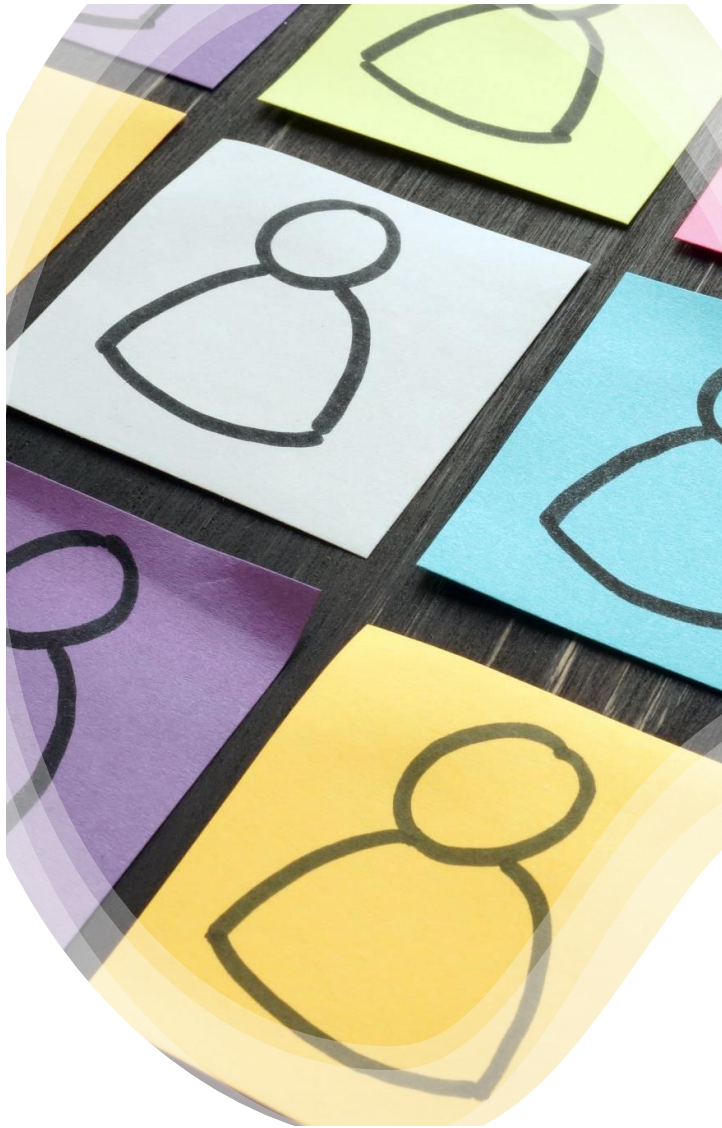


- This theory attempts to explain how moral thinking, in interaction with other psychosocial determinants, govern individual moral conduct
- Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) describes the influence of individual experiences, the actions of others, and environmental factors on individual health behaviors.
- Key components of the SCT related to individual behavior change include:
- **Self-efficacy:** The belief that an individual has control over and is able to execute a behavior.
- **Behavioral capability:** Understanding and having the skill to perform a behavior.
- **Expectations:** Determining the outcomes of behavior change.
- **Expectancies:** Assigning a value to the outcomes of behavior change.
- **Self-control:** Regulating and monitoring individual behavior.
- **Observational learning:** Watching and observing outcomes of others performing or modeling the desired behavior.
- **Reinforcements:** Promoting incentives and rewards that encourage behavior change.



# Social cognitive theory

## Example



- **Social Cognitive Theory Examples**
- [Healthy Relationships](#), a program implemented by [Chattanooga CARES](#), is a small-group intervention for people living with HIV/AIDS. The program is based on the Social Cognitive Theory and uses skill-building exercises to increase independence and develop healthy behaviors among participants.
- [HoMBReS](#) is a [community-based intervention](#) designed to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases among Latino men living in rural areas of the United States. Based on the Social Cognitive Theory, the program trains “Navegantes” (Navigators) who provide information and risk reduction materials to the target population.

# Erickson's theory of Social Development

- Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0 - 1½
2.	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	1½ - 3
3.	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	3 - 5
4.	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	5 - 12
5.	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	12 - 18
6.	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	18 - 40
7.	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	40 - 65
8.	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	65+



# 1. Trust vs. Mistrust

- This stage begins at birth continues to approximately 18 months of age.
- During this stage, the infant is uncertain about the world in which they live and looks towards their primary caregiver
- If the care is consistent, predictable and reliable, they will develop a sense of trust
- This will carry with them to other relationships, and they will be able to feel secure even when threatened
- If these needs are not consistently met, mistrust, suspicion, and anxiety may develop.
- *Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **hope**.*



## 2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **will**.

If children in this stage are encouraged and supported in their increased independence, they become more confident and secure in their own ability to survive in the world.

Otherwise, they begin to feel inadequate in their ability to survive, and may then become overly dependent upon others

child is developing physically and becoming more mobile, and discovering abilities

Erikson states it is critical that parents allow their children to explore the limits



### 3. Initiative vs. Guilt

- During this period the primary feature involves the child regularly interacting with other children at school.
- Central to this stage is **play**, as it provides children with the opportunity to explore their interpersonal skills through initiating activities.
- Children begin to plan activities, make up games, and initiate activities with others.
- If given this opportunity, children develop a sense of **initiative and feel secure** in their ability to lead others and make decisions.
- if this tendency is squelched, either through criticism or control, children develop a sense of **guilt**.



## 4. Industry vs. Inferiority

- Children are at the stage where they will be learning to read and write, to do sums, to do things on their own
- Teachers begin to take an important role in the child's life as they teach the child specific skills.
- If the child cannot develop the specific skill, they feel society is demanding then they may develop a sense of Inferiority.
- Again, a balance between competence and modesty is necessary.
- Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **competence**.

## 5. Identity vs. Role Confusion

- This is a major stage of development where the child has to learn the roles he will occupy as an adult.
- It is during this stage that the adolescent will re-examine his identity and try to find out exactly who he or she is.
- Erikson suggests that two identities are involved: **the sexual and the occupational**.
- Erikson claims that the adolescent may feel uncomfortable about their body for a while until they can adapt and “grow into” the changes
- Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **fidelity**.
- Fidelity involves being able to commit one's self to others based on accepting others,



## 6. Intimacy vs. Isolation

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We begin to share ourselves more intimately with others.

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We explore relationships leading toward longer-term commitments with someone other than a family member.

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Successful completion of this stage can result in happy relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship.

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Avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **love**.



## 7. Generativity vs. Stagnation

- We give back to society through raising our children, being productive at work, and becoming involved in community activities and organizations.
- Through generativity we develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture.
- Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
- By failing to find a way to contribute, we become stagnant and feel unproductive.
- These individuals may feel disconnected or uninvolved with their community and with society.
- Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of **care**.

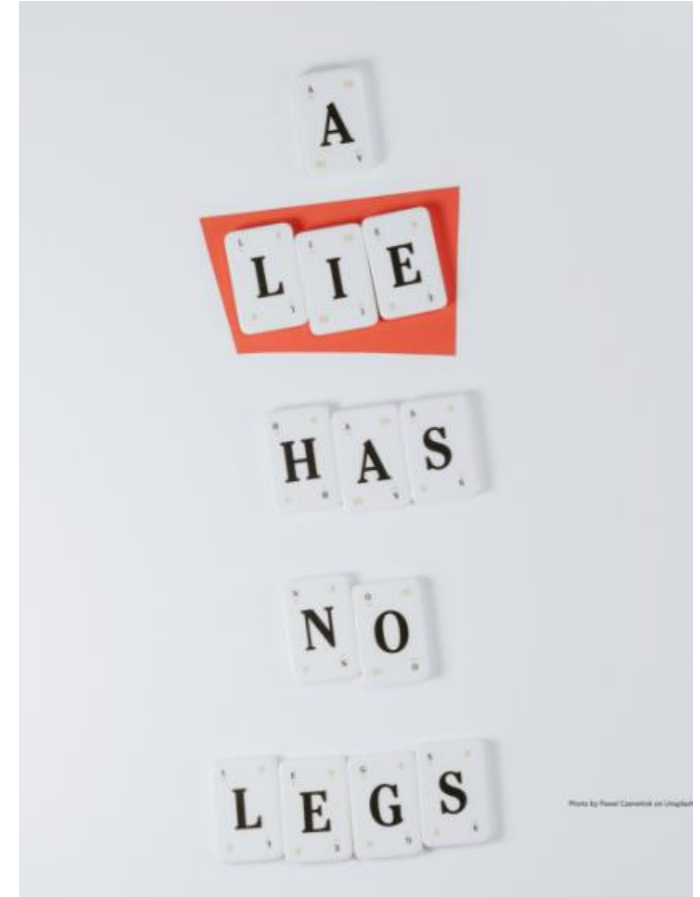
# **Moral (Ethical) Dilemma**

# Moral (Ethical) Dilemma

- Problem in the decision-making process between two possible options, neither of which is absolutely acceptable from an ethical perspective.
- Extremely complicated challenges that cannot be easily solved.
- Ability to find the optimal solution in such situations is critical to everyone.
- A response to a moral (ethical) dilemma is not always a matter of “right versus wrong,” as both courses of action or decision could seem moral or ethical (or the “right thing to do”).
- Involves to decide the better or best way to respond when faced with two or more “right “courses of action or decisions to select from.
- **What should I do?” or “What ought I do now?**
- You may have a “little voice” inside your head telling you to do one thing, while your immediate desire is to do another.

# Case-1: Moral (Ethical) Dilemma

- Your eighteen-year-old sibling/relative confided in you that they had been involved in the recent theft of your neighbor's car. Should you call the police and turn your son/daughter in because you want to be honest with you neighbor, as well as want to tell the truth? Or do you simply “keep quiet” because you want to remain loyal to your sibling/relative, especially since they told you in confidence?
- (Think about truth versus loyalty when pondering this dilemma, such as in the relationship with your sibling/relative and your neighbor.)



## Case-2: Moral (Ethical) Dilemma

- You have a failing grade in your English class, and you were quite surprised when you received your final exam back. It shows you scored 100% on the exam, yet you cannot figure out how you even passed the exam. You did not study, and you totally guessed when completing the multiple-choice and true/false questions. There is no way you could have passed the final exam, and you were prepared to earn an F in the course. You had even planned to retake the course during the summer. You really need to pass this class to graduate.
- Upon reviewing the exam, you notice the teacher made a big mistake in grading my exam. You should have earned an F on the final exam, and not the grade of 100%. The error in grading was not your fault, so you are wondering if you should say anything to your instructor about her big mistake in grading my final exam? If you say something, then you will fail the course and have to retake it in the summer. If you do not say anything, you can at least earn a D and not have to retake the course. (Think about the short- and long-term impact of this situation on you as the student, the instructor, and other students in the same course.)



# Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg developed one of the best-known theories exploring some of these basic questions.
- Proposing that moral development is a continual process that occurs throughout the lifespan.

Levels of Moral Development	Age	Stages Included in This Level
Preconventional Morality	0 to 9	Stage 1: Obedience and punishment Stage 2: Individualism and exchange
Conventional Morality	Early adolescence to adulthood	Stage 3: Developing good interpersonal relationships Stage 4: Maintaining social order
Postconventional Morality	Some adults; rare	Stage 5: Social contract and individual rights stage 6: Universal principles



## Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development: The Six Stages



1. Rules are fixed and absolute



2. Judging actions according to individual needs



3. Conforming and being "nice"



4. Respecting authority



5. Considering individual rights



Verywell / Bailey Marino

# Level 1. Preconventional Morality

- Preconventional morality (ages of 4 and 10 years) is the earliest period of moral development. It lasts until around the age of 9.
- At this age, children's decisions are primarily shaped by the expectations of adults and the consequences of breaking the rules.
- **Stage 1 (Obedience and Punishment):** The earliest stages of moral development, obedience and punishment are especially common in young children.
- According to Kohlberg, people at this stage see rules as fixed and absolute.
- **Stage 2 (Individualism and Exchange):** a child's actions are based mainly on consideration of what other people can do for them. They tend to follow rules out of self-interest.

## Level 2. Conventional Morality

- Next period (ages of 10 and 13) of moral development is marked by the acceptance of social rules regarding what is good and moral.
- **Stage 3 (Developing Good Interpersonal Relationships):** children evaluate morality based on the person's motives behind their behavior. Children in this stage can take different circumstances into account when deciding if an act was moral or not.
- *Children in this stage often want to help others, can judge others' intentions, and can begin to develop their own ideas regarding morality.*
- **Stage 4 (Maintaining Social Order):** individuals become more concerned with respecting authority, maintaining social order, and doing their duty within society.
- In this stage, one considers an act morally wrong if it harms others or violates a rule of law.

## Level 3. Postconventional Morality

- by early adolescence or young adulthood, though many individuals never reach this level.
- **Stage 5 (Social Contract and Individual Rights):** people begin to value the will of the majority, as well as the well-being of society.
- *Though people at this stage can recognize that there are times when human need and the law are conflicted, they typically believe that it is better when people follow the law.*
- **Stage 6 (Universal Principles):**
- At this stage, people follow these internalized principles of justice, even if they conflict with laws and rules.

## People who reach the post-

Kohlberg believed that only a relatively small percentage of people ever reach the post-conventional stages (around 10 to 15%).

One analysis found that while stages one to four could be seen as universal in populations throughout the world, the **fifth and sixth** stages were extremely rare in all populations.

# Applications for Kohlberg's Theory



- Kohlberg's theories can help business owners and managers assess how their employees and other key stakeholders interact with the organization and its leadership at various stages of growth.
- Understanding moral development and moral reasoning in business ethics can help leaders make ethically defensible choices that benefit the greater good.
- **Desire to Please Others**
- When applied to business, the **preconventional level** explains the reactions of many employees when they first join an organization. There is often apprehension about pleasing the boss and a desire to perform work diligently and without much upset.



# Applications for Kohlberg's Theory



- **Adherence to Authority**

- this conventional stage of morality is witnessed as employees become more comfortable working within the organization and with their co-workers and supervisors.
- While the employee will ideally still want to be productive with her time, her focus begins to shift to the better good of the company as opposed to purely selfish motives.

- **Acceptance of Social Responsibility**

- In the business setting, the postconventional stage is likely to be seen in employees who have a long history with the company.
- These employees may have risen to management positions and are keen to secure a sense of rights and responsibilities among their subordinates.

# Applications for Kohlberg's Theory

- Teachers and other educators can also apply Kohlberg's theory in the classroom, providing additional moral guidance.
- A kindergarten teacher could help enhance moral development by setting clear rules for the classroom, and the consequences for violating them.
- A teacher in high school might focus more on the development that occurs in stage three (developing good interpersonal relationships) and stage four (maintaining social order).