

The four stage ethical decision-making model

This EDMM (ethical decision-making model) is created to resolve ethical dilemmas of mental health teams. Although previous models existed, there seemed to be a lack of a model that would be user-friendly and understandable in terms of rationale for thinking. The model is divided into four parts, with each part having an internal logic. (Ferencz-Kaddari, 2025)

In the first part, the therapist meets with the dilemma and processes it in front of himself. In the second part, the therapist introduces the dilemma to the external world of codes, laws, and so forth. In the third part, a solution is chosen, and in the fourth part implements it.

Stage I: Encountering the dilemma and processing the data

1. Describe the story of the dilemma.
2. Define the dilemma and identify its ethical conflicts and competing interests.
3. Identify the subthemes in the dilemma and describe the issues.
4. Examine who you are obligated to.
5. Specify the emotions that may be involved.
6. Address the values that are entailed in resolving the dilemma.
7. Address the morality component by asking “What commitment do you feel towards the patient? How would other therapists behave and act in this case?”
8. Make a list of the various possible courses of action.

Stage II: Data collection and consulting with others Consult with other professionals, ethical codes and legislation, current research, supervisors, peers, and ethics committee members.

Stage III: Selecting one course of action Select one course of action. This entails the attitudes component: “To what extent is the solution expected to yield positive or negative results?” List all the possible disadvantages of the chosen solution.

Stage IV: Applying the solution

Begin implementing the solution. Monitor the patient and the outcomes continuously until a new balance is achieved.

(Ferencz-Kaddari, 2025)

James rest four component model (FCM)

The Four Component Model (FCM) developed by James Rest, an American psychologist, is a foundational framework in moral psychology that explains the psychological processes involved in ethical decision-making and moral behavior. He concluded that ethical action is the result of four interrelated psychological components:

C1. Interpretation. 'The person must have been able to make some sort of interpretation of the particular situation in terms of what actions were possible, who (including oneself) would be affected by each course of action, and how the interested parties would regard such efforts on their welfare'.

C2. Judgement. 'The person must have been able to make a judgment about which course of action was morally right (or fair or just or morally good), thus labeling one possible line of action as what a person ought (morally ought) to do in that situation'

C3. Decision (or Motivation). 'The person must give priority to moral values above other personal values such that a decision is made to intend to do what is morally right'.

C4. Implementation. 'The person must have sufficient perseverance, ego strength, and implementation skills to be able to follow through on his/her intention to behave morally, to withstand fatigue and flagging will, and to overcome obstacles'.

(Breakey, 2023)

Bibliografie

Breakey, J. R. (2023). *James Rest's four component model (FCM): A case for its central place in legal ethics*. Griffith University, Australia: Griffith Research Online.

Ferencz-Kaddari, M. (2025). The Four-Stage Ethical Decision-Making Model. *Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry, Volume 27, Number 1, 2025* (p. 46). Reichman University (IDC), Herzliya, Israel: Springer Publishing Company.