

A Code of Intellectual Conduct

(taken from T. Edward Damer's *Attacking Faulty Reasoning*)

Standards for the Code itself:

- *Procedural*: the rules that, when followed, most often lead to 1) the successful resolution of issues, 2) the most rationally endorsed beliefs and, we hope, 3) truth
 - o Considerations stemming from our aims (ex. The *product* or *ends* of our argumentative efforts)
- *Ethical*: the rules that, when followed, constrain our behavior within contexts of disagreement in light of what we owe to others and to ourselves (i.e. these rules describe the best way to be and behave in a certain sphere of human life)
 - o Considerations stemming from how we go about pursuing them (ex. Our *attitudes* or *means* in argumentative exertions)

The Fallibility Principle

Each participant in a discussion of a disputed issue should be willing to accept the fact that he or she is fallible, which means that one must acknowledge that one's own initial view may not be the most defensible position on the question.

The Truth-Seeking Principle

Each participant should be committed to the task of earnestly searching for the truth or at least the most defensible position on the issue at stake. Therefore, one should be willing to examine alternative positions seriously, look for insights in the positions of others, and allow other participants to present arguments of or raise objections to any position held on an issue.

The Clarity Principle

The formulations of all positions, defenses, and attacks should be free of any kind of linguistic confusion and clearly separated from other positions or issues.

The Burden-of-Proof Principle

The burden of proof for any position usually rests on the participant who sets forth the position. If and when an opponent asks, the proponent should provide an argument for that position.

The Principle of Charity

If a participant's argument is reformulated by an opponent, it should be carefully expressed in its strongest possible version that is consistent with what is believed to be the original intention of the arguer. If there is any question about that intention or about any implicit part of the argument, the arguer should be given the benefit of the doubt in the reformulation and/or, when possible, given the opportunity to amend it.

The Structural Principle

One who argues for or against a position should use an argument that meets the fundamental structural requirements of a well-formed argument. Such an argument does not use reasons that contradict each other, that contradict the conclusion, or that explicitly or implicitly assume the truth of the conclusion. Neither does it draw any invalid deductive inferences.

The Relevance Principle

One who presents an argument for or against a position should set forth only reasons whose truth provides some evidence for the truth of the conclusion.

The Acceptability Principle

One who presents an argument for or against a position should provide reasons that are likely to be accepted by a mature, rational person and that meet standard criteria of acceptability.

1. A claim that is a matter of undisputed common knowledge
2. A claim that is confirmed by one's personal experience or observation
3. A claim that is adequately defended in the context of the argument or at least is capable of being adequately defended by some other accessible source
4. An uncontroverted eyewitness testimony
5. An uncontroverted claim from a relevant authority
6. The conclusion of another good argument
7. A relatively minor claim that seems to be a reasonable assumption in the context of the argument

1. A claim that contradicts credible evidence, a well-established claim, or a legitimate authority
2. A claim that is inconsistent with one's own experience or observations
3. A questionable claim that is not adequately defended in the context of the argument or not capable of being adequately defended by evidence in some other accessible source
4. A claim that is self-contradictory or linguistically confusing
5. A claim that is based on another unstated but highly questionable assumption

The Sufficiency Principle

One who presents an argument for or against a position should attempt to provide relevant and acceptable reasons of the right kind, that together are sufficient in number and weight to justify the acceptance of the conclusion.

The Rebuttal Principle

One who presents an argument for or against a position should include in the argument an effective rebuttal to all anticipated serious criticisms of the argument that may be brought against it or against the position it supports.

The Suspension-of-Judgment Principle

If no position is defended by a good argument, or if two or more positions seem to be defended with equal strength, one should, in most cases, suspend judgment about the issue. If practical considerations seem to require a more immediate decision, one should weight the relative benefits or harm connected with the consequences of suspending judgment and decide the issue on those grounds.

The Resolution Principle

As issue should be considered resolved if the argument for one of the alternative positions is a structurally sound one that uses relevant and acceptable reasons that together provide sufficient grounds to justify the conclusion and that also includes an effective rebuttal to all serious criticisms of the argument and/or the position it supports. Unless one can demonstrate that the argument has not met these conditions more successfully than any argument presented for alternative positions, one is obligated to accept its conclusion and consider the issue to be settled. If the argument is subsequently found by any participant to be flawed in a way that raises new doubts about the merit of the position it supports, one is obligated to reopen the issue for further consideration and resolution.

14 Types of Bias

When it comes to human behavior, there are many common types of bias we have that can influence the way we think and act in our everyday lives.

Confirmation bias.

This type of bias refers to the tendency to seek out information that supports something you already believe, and is a particularly pernicious subset of cognitive bias—you remember the hits and forget the misses, which is a flaw in human reasoning. People will cue into things that matter to them, and dismiss the things that don't, which can lead to the "ostrich effect" (named so because ostriches bury their heads in the sand), where a subject seeks to avoid information that may disprove their original point.

The Dunning-Kruger Effect.

This particular bias refers to how people perceive a concept or event to be simplistic just because their knowledge about it may be simple or lacking—the less you know about something, the less complicated it may appear. However, this form of bias limits curiosity—people don't feel the need to further explore a concept, because it seems simplistic to them. This bias can also lead people to think they are smarter than they actually are because they have reduced a complex idea to a simplistic understanding.

Cultural bias.

Cultural bias, also known as implicit bias, involves those who perceive other cultures as being abnormal, outlying, or exotic, simply based on a comparison to their own culture. Also known as implicit social cognition, this bias attributes the traits and behaviors of an individual to a larger group of people.

Implicit bias creates attitudes or stereotypes that can affect or influence our decisions in an unconscious way. This unconscious bias affects many people because they are unaware of the origins of their baseline of thinking.

In-group bias.

This type of bias refers to how people are more likely to support or believe someone within their own social group than an outsider. This bias tends to remove objectivity from any sort of selection or hiring process, as individuals tend to favor those who they personally know and want to help.

Decline bias

*The decline bias refers to the tendency to compare the past to the present, leading to the decision that things are worse, or **becoming worse in comparison to the past, simply because change is occurring.***

Optimism or pessimism bias.

This bias refers to how individuals are more likely to estimate a positive outcome if they are in a good mood, and a negative outcome if they are in a bad mood.

Self-serving bias.

*A self-serving bias is an assumption that good things happen to us when we've done all the right things, but bad things happen to us because of circumstances outside our control or things other people purport. This bias results in a tendency to blame outside circumstances for bad situations rather than taking **personal responsibility.***

Information bias.

*Information bias is a type of cognitive bias that refers to the idea that amassing more information will aid in better decision-making, even if **that extra information is irrelevant to the actual subject at hand.***

Selection bias.

This bias refers to the way individuals notice things more when something has happened to make us notice that particular thing more—like when you buy a car and suddenly notice more models of that car on the road. The car has simply become part of the individual's observations, so they tend to observe it more elsewhere (also known as observational selection bias).

Availability bias.

*Also known as the availability heuristic, this bias refers to the tendency to use the information we can **quickly recall** when evaluating a topic or idea—even if this information is not the best representation of the topic or idea. Using this mental shortcut, we deem the information we can most easily recall as valid and ignore alternative solutions or opinions.*

Fundamental attribution error.

This bias refers to an individual's tendency to attribute someone's particular behaviors to existing, unfounded stereotypes, while attributing their own similar behavior to external factors. For instance, when someone on your team is late to an important meeting, you may assume that they are lazy or lacking motivation without considering internal and external factors like an illness or traffic accident that led to the tardiness. However, when you are running late because of a flat tire, you expect others to attribute the error to the external factor (flat tire) rather than your personal behavior.

Hindsight bias.

Hindsight bias, also known as the knew-it-all-along effect, is when people perceive events to be more predictable after they happen. With this bias, people overestimate their ability to predict an outcome beforehand, even though the information they had at the time would not have led them to the correct outcome. This type of bias happens often in sports and world affairs. Hindsight bias can lead to overconfidence in one's ability to predict future outcomes.

Anchoring bias.

The anchoring bias, or focalism, pertains to those who rely too heavily on the first piece of information they receive—an "anchoring" fact— and base all subsequent judgments or opinions on this fact. For instance, if you tell someone a picture frame costs \$20 and they go to a store that sells it for \$15, their anchoring bias will lead them to perceive the \$15 frame as a bargain, even though it may be on sale at a different store for \$10. With anchoring bias, the initial price of the frame will influence a person's perception of its value.

Observer bias.

The observer bias occurs when someone's evaluation of another person is influenced by their own inherent cognitive biases. Observers, like researchers or scientists, may assess the outcome of an experiment differently depending on their existing evaluations of the current subject. Subsequently, the subject that is under observation may alter their behavior if they know they are being observed. Double-blind studies are often implemented to overcome observer bias.

We hope this informs both your understanding and critical thinking for future intellectual discussions.