

# UNIT 1: ETHICAL VALUES

## Introduction to Ethical Values for Citizens

Ethical values are essential for building a better and more civilized society. They guide our behavior and decisions, helping us live harmoniously with others. This unit will help you understand the meaning of ethics, major ethical values, and applied ethics, including professional and environmental ethics.

### Key Words and Concepts:

- **Abiding by the Law:** Following legal rules and regulations.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** Striving to achieve the highest standards.
- **Environmental Ethics:** Respecting and protecting the environment.
- **Ethics:** Principles guiding what is right and wrong.
- **Helping Others:** Offering assistance and support to others.
- **Integrity:** Adhering to moral and ethical principles.
- **Keeping Promises:** Fulfilling verbal or written commitments.
- **Loyalty:** Being faithful to commitments, institutions, or people.
- **Morality:** Standards for distinguishing right from wrong.
- **Professional Ethics:** Ethical standards in a professional context.
- **Respecting Others:** Valuing and honoring others' rights and opinions.
- **Values:** Beliefs about what is important or desirable.

### Lessons:

#### The Meaning of Ethics

**Ethics** is the study of what is right and wrong and how individuals should act. It comes from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning customs or habits.

- **Ethics:** Refers to moral principles guiding behavior. It helps determine what actions are right or wrong and what values are important.
- **Morality:** Refers to specific standards and principles used to judge behaviors.

Ethics and morality are closely related but not always the same. While ethics is about the theoretical understanding of right and wrong, morality involves practical standards and behaviors.

#### Major Ethical Values

**Integrity:** Acting with honesty and strong moral principles. It means aligning your behavior with your beliefs and being trustworthy.

## Key Attributes of Integrity:

- **Respect for Humanity:** Valuing every individual regardless of differences.
- **Consistency:** Aligning actions with words and promises.
- **Honesty:** Avoiding deceitful behaviors.
- **Responsibility:** Owning up to actions and their consequences.
- **Kindness:** Being compassionate and supportive.
- **Self-Awareness:** Understanding your strengths and weaknesses.
- **Hard Work:** Committing to effort and diligence.
- **Addiction-Free:** Avoiding harmful substances and behaviors.

## The Importance of Ethical Values

Ethical values are crucial for maintaining trust, respect, and order within a society. They help individuals make good decisions, build strong relationships, and contribute positively to their communities and the world.

## Aspects of Applied Ethics

- **Professional Ethics:** Ethical standards in the workplace, such as honesty and fairness in professional conduct.
- **Environmental Ethics:** The responsibility to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

## Concern for Others

**Definition:** Concern for others involves recognizing, listening to, and considering the needs and feelings of people around us. It means allowing others to participate in decisions that affect their lives, particularly in political, economic, and social contexts. Additionally, it includes supporting others during times of difficulty or hardship.

**Moral Responsibility:** As citizens, it is our duty to care for various groups in our society, including people with disabilities, children, the elderly, women, and those living with HIV/AIDS. Our societal norms often encourage helping one another in various situations, such as:

- **Weddings:** Assisting in preparations and celebrations.
- **Traditional Cooperative Systems:** Participating in communal activities like Debo or Jigi.
- **Birth:** Supporting families when a new child is born.
- **Mourning:** Offering comfort and aid during times of loss.
- **Disasters:** Providing help during natural or man-made disasters.
- **Illness:** Offering support to those who are seriously ill.
- **Economic Hardship:** Helping those facing financial difficulties.

## Respect for Others

**Definition:** Respect is a fundamental moral value that involves treating people with dignity and kindness, regardless of their background, such as ethnicity, religion, language, color, sex, economic status, disability, or age. It is a core value in families, communities, and schools.

### Ways to Show Respect:

- **Use Kind Words:** Speak politely, even when upset.
- **Practice Good Manners:** Share, wait your turn, and use phrases like "please" and "thank you."
- **Accept Differences:** Disagree respectfully and kindly.
- **Care for Property:** Avoid damaging places or things.
- **Maintain a Quiet Voice:** Be calm and respectful in public places.
- **Share Resources:** Only take what you need.

### Consequences of Disrespect:

- **Exclusion:** Individuals may be left out of social circles.
- **Lack of Respect:** Others may not show respect in return.
- **Poor Relationships:** Difficulty forming loving and supportive friendships.
- **Reduced Support:** Less help during times of hardship.

## Abiding by the Law

**Definition:** Abiding by the law means following rules and regulations that govern behavior in society or organizations like schools. Laws are formal rules set by authorities, and breaking them can result in punishment.

### Examples:

- **School Rules:** Wearing uniforms, respecting teachers, and not cheating.
- **Societal Rules:** Not stealing, avoiding corruption, and respecting fellow citizens.

### Consequences of Violating Laws:

- **Punishment:** Consequences for breaking laws or rules.
- **Condemnation:** Facing criticism and exclusion from society.

## Commitment to Excellence

**Definition:** Commitment to excellence involves dedicating oneself to continuously improving and overcoming challenges. It means taking full responsibility for one's actions and striving to achieve high standards.

**Importance:** Life is full of ups and downs. A commitment to excellence helps individuals face challenges with resilience and determination. It requires persistence and hard work to achieve outstanding results.

**Example:** A student who consistently puts in effort in their studies, participates actively, and overcomes obstacles will likely achieve excellent academic results.

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- **Concern for Others:** Caring for and supporting people in various situations.
- **Respect for Others:** Treating everyone with dignity and kindness.
- **Abiding by the Law:** Following rules and regulations.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** Dedicating oneself to continuous improvement and overcoming challenges.

## Professional Ethics

**Definition:** Professional ethics refers to the moral principles, values, and standards that guide behavior in a professional setting. It involves adhering to ethical norms while providing services and conducting oneself in a manner that is accountable and responsible.

### Key Points:

1. **What is a Profession?**
  - A profession is a job or occupation that requires specialized skills, knowledge, and often involves self-regulation.
  - It holds a high status socially and economically and is committed to serving the public good.
2. **Core Values in Professional Ethics:**
  - **Competence:** Professionals must possess the required skills and knowledge for their role.
  - **Integrity:** Professionals should act honestly and maintain moral principles.
  - **Altruism:** Professionals should prioritize the welfare of the public and their clients.
  - **Public Good:** Professionals should contribute positively to society and be accountable to those they serve.
3. **Importance of Professional Ethics:**
  - **Moral Obligations:** Professionals must adhere to ethical norms and principles to achieve their profession's objectives.
  - **Guiding Principles:** These include honesty, transparency, confidentiality, impartiality, punctuality, respectfulness, and obedience to the law.
4. **Examples in the Teaching Profession:**
  - **Positive Relationships:** Teachers should maintain smooth and respectful interactions with students, colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders.

- **Professional Behavior:** Teachers are expected to be fair, supportive, and to uphold ethical standards in their teaching practices.

5. **Consequences of Not Following Professional Ethics:**

- Professionals who do not adhere to ethical standards may face loss of credibility, legal consequences, and damage to their professional reputation.

**Summary:** Professional ethics are essential for maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of any profession. They ensure that professionals conduct themselves in a manner that is ethical and responsible, serving both their clients and the public with competence and respect.