Ethical Processing Model:
A Reference Guide

A resource from the United States Army Chaplain Center & School

POC for this resource: CH(MAJ) Tim Cross
timothy.g.cross.mil@mail.mil

Ethical Processing:

Introduction – Ethical dilemmas are a reality of the world in which Soldiers and leaders serve the Nation. Ethical processing or ethical reasoning thus becomes a critical capability for all to master in fulfillment of the Army's overarching purpose — the ethical application of land combat power. According to ADP 6-22 Army leaders must be proficient in ethical reasoning to find moral solutions to diverse problems. Thus ethical processing or reasoning is the process by which a course of action is identified to resolve ethical problems or dilemmas. As stated in doctrine leaders must acknowledge the necessity of ethical reasoning in all aspects of "planning, preparing, execut-ing, and assessing operations." With such an expectation both leaders and Soldiers require crucial training in mastering this art and skill. The Chaplain Corps is assigned this noble task of equipping others in this area through Moral Leadership Training events. This capability also is essential to chaplains when providing internal advisement to leaders, Soldiers, and Army Family members.

Key Terms:
Ethical - *refers to a system of moral principles, or rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group or culture*
Ethics - *reflects upon how morality is practically applied to decisions made in particular contexts and communities, such as the Army, that possess shared guidelines, norms, expectations, and commitments*
Moral - *refers to a sense of right and wrong in principles, values, decisions, and conduct*
Ethical Dilemma - *situation in which values/rules/outcomes are in conflict; there is more than one right thing to do but to act on one necessarily precludes the others*
Ethical Reasoning - *process by which one must evaluate an ethical decision in order to determine their response or actions*
EMDMP - *Army's ethical moral decision making process.*

---

*Use **EMDMP** and insert your results in the blank matrix.*

Identify your select-ed COA for resolving the ethical dilemma.

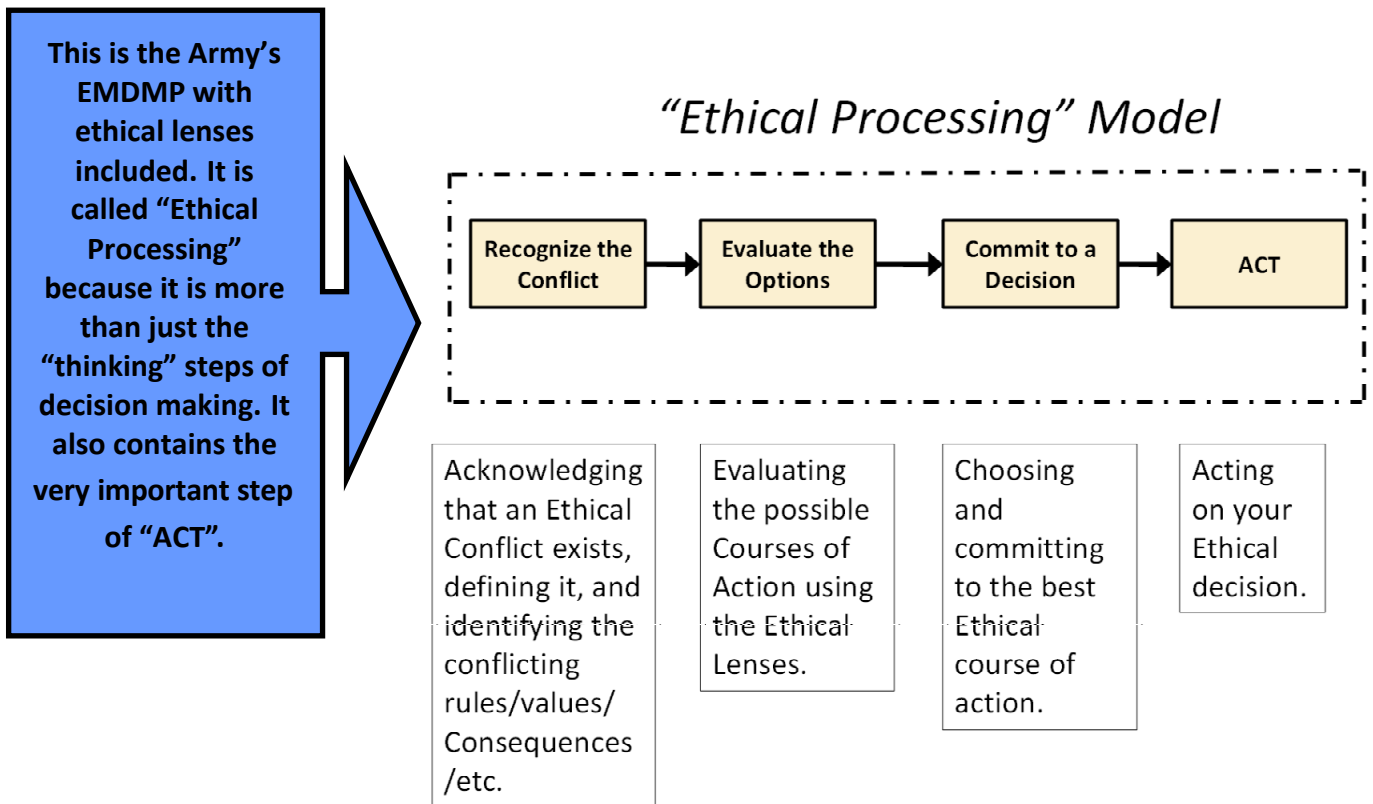| Evaluate the Options	Rules	Outcomes	Virtues
COA 1			
COA 2			
COA 3			

Obstacles _____

Fears _____

One More Ethical Dilemma to Boost your Confidence:

As a chaplain you enjoy being where your Soldiers are. Your Infantry Battalion along with other units from across your Brigade is conducting EIB (Expert Infantryman Badge) testing. You are present to support and motivate Soldiers who are hoping to secure the coveted EIB. You observe one of your young 2LT testing for his EIB. He is at the claymore station and fails both his first and second attempt at successfully deploying the mine. No one else witnesses his failures at this station. At this particular station a SSG from his platoon is responsible for testing and the OIC for the lane is his Platoon Sergeant. Individuals testing for the EIB are only allowed two attempts at each station. The 2LT complains to his Platoon Sergeant and exerts much personal pressure on the NCO. The Platoon Sergeant then speaks to his SSG at the station. The 2LT is given another attempt resulting in a "go" this time and will ultimately be awarded the EIB.

What do you do? Use EMDMP to determine a feasible COA to resolve the dilemma.

This is the Army's EMDMP with ethical lenses included. It is called "Ethical Processing" because it is more than just the "thinking" steps of decision making. It also contains the very important step of "ACT".

"Ethical Processing" Model

Recognize the Conflict	Evaluate the Options	Commit to a Decision	ACT

| Acknowledging that an Ethical Conflict exists, defining it, and identifying the conflicting rules/values/Consequences /etc. | Evaluating the possible Courses of Action using the Ethical Lenses. | Choosing and committing to the best Ethical course of action. | Acting on your Ethical decision. |

Ethical Processing Model: Basic Steps of the Model to Follow

1. **Recognize the Ethical Conflict** – (problem, dilemma, etc.). If you cannot see it, you cannot do any thing about it. Training needs to include scenarios that will build Soldier experience levels to promote the recognition of moral/ethical conflicts and aspects. This is especially true in our newer Soldiers (most inexperienced). We want them to recognize and report conflicts/problems even if they are unsure what to do. In this first step, someone may actually state, "Here is my problem" or "This is the problem I must solve". This is the ethical predicament or conflict that I am facing. Someone may even write out a problem statement for the sake of focus as the process occurs.

2. **Evaluate the Options** – Think of all courses of action. Apply all three ethical lenses to each COA. Identify most reasonable COAs according to the three ethical lenses. Note that the first half of the process is referred to as the cognitive or thinking phase.

3. **Commit to a Decision** – From your set of COAs, pick and commit to one. Commitment involves taking responsibility of the decision and being accountable for it. It's yours – the best you could do with the available information in the allotted time. Although you may look back later and choose differently, for now it is the solution – put your best effort into it. This is what should be done or the answer to the question, 'What would I do?'.

4. **ACT** – This step is ruled by motivation. This is only part of the process that others see because until now the steps were inside your head (cognitive). Many Soldiers interviewed say: "I knew what the right thing to do was; I just didn't do it". Doing the "Harder Right" is sometimes the hardest thing to do given the dilemma being faced or the ethical battlefield in which that Soldier resides. For many this is where moral courage is required.

---

*Use **EMDMP** and insert your results in the blank matrix.*

Identify your selected COA for resolving the ethical dilemma.

Evaluate the Options	Rules	Outcomes	Virtues
COA 1			
COA 2			
COA 3			

Obstacles _____

Fears _____

Another Ethical Dilemma to test drive EMDMP on your own:

Your platoon is conducting a rescue mission. Two of your Soldiers are pinned down on a hilltop by enemy fire. Both individuals are severely wounded and will surely die if not rescued within the hour. You presently have a minefield standing between you and your wounded Soldiers. Time does not allow you to breach the minefield nor go around. As you search for COAs you witness a local civilian passing through the minefield. The person makes sharp and abrupt turns obviously indicating he knows where the mines are located. Your Soldiers detain the local with hopes he will volunteer to lead your platoon safely through the field. He refuses stating the danger is too great to return the same route. You now suspect he is partnered with the enemy, his refusal only makes you more angry. Time is running out!

What do you do? Use EMDMP to determine a feasible COA to resolve the dilemma.

Ethical Processing = Putting the Ethical Lenses to Work

Use the three ethical lenses to evaluate the identified COAs for resolving the dilemma.

RULES

Rules or Duty Lens – These are the specifications that a group or groups agree to follow such as laws, treaties, regulations, professional ethic, etc. With this lens we ask: What rules or norms govern this situation? What is my duty in this situation?
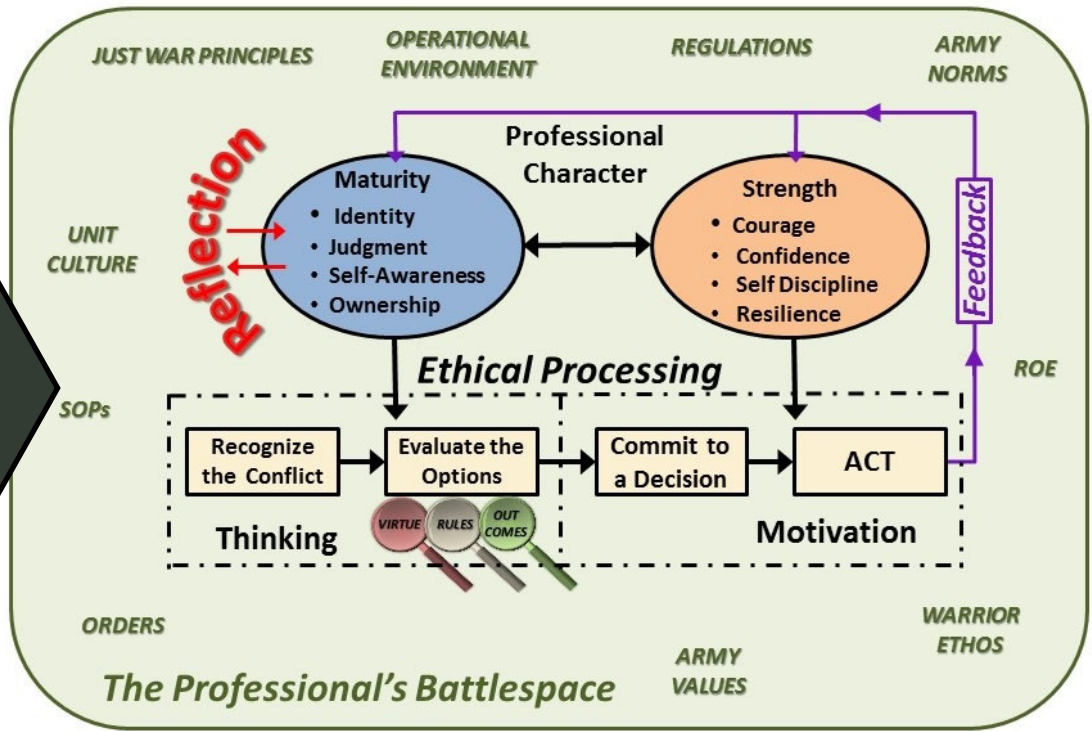
OUTCOMES

Outcomes or Consequences Lens – This lens consists of foreseeable results of decisions/actions/behaviors. This ventures into the realm of utilitarianism and aspects of social contract theory. With the identified COA, we ask: What are possible outcomes/consequences with this choice? How does this COA affect the main character's unit? How does it affect the main character personally? How does it impact US/foreign relations, strategic mission, or trust?

VIRTUES

Virtues or Values Lens – These are the components of "moral and good" human beings that transcend cultural differences between civilized societies. Many ethicists consider virtues to be the basis for other constructs such as values and morals. Here we ask: What is the most virtuous or right thing to do? What COA matches up to the virtues/values we hold as a profession? This lens focuses on corporate virtues and not core virtues, as those may be in conflict with the shared virtues.

Army Ethical Processing Model

(Full Version with Character Development Pathway)

JUST WAR PRINCIPLES OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT REGULATIONS ARMY NORMS

Professional Character

UNIT CULTURE

Reflection

Maturity
- Identity
- Judgment
- Self-Awareness
- Ownership

Strength
- Courage
- Confidence
- Self Discipline
- Resilience

Feedback

SOPs

Ethical Processing

Recognize the Conflict → Evaluate the Options → Commit to a Decision → ACT

VIRTUE RULES OUTCOMES

Thinking

Motivation

ROE

ORDERS

The Professional's Battlespace

ARMY VALUES

WARRIOR ETHOS

Possible Results of **EMDMP** being completed with presented Ethical Scenario

Evaluate the Options Shoot or Not?	Rules	Outcomes	Virtues
Shoot COA 1	ROE TTPs SOPs Warrior Ethos Orders	Protect other Soldiers Kill innocent person Investigation Moral Injury if wrong	Loyalty Duty Courage Love for fellow Soldiers
Warning Shot COA 2	ROE TTPs SOPs Regulations Geneva Convention	Stop threat Shot go astray Expose others to danger	Loyalty to HN Compassion Duty Honor Trust
Do Nothing COA 3	ROE TTPs SOPs Orders FM 27-10	Expose others to danger Create new TTP for enemy Prevent Moral Injury	Personal Courage Compassion Cowardice Complacency Golden Rule

Based on COA 2

Obstacles - potential of engaging a noncombatant or coalition forces

Fears - use of lethal force to prevent greater loss of life, being incorrect

Ethical Dilemma to test drive EMDMP:

You are a <u>Soldier</u> manning an entry control point for your forward operating base. There is a sign posted on the road coming into the entry control point that is in both English and the language of the host country. The sign gives clear instructions to drivers to slow down and come to a complete stop at the first barrier, which is at the engagement range of your machine gun. Drivers should only proceed once the barrier is raised and they are waved forward by a Soldier. The rules of engagement state you can fire on vehicles that do not comply with the instructions in order to protect Soldier's lives. You see a vehicle driving at a high rate of speed approaching the entry control point. One of the occupants is waiving a white cloth out the window and the driver is honking his horn. The vehicle is 100 meters out from the first barrier and does not appear to be slowing down.

What do you do? Use EMDMP to determine a feasible COA to resolve the dilemma.

Option 2 for Ethical Processing

Army Ethical Processing Model (Flow Chart Version)

Recognize the Dilemma

Evaluate the Options

a. Option 1: _____

-Rules: _____

-Outcomes: _____
  -Primary
  -2nd Order
  -3rd Order

-Virtue:_____

b. Option 2: _____
-Rules: _____

-Outcomes: _____
  -Primary
  -2nd Order
  -3rd Order

-Virtue:_____

c. Option 3: _____

-Rules: _____

-Outcomes: _____
  -Primary
  -2nd Order
  -3rd Order

-Virtue:_____

Commit to a Decision

--------Obstacles: _____
--------Fears:_____

Act

EMDMP

(Ethical Moral Decision Making Process)

This is the a field expedient version that is easily employed in various settings.

Evaluate the Options	Rules	Outcomes	Virtues
COA 1			
COA 2			
COA 3			
COA x			

Obstacles _____

Fears _____

Breaking down the Parts of EMDMP:

Insert a simple phrase stating the ethical problem being resolved.

All three ethical lenses are present to assess all potential COAs.

Identify at least 2-4 possible COAs for solving the ethical problem.

Fill in every sector with content indicating each lens' support & conflict with the evaluated COA.

Evaluate the Options	Rules	Outcomes	Virtues
COA 1			
COA 2			
COA 3			
COA x			

What are the obstacles to overcome, and fears the main character must face to act on chosen COA?

Obstacles _____

Fears _____