

- **Unethical behavior** as any actions that violate accepted societal norms.
- Why should companies attempt to understand individual ethics to reduce unethical behavior?
 - Unethical behavior can lead to a decrease in general well-being as a result of the trauma and stress associated with either being victimized or committing unethical behavior.

Moral Awareness

- **Moral awareness** refers to the ability of an individual to understand the ethicality of a situation or behavior.
- Other determinants of moral awareness come from more personal factors. For example, recent research suggests that ethical predispositions can play an important role. Specifically, **ethical predispositions** refer to the “cognitive framework individuals prefer to use in moral decision making.”
- Another important factor contributing to **moral attentiveness** referring to the ability of individuals to access and interpret the moral content of information and stimuli they are presented with.

Moral Judgment

- **Moral judgment** therefore refers to the process by which someone reasons about how to deal with an ethical situation.
- To properly judge the morality of any situation, employees need to be rational and logical. Because of our limitations, we often fall prey to biases that result in unethical behaviors.
 - Biases can be both **conscious** whereby the employee intentionally relies on biases to make unethical choices. In contrast, **unconscious biases** occur when the “most well-meaning person unwittingly allows unconscious thoughts and feelings to influence seemingly objective decisions.”
- Types of biases
 - **Implicit prejudice** occurs when people rely on unconscious biases and prejudice when people judge others.
 - **In-group favoritism** occurs because people tend to favor those individuals who share similar characteristics to their own, such as being from the same school, social class, or religion.
 - **Motivated blindness** takes place when people turn a blind eye to unethical behavior because such behavior is beneficial to the holder.
 - **Conflict of interest** occurs when decision-making can be unconsciously

affected because the decision-maker may benefit from the chosen.

- **Obedience to authority** whereby employees justify unethical behavior as orders that came from their managers or CEO.
- Employees are also likely to succumb to the **conformity bias** whereby the employee has the “tendency of imitating or accepting the values of others” as a way to justify one’s actions.
- **Incrementalism** whereby employees engage in minor unethical behaviors that eventually lead to major ethical infractions.

Moral Intention and Behaviors

- **Moral intention and behaviors** refer to the employees’ choices and decisions when confronting moral situations.
- **Jones’ Ethical Decision-Making Aspects**
 - How do individuals examine ethical situations and decide how to act? According to Jones, people evaluate the moral intensity of any situation and behave accordingly. If they perceive that the situation has high moral intensity, they are more likely to have intentions or to behave ethically.
 - According to Jones, the moral intensity of is dependent on six elements. These elements include:
 1. **magnitude of consequences**—refers to the degree of harm that the victims of an unethical choice will have to endure;
 2. **social consensus**—the degree to which others agree that a specific behavior is wrong;
 3. **probability of effect**—the probability that any action will result in harm to victims of the action;
 4. **temporal immediacy**—the length of time between the action and the harmful consequences of such actions;
 5. **proximity**—the psychological or cultural nearness to the victim; and
 6. **concentration of effect**—the number of people affected by the act.
- **Moral disengagement** refers to this deactivation process where, when faced with potential behavior counter to their own personal standards, a person may choose to deactivate the standard and still engage in the behavior.
 - **Moral justification** occurs when individuals justify certain actions to make them seem more morally acceptable.
 - **Euphemistic labeling** refers to the use of morally neutral language to make something seem less immoral.
 - **Advantageous comparison** occurs when someone compares a worse behavior with another behavior and rationalizes the behavior on that basis.
 - **Displacement of responsibility** occurs when the perpetrator of an unethical behavior can attribute the behavior to other factors.
 - **Diffusion of responsibility** can occur if decisions are being made by a group.
 - **Distortion of consequences** occurs when an individual can disconnect the actions from the harmful connections of the action.

- **Dehumanization** occurs when the target of the decision is derogated or is seen as lacking in human qualities.
- **Attribution of blame** occurs when the decision-maker ascribes the blame for the decision to the target.