

Introduction



PURPOSE

We live in a fast-paced, turbulent world, in which each person is constantly faced with hard decisions to be made, both as an individual and as a member of a group. As pressures to succeed rise, more people are willing to risk doing things that are not entirely honest. Society emphasizes obtaining goals, and sometimes the end results become more important than how you go about doing things. There are numerous examples of unethical behavior broadcast in today's news media: athletes bulking up with steroids, students e-mailing test answers, people cheating on their taxes, land speculators scamming prospective buyers, politicians taking bribes or making behind-the-scenes deals. The list goes on and on. And it is not uncommon for these actions to be rewarded, or at least ignored.

When we see others cheat or act in an unethical way, it can lower personal inhibitions, and soon cheating doesn't seem so bad. So it is important to see how personal behaviors have an impact on others, whether they are members of a work or social group, an organization, a community, or even society as a whole. A major consideration in this analysis involves one's choice to compete against others for personal gain or to cooperate with others to create a synergy that obtains the best results for the group.

Based on the classic study in competition versus cooperation known as the "prisoner's dilemma," this simulation game is designed to provide a hands-on experience for examining the consequences of individual choices in terms of collaboration and ethics. This concept is extended to team actions because each individual member of the group is accountable for what the group does as a unit. The game is designed to help participants recognize the consequences of

their actions on themselves and on others, while exploring the issues of risk taking and trust building in social interactions. Exploring these issues helps individuals make better choices and work in partnership with others to achieve the best overall results for all stakeholders.



AUDIENCE

The audience is all-inclusive because of the wide range of usage in terms of interpersonal relationships and ethical decision making. The game is especially suited for group members who are working toward establishing collaborative relationships or who want to explore ethical behavior in situations characterized by a conflict between individual and group interests. It is highly recommended for use in business, non-profit, and government organizations, as well as in academic settings, to explore issues involving the outcomes of competition versus cooperation and in discussing ethical standards.



HOW THIS RESOURCE IS ORGANIZED

This simulation game is based on the well-known prisoner's dilemma structure whereby participants must choose among options reflecting either cooperation or competition. The game consists of eight separate scenarios in which players select and then compare action choices with one another. These situations include a version of the original prisoner's dilemma, followed by seven additional dilemmas that escalate in terms of ethical decisions to be considered. The selection process for each scenario is repeated for several rounds, with and without communication between the players.

The *Leader's Guide* includes background information on the classic prisoner's dilemma; an overview of the *What Would You Do?* game and scoring information; facilitator guidelines; detailed step-by-step processing notes; debriefing questions and discussion notes; learning extensions; a Response Cards Sheet; and handouts on the topics of collaboration and ethics. The *Participant Workbook* includes an introduction to playing the game, the eight scenarios with

accompanying scoring and response charts, the Final Scoring Sheet, and discussion and learning application pages.



KEY TERMS

Collaboration—the ability to work together to produce an integrated joint effort

Competition—an act that maximizes self-interest

Cooperation—an act that maximizes the interests of all parties involved (as individuals or as a collective)

Dilemma—a situation or state of perplexity that requires a choice between equally unfavorable options

Ethics—the study of the rules, standards, or principles that help determine whether an action is right or wrong

Game—the interaction or exchange between two or more players whereby each tries to win by choosing the best move, dependent on the other's response

Game theory—a mathematical method of decision making in which a competitive situation is analyzed to determine the optimal course of action for an interested party

Non-zero-sum game—a non-strictly competitive game in which there is no universally accepted solution; players have some complementary interests and some interests that are completely opposed

Risk—the potential harm that may arise from some present process or from some future event

Simulation game—a game that employs a situation depicting some aspect of reality for testing hypotheses in a “what if” analysis

Stakeholder—one who has a share or interest in an activity

Synergy—the effect of two or more agents working together to produce an effect greater than the sum of the parts

Tit-for-tat strategy—an approach in which one party cooperates on the first move of a game and then copies an opponent's last move for all subsequent moves

Trust—confidence in the integrity, ability, character, and truth of an individual or process

Zero-sum game—a competitive game in which the amount of “winnable resources” is fixed; what one player gains (positive) equals what the other player loses (negative) and the sum of the two is zero

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