



# **DIALOGUE LAB**

The Game of Dialogic Communication Ethics

DIACOMET

 UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

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The Game of Dialogic Communication Ethics

Project: "Fostering capacity building for civic resilience and participation: Dialogic communication ethics and accountability"



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Dialogue Lab is also accessible online at <https://diacomet.eu/games>.

Scan the QR code for direct access.



## Abbreviations of Diacomet's partner organisations:

UTARTU University of Tartu (EE)

OEAW Austrian Academy of Sciences (AT)

TAU Tampere University (FI)

UL University of Ljubljana (SI)

HU Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (NL)

HES Hungarian Europe Society (HU)

USI Università della Svizzera italiana (CH)

VMU Vytautas Magnus University (LT, Coordinator)

# Introduction

## Dialogue Lab

The goal of the game is to learn to notice the ethical aspects of dialogic communication in everyday life.

## When and why is dialogue needed?

Dialogic communication is important for supporting a culture of discussion and participation, as well as for fostering good relationships between people – in families, professional communities, organisations, society, and between countries. However, dialogic communication is not appropriate in every situation. For example, in a crisis situation, clear one-way communication is rather needed, helping people get through the situation safely (with as little damage as possible). In various learning situations, there is also a great deal of one-way instruction, and similarly, dialogue may not be the dominant form in information meetings.

Therefore, dialogic communication is primarily needed when the goal of communication is to be understood (recognised), to deliberate, to debate, to reach agreements, to cooperate, to give and receive feedback, and to build and develop relationships.

## Normative frameworks of a good discussion culture

A normative approach answers the question: how should it be? In other words, we should ask what conditions need to be ensured in society – through education, laws, self-regulation, and culture – so that people would be motivated to strive for a good communication culture and dialogue. For norms of right and wrong to be understandable to many people, a code of good practice is usually agreed upon: values and principles that are written into codes of conduct.

**The ethics of dialogic communication** is therefore a cross-cutting issue in society – it concerns all professions, fields, and communication between groups and individuals. Within the framework of Diacomet, we have formulated six areas of good dialogic communication and corresponding guidelines for conduct (see the appendix at the end of this publication).

The development of a culture of dialogic communication ethics in society presupposes that individuals possess both ethical and communicative competencies. Ethical competence begins with the capacity to recognise ethical dimensions and choices embedded in everyday situations. The serious game "Dialogue Lab" provides an opportunity to cultivate the ability to identify communication-ethical dilemmas and to engage in critical reflection and deliberation on such situations in everyday life contexts. It also supports the development of skills in articulating and justifying ethical decisions.

### What does the game consist of?

The educational game "Dialogue Lab" is composed of narratives constructed around real-life situations, typically involving two or three characters. Each story is presented from the perspectives of two characters who occupy different roles, pursue different objectives, and possess slightly different information about the situation.

A central element of dialogic communication ethics is the ability to "step into another person's shoes". This helps one understand that not all relevant circumstances may be known and that asking questions before making judgments may be more appropriate. Asking questions is a constructive habit that can prevent many communication conflicts. Thus, "Dialogue Lab" also develops the player's ability to recognise others' needs in communicative situations. The dual-perspective structure constitutes the second key element of the game.

The third element consists of five possible responses to the situation presented in the story from the perspective of one of the parties involved. In some cases, the character is directly engaged in a communication conflict; in others, they are an observer who must decide whether and how (to what extent, in what manner, and at what moment) to intervene.

The responses are based on profiles developed by the Centre for Ethics, University of Tartu, each grounded in a distinct moral theory: the deontologist, the utilitarian, the ethical egoist, the relationship-oriented pragmatist, and the ethicist of care (see descriptions at the end of the booklet).

For the purposes of "Dialogue Lab" these profiles have been constructed to describe choices and reactions that arise specifically in communication contexts.

None of the five responses is entirely positive; nor does any response explicitly violate principles of communication ethics. The options do not include manipulation, lying, or insulting behaviour. In some narratives, a character may use manipulative techniques; in such cases, the aim is to help players recognise these strategies and reflect on the most appropriate response. Many people have experienced situations where, hours after a conflict, they think: "I should have said that...".

The fourth element of "Dialogue Lab" is the avatars, which are central to the game's mechanics. The group constructs a shared avatar through consensus. The construction is based on assembling puzzle pieces, where each response corresponds to a specific colour. Each avatar consists of six pieces, each representing one decision made during the game (three cases, each with two stories, totalling six decisions).

Each piece is numbered, allowing players to review which colours they selected individually and collectively in specific situations. The group avatar may include grey pieces, indicating a lack of consensus. These represent situations where communication-ethical value choices differed so substantially that agreement could not be reached.

The fifth element is feedback, where the game's outcome is analysed based on which colours (ethical choices) dominate the avatar and which are less represented. Importantly, avatars do not portray individual players; rather, they indicate which communication-ethical choices were dominant in a particular group's responses to the cases.

Our avatar designer, Britten Dortmans, created the board game avatars drawing on mythological elements and visualising the distinctive traits of each type. At the end of the booklet, each type of description is accompanied by an image of its representative avatar.

Avatars may be diverse in colour, sometimes incorporating all available colours. This often indicates that players are situational ethical thinkers who perceive each constructed scenario as unique. Possible interpretations of the colour palettes are provided in the final section of this booklet.

In summary, the educational game "Dialogue Lab" aims to support players in recognising ethical choices in everyday communication situations, becoming more aware of their communicative competencies, and better imagining others' needs in interaction. The board game version also seeks to initiate and support interpersonal discussion about what to notice in the narratives. Such dialogue facilitates in-depth situational analysis, as listening to others helps reveal details one might otherwise overlook. It also fosters understanding of how different individuals justify their choices.

Communication is like air: everyone uses it, yet it is noticed only when effective communication is absent and conflicts arise. Once conflict is already present, discussing communication itself often becomes difficult. How does one tell a supervisor that they did not listen, and that this has diminished one's willingness to cooperate? Perhaps they no longer remember the interaction or the remarks that caused distress, or the meeting where they misinterpreted your words.

The game's narratives are structured for four target groups: journalists and communication professionals; employees of various organisations; higher education staff and university students; and general education school staff and students.

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# Instructions for the board game

## How to play

The game can be played in groups of 2–6 participants.

### 1. Read the story

Each case includes two perspectives from the characters' points of view – two views of the same story, each with its own dilemma. First read the perspective marked with "I" at the end of the title and complete the following stages before moving on to the second perspective ("(title) II").

### 2. Make your decision

After reading one perspective of the case, review the answer options provided and secretly decide which option you prefer. There is no single correct answer – each option is inspired by an ethical theory. Imagine yourself in the character's situation and choose what you would do.

To confirm your choice, place the coloured token corresponding to your selected answer in front of you on the game board, ensuring that the other players cannot see the colour you selected.

**NB!** The purpose of concealing your choice is to minimise influence on other players who have not yet made their decision. Otherwise, a player might see a dominant colour within the group and make a choice they do not genuinely agree with, simply to conform.

### 3. Justification

Once all players have secretly made their decisions and placed their coloured tokens face down on the table, the colours are revealed simultaneously. All players turn their tokens face up, and the justification stage begins.

Each player must explain why they made their choice. The length and level of detail of the explanation may be decided by the player. Speaking proceeds clockwise. With each new perspective, the justification stage may begin with the next player in order.

During this stage, it is essential that while one player is explaining their decision, others listen attentively and allow the speaker to finish. In the

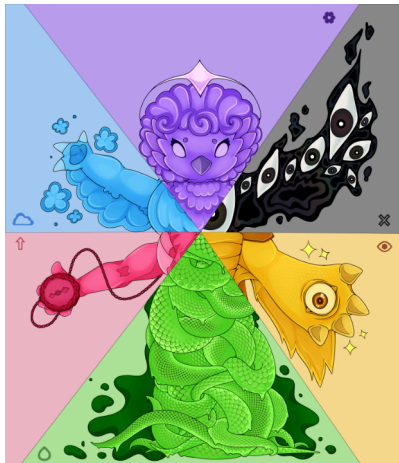
ethics of dialogic communication, attentiveness is of great importance – therefore, be respectful and do not interrupt. After all players have justified their responses, the discussion stage follows.

#### 4. Discussion

The discussion stage is open-ended and has no time limit. Players may ask each other for clarification, offer counterarguments, compare perspectives, and generally deliberate on the case and the answer options.

The aim of this stage is for the group to reach a shared decision about which answer is preferable. Majority preference does not apply here; all players must agree on the choice – consensus must be achieved. If all players agree on the same answer after discussion, an avatar piece corresponding to the selected colour is placed in the centre of the board. If consensus is not reached, a grey avatar piece is placed in the centre.

**NB!** Failing to reach consensus (a grey avatar piece) does not signify failure. People respond to situations differently, and often individuals hold fundamentally different value judgments regarding the same case. This does not mean that dialogue between such individuals is impossible. On the contrary, through dialogue the group may conclude that they would resolve the situation differently, which is itself a fully acceptable outcome.



#### 5. Building the avatar

The group builds their own avatar.

Each avatar piece is numbered and indicates the sequence of decisions. A complete avatar consists of six pieces, which corresponds to the length of one full game (3 cases × 2 perspectives). Thus, at the end of one complete round of the game, one avatar piece will have been placed in the centre of the board.

#### 6. Start again

After a new piece has been added to the avatars, return to the first stage. This means reading either the second perspective of the current case or the first perspective of a new case.

#### 7. End of the game

The game ends when the avatars are fully constructed. During one game, three cases are played. Since each case has two perspectives, the stages are completed six times in total.

After the avatars are completed, players may analyse and compare their decision-making types using the descriptions provided at the end of the game booklet.

# Demo cases for introduction

## A public figure's reaction to criticism and freedom of speech I

In a small kingdom, a daughter was born into the royal family. The palace communication service designed the christening celebration as a grand event that would bring together many important guests. The **Queen**, wishing her daughter to receive as many blessings as possible, wanted to invite all the enchantresses of the realm. However, the King declared that he did not want the Moon Enchantress to appear as a guest at the feast, for the Moon Enchantresses had often criticised and ridiculed the King's deeds and decisions in public.

What would you do if you were the Queen?

1. I say to the King that he should consider that if someone suffers for expressing a critical opinion, people may no longer dare to voice their thoughts freely.
2. I say it would be appropriate to swallow your personal offense, for as a public figure you must endure criticism with greater dignity than an ordinary citizen.
3. I say that I understand the King's displeasure and that I support him.
4. I say that I understand his displeasure and ask whether he had considered how not inviting the Moon Enchantress might affect our relations with the community of enchantresses.
5. I say that the most important thing is our little daughter, and for her sake, all the enchantresses must be invited, regardless of whom we personally like or dislike.

## A public figure's reaction to criticism and freedom of speech II

Eavesdropping on the conversation between the King and Queen was a reporter from the kingdom's most widely circulated newspaper, who had come to the castle to cover a story about the little princess's morning bath. Unfortunately, the King spoke very loudly while the Queen whispered softly. This is how the reporter overheard that the King did not want to invite the **Moon Enchantress** to the celebrations. The reporter immediately sneaked out and called the **Moon Enchantress** to ask how she felt about the king not wanting to invite her to the celebration.

What would you do if you were the Moon Enchantress?

1. I say to the reporter that me being uninvited shows that if criticising the king means being cancelled, then there is no freedom of speech in the kingdom.
2. I say to the reporter that surely the royal couple has their reasons for leaving someone uninvited, and I expressed hope that the public would soon learn about it.
3. I say that since no one has informed me, I will not comment on anything.
4. I say to the reporter that the royal couple may not yet know that I planned to give the little one a good-sleep spell.
5. I say to the reporter that the little princess does not have to suffer if I am not invited, so I will send her a good-sleep spell anyway.

## How to give feedback? I

**Snow White** lived in a small forest cottage with seven dwarfs. The division of labour was well established: the dwarfs worked long days in the diamond mine and sold the gems to merchants, earning money for daily expenses. Snow White cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, and, when needed, stoked the oven and sauna. Everyone was content with this arrangement – except Grumpy. He insisted that everyone living in the house should rotate all chores. According to his idea, **Snow White** should work in the mine every Monday, while one of the dwarfs would take over the household tasks. To appease Grumpy, they followed this rotation. On Monday, **Snow White** went to the mine to dig diamonds, and Sleepy was assigned the house chores. When the miners returned home, they were greeted by burnt macaroni, piles of unwashed dishes, a cold house, and Sleepy with burn marks.

**What would you do if you were the Snow White?**

1. I tell Grumpy directly that the change he wanted didn't work, because not everyone knows how to do every task.
2. I tell Grumpy that we could consider a fairer division of labour in the future, but for now, he needs to motivate all the dwarfs to clean up the disaster.
3. I say that Sleepy must quickly prepare something edible to eat and then clean the kitchen, because I am hungry after a day's work and want to start tomorrow with a clean kitchen.
4. I tell Grumpy that thanks to this experiment, we can discuss and figure out a better way to divide the household chores in the future so that everyone will be satisfied.
5. I suggest to Grumpy that he needs to talk to Sleepy, asking what happened and what help he might need to cope better with the tasks.

## How to give feedback? II

The Seven Dwarfs and Snow White couldn't stand **Grumpy's** constant complaining, so they decided to have a "role swap day" on Monday. Snow White went off to mine diamonds, while the dwarfs drew lots to see who would stay home to clean, tend the stove, and cook. By chance, Sleepy was assigned the role.

Sleepy tried very hard, but while cooking pasta, he dozed off. He woke up only when the stove was already on, badly burned himself, forgot to heat the oven, and, with his burned hand, the dishes went unwashed as well.

**What would you do if you were Grumpy?**

1. I say to Sleepy that he did not fully meet the expectations set for him, and I am asking what options or steps he sees to improve the situation.
2. I say that in my opinion, it is fair if he covers the cost of the takeaway meal for everyone with his own money; once they are no longer hungry, they will be willing to heat the oven and clean up together.
3. I don't say anything; I first watch how the others comment on the situation.
4. I tell Sleepy that we both made a mistake by forgetting to set alarms on the timer, since we all know that Sleepy's problem is constantly falling asleep uncontrollably.
5. I say that the house is intact, and cooking a new batch of pasta will also go quickly, so he can just take the mess with the household chores as a lesson.

## Honesty and informed decision-making I

After Sleeping Beauty and the entire court awoke from their 100-year sleep, the King's economic **advisor** conducted an analysis and found that many services that people provided 100 years ago can now be purchased more cheaply or performed by robots. Over the past century, several sources of income for the kingdom have disappeared: agriculture in the region has died out, and beautifully printed books can now only be sold below cost. **The advisor** presented the entire analysis to the king. The king then asked how he could maintain his standard of living.

What would you do if you were the advisor to the King?

1. I tell the King that he didn't listen to me carefully and repeat that my analysis does not answer the question of how the King can maintain his standard of living.
2. I reflect on the King's summary and ask whether maintaining his standard of living also means maintaining the standard of living of the entire court.
3. I summarise by saying that the King needs to reduce expenses further and find new sources of income.
4. I say that I understand the King's concern about the potential decline in his standard of living and ask what cost-saving options he himself sees.
5. I suggest conducting a new analysis to determine the best way to maintain the King's standard of living.

## Honesty and informed decision-making II

**Sleeping Beauty** woke up from her 100-year sleep, and so did the entire court. Soon, the old King discovered that over the 100 years, the kingdom's sources of income had dwindled. He realised he would need to lay off half of the people working in the court and increase the workload of those who remained in order to keep the palace running.

The King attended a layoff training, where he was advised that the termination notices should, unexpectedly, be delivered to employees in the presence of a lawyer and that the layoffs should be carried out quickly so that people would not have time to recover and assert their rights. **Sleeping Beauty** learned about this plan at the evening meal.

What would you do if you were the Sleeping Beauty?

1. I say that the King should express gratitude to each laid-off person and pay them a proper severance and, if necessary, take a loan to cover it.
2. I propose discussing the situation in a wider forum.
3. The layoffs are the King's concern as the employer; I can write personal thank-you letters to those being laid off.
4. I ask the King whether he is ready for the fact that people who have served him for a long time might start hating him because of this behaviour.
5. I tell the King that he should discuss the situation together with those being laid off; perhaps some of them are willing to continue working with a reduced workload.

# BOOK 1: Cases for journalists and communication experts

Journalistic ethical norms have evolved over many decades in democratic societies. As a result, journalists and communication specialists are professionals for whom the existence of norms governing communication, information processing, and dissemination is customary. Why, then, might knowledge and application of the principles of dialogic communication ethics be beneficial for journalists and communication professionals?

One of the central principles of journalism ethics is that journalism has a duty to serve the public's need for truthful and relevant information. In other words, journalists are obliged to be primarily loyal to the public, although in everyday practice they must also demonstrate loyalty to their audiences, sources, and the subjects of their stories – often making these complex decisions under time pressure. A communication specialist's primary loyalty, by contrast, is tied to the organisation they serve. This difference gives rise to some of the most significant tensions between these two professional roles.

Dialogic communication ethics, however, extends across and beyond the professional ethical principles of both journalists and communication specialists. While decisions regarding hierarchies of loyalty remain important, they are secondary to the core values of dialogic communication. Dialogic communication ethics is grounded in listening (including responses that signal to the speaker that they have been understood), evidence-based argumentation, and respectful interaction in which power asymmetries are minimised. Can a journalist apply these values, for example, when exposing corruption? Yes – because truthfulness, human dignity, and the rejection of manipulative practices are universal values of communication ethics.

From the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, communication management experienced a so-called dialogic turn, during which academic approaches to organisational communication increasingly emphasised two-way communication with the public. In practice, however, communication

professionals can still be encountered who focus primarily on how to deliver their message to a target audience.

Despite longstanding professional traditions, today's polarised and propaganda-saturated public communication environment compels professional communicators to reflect more deeply on everyday communication ethics. Dialogic communication ethics offers one possible approach in which the manner of communication itself fosters social cohesion. Being heard and understood is fundamentally important to people. Audiences do not appreciate situations in which a journalist metaphorically "rides over" an interviewee. Likewise, a communication manager who, out of loyalty to leadership, speaks about employees rather than with them may inadvertently contribute to their alienation from the organisation.

Drawing on decades of academic discourse on the values, hierarchies of loyalty, principles, and concepts of journalism and communication ethics, the Diacomet project has proposed domains, values, and principles of dialogic communication ethics. These aim to establish a normative framework and articulate guidelines for achieving positive outcomes and avoiding negative ones (such as the emergence of conflict). These principles are not fixed; users may reinterpret and refine them through practice, particularly given the constantly evolving communication environment.

The principles are formulated at a general level and acquire meaning when interpreted within the context of specific cases. In this booklet, we have compiled short narratives based on practical cases from different countries, to which the proposed principles may be applied (see the inside cover of this booklet).

A defining feature of communication ethics is that the application of principles often occupies a grey area, where clear-cut interpretations are rare in everyday communication situations. In some cases, however, violations of good practice are evident. In such instances, deciding how to respond becomes an ethical choice. How should one react if one is the victim? Or if one is a bystander? Does the bystander have sufficient information to intervene?

For example, a passerby witnesses a photojournalist moving a delivered package to the first step of a house in order to entice a reclusive resident to step outside far enough to be photographed. The person comes down the steps to retrieve the package, and the reporter takes the photograph. Should the bystander tell the reporter that this tactic constitutes deception? Or should they write about the incident on their blog without speaking to the journalist?

The purpose of this game is to initiate discussion such questions.

## A child in the media I

An educational reform is being introduced that requires standardised tests at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Based on the results, pupils will be grouped by level in subjects for the following school year. The change has sparked a media debate. Journalist Kate decides to explore the reform from the children's perspectives and visits a disadvantaged area to gather their views. She searches for contacts from local school/parent councils and reaches **Thomas**, father of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. Kate explains her aim to highlight concerns about the tests from the pupils' viewpoints and asks permission to interview **Thomas'** son for a TV segment.

What would you do in Thomas' place?

1. While listening to children's opinions is important, it is too rarely done in the media. I agree with the interview but ask to review it before airing.
2. I appreciate giving voice to children in media but ask the journalist to contact older students who have more experience with the standard-determining tests.
3. I will say that if my child wants to give an interview, then I have no reason to refuse.
4. I will give my permission on the condition that the journalist interviews both my child and a couple of his classmates at the same time and provide the phone numbers of other parents.
5. I will say that my child can only be interviewed with me, because such a small child cannot speak alone on the topic of standard-determining tests.

## A child in the media II

**Laura** is Editor-in-Chief of a national news agency. A reform is underway requiring standard-determining tests at the end of each school year, with pupils grouped by level based on results. The change has sparked a media debate. Journalist Kate aims to show the children's perspective and visits a disadvantaged area. With a father's permission, she interviews his 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade son. When asked if he knows what a national standardised assessment is, the child says, "Yes." Asked what he should be able to do for the test, he replies, "I must be quiet." Kate asks **Laura** whether the clip should be aired.

What would you do in Laura's place?

1. The public needs the truth. The interview authentically reflects a child's understanding of the standard-determining tests, and the parent gave their permission.
2. Standard-determining tests are where children should be heard, and the reformers should be reminded whose interests the reform is being made.
3. The response given by the child attracts attention, which is important in any case.
4. I suggest the journalist only use the first part of the interview as child welfare organisations and media ethicists are unlikely to like the public dissemination of such an interview.
5. The child's response may show him as stupid in the eyes of many viewers. I will not allow the journalist to use this interview.

## Forgotten notes I

**Tarmo**, a young state-level communication specialist, has been involved in a long-running project affecting local communities, which has faced growing resistance. At a tense meeting, **Marta**, a local resident, expresses frustration that the state is again asking for their views. She recalls a similar meeting a year ago, where someone took notes, and asks what became of that feedback. **Tarmo** realises he was the one taking notes, valuing the input at the time, but forgot about them due to the fast pace of the project.

What would you do in Tarmo's place?

1. I admit my mistake about forgetting the feedback that was given last year and explain that, due to inclusion of several communities, mistakes can occur.
2. I would suggest participating in this round of feedback to have the best chance of it being processed.
3. I would stay silent on what happened with the notes.
4. I would promise the community that if they participate in this round of feedback, it will be adequately processed.
5. I would admit my mistake about not processing the feedback that was given last year. I would then ask if there were anything the community would like to add to previous feedback.

## Forgotten notes II

**Marta's** community has been impacted by a long-running project, and frustration is growing. At another heated meeting, **Marta** questions why the state is again asking for their views. She recalls a similar meeting a year earlier, where someone took notes, and asks what became of that feedback. The communication specialist replies that the input is being processed and suggests continuing with the current discussion.

What would you do in Marta's place?

1. I would ask for the information on who attended and took notes last year, so that their oversight might get reprimanded.
2. I would restate the feedback that was given last year in the hopes that this time it will be heard.
3. I would sit in silence for the rest of the discussion.
4. I would ask for the contact information of the supervisor of the communication specialist, so that the feedback can get a response.
5. I think my community is being used for faking involvement. I propose to end the discussion, because the community's feedback is not being heard.

## Truth or safety? I

**Villem**, a youth centre social worker, is not involved in organising the LGBTQ+ discussion events but has noticed increasing harassment towards participants and organisers. One day, he receives a Facebook invite to a protest organised by a populist party, scheduled at the same time as the LGBTQ+ event. The protest incites hostility, with some even suggesting burning down the youth centre. **Villem** alerts the organisers, who postpone the event but choose not to inform the media. **Villem** then considers whether he should contact the news himself.

What would you do in Villem's place?

1. I would not reach out to the news, because the safety of the centre is my first priority, and going public would jeopardise that safety. I would however contact the authorities.
2. I would send an anonymous message about the incident to the news station.
3. I would do nothing, as I am not connected with the event.
4. I would send an anonymous message about the incident to the news station but inform my colleagues beforehand.
5. I would publicly speak out against the populist party and the event they organised in an interview with the news station.

## Truth or safety? II

**Andres**, a journalist at a national news portal, learns that a youth centre had to move its LGBTQ+ discussion event to a secret location due to threats from a populist party, including calls to "burn it all down". After verifying the facts, **Andres** sees the story as nationally significant. However, he hesitates to publish it, fearing that media attention could lead to more threats and put the youth centre and its participants at greater risk.

What would you do in Andres' place?

1. I would not publish the story, but I would notify the authorities.
2. I would publish the story but leave out any sensitive information (names, time, location, etc.).
3. I would publish the story with all the relevant details.
4. I would publish the story but leave out any sensitive information. I would also urge the taking of legal action against the perpetrators.
5. I would not publish the story as the safety of the participants and the community centre is more important.

## The famous fighter I

A heated debate is taking place in mixed martial arts over a famous fighter's eligibility because of their gender. **John**, an amateur coach, initially viewed the issue through the lens of sports rules and fairness. As the debate grew more ideological, he noticed colleagues either rejecting the fighter outright or seeking a more balanced discussion. Known in his community, **John** was asked by a local news outlet to comment, but he hesitates due to the polarised nature of the topic.

What would you do in John's place?

1. I would inform the reporter of my refusal to give an interview. I am not qualified to give an opinion.
2. I would accept the interview only if I can check how my statements are represented in the interview.
3. I would refuse their request for an interview, because I do not want to get involved with this situation.
4. I would refuse the interview but recommend some of my colleagues with similar expertise who have a stronger stance on the matter and might be willing to give an interview.
5. I would speak with the reporter from the news outlet, accepting the interview, in which I plan to explain the situation and refute overtly unjustified claims.

## The famous fighter II

A heated debate is taking place in mixed martial arts over a famous fighter's eligibility because of their gender. Reporter **Clark** is tasked with securing an interview on the topic. Aware that intensifying the debate boosts engagement, **Clark** interviews an amateur MMA coach who makes relevant remarks, but raises critical questions related to the sports association and their lack of proactivity in dealing with the matter. Later, the coach asks to withdraw his more controversial statements.

What would you do in Clark's place?

1. I would refuse to omit their statements from my story, because after giving an interview, the journalist must retain independent editorial autonomy over what to use from the interview.
2. I explain to the interviewee that if no one dares to challenge the sports association's activities, the field will suffer from the consequences.
3. I do not want my sources to suffer from consequences; I omit the statements.
4. I would clarify with the interviewee on what he wants retracted and then omit those statements.
5. I would speak with the interviewee, asking if he would want to give a new interview.

## Selective editing? I

**Tomas**, a media and communication student, starts an internship at a national newsroom, eager to practise unbiased journalism. However, he soon notices that the editor alters his reports before broadcasting, removing parts **Tomas** sees as objective and reshaping the content to fit a specific editorial angle. This makes **Tomas** feel the focus is more on narrative than truthful reporting. One day, when **Tomas** is once again confronted with a major reshaping of his story, he considers if he should say something.

**What would you do in Tomas' place?**

1. I would notify my superiors and express distaste towards the altering of my story. I would ask if such practice is common, and whether it could be avoided.
2. I would ask the editorial staff to be included in future editorial decisions of my work.
3. I would do nothing, as the decision on what gets published is not mine to make.
4. I would ask the editorial staff for clarification on why they changed the story, and if there was something I could have done better.
5. I would make a personal apology to the interviewee who was misrepresented on TV due to the edits.

## Selective editing? II

**Tiina**, an editor in a national newsroom, is responsible for shortening stories to fit broadcast time. A new intern has started submitting engaging but overly long pieces that require editing. One day, **Tiina** receives an email from the intern expressing dissatisfaction with her edits. She recalls that several of the intern's stories had to be shortened due to unexpected developments needing airtime.

**What would you do in Tiina's place?**

1. I would respond that while I appreciate the criticism, it is still unfounded as I have expertise that the intern lacks.
2. I would explain why the edits were made and that the intern should confer with their supervisor if my explanation is not acceptable.
3. I would not react to the email, as it does not come by proper channels i.e., my superiors.
4. I would write back, explaining why the edits were made and offer to give advice on how to write future stories.
5. I would write back, inviting the intern to join in the process of editing their stories.

## The author's identity I

A well-written, socially critical first-person article signed by Raimondo King arrives in cultural journalist **Laura's** inbox. The author presents himself as a young intellectual. Suspecting a pseudonym, **Laura** checks past publications and finds the name has appeared widely. She edits and publishes the piece, which receives positive feedback.

Later that day, actress Inna calls **Laura**, saying she had an online interview with Raimondo King – without video – where he asked oddly specific questions suggesting deep cultural knowledge. He also failed to send her the article for review, portraying her as eccentric. **Laura** begins to suspect that "Raimondo King" might be a shared pseudonym used by multiple authors.

What would you do in Laura's place?

1. I will refuse to publish any more articles or interviews by Raimondo King because using a pseudonym is deceptive.
2. I will make a blog post about "Raimondo King" possibly being a pseudonym, which might help the public become more aware of relevant information.
3. I would do nothing, since solving issues around author authenticity is not an individual journalist's responsibility.
4. I write to Raimondo King at his email address, expressing that he should explain his motives to the public because in today's AI era, pseudonyms are not ethically acceptable.
5. I raise the issue at an editorial meeting, stating that because of AI, all journalists should know who is behind pseudonymous authors. If the real author is not known, that should automatically disqualify the article.

## The author's identity II

**Tom**, editor-in-chief of a cultural newspaper, knows that his brother – a theatre critic – belongs to a small group, including a government official and a judge, who sometimes co-author socially critical articles under the pseudonym "Raimondo King". **Tom** doesn't know exactly who the contributors are. His brother also uses the pseudonym for solo pieces.

The group claims the virtual identity helps readers focus on ideas rather than authors. So far, the articles have been well received for their insight and eloquence.

Now, journalist Laura has raised concerns about publishing work under a pseudonym without knowing who is behind it. The editorial team agrees and awaits **Tom's** decision.

What would you do in Tom's place?

1. I will tell the editorial team all I know about the pseudonym and who are involved. We are responsible for what we publish, and the editorial team should know who are behind the articles in our newspaper.
2. I suggest allowing pseudonyms on a case-by-case basis. With socially critical articles, the content and message are more important than the identity of the author(s), which may actually prevent readers from assessing the content objectively.
3. I really don't see an issue here. The use of pseudonyms is a long-standing tradition, and we don't need yet another policy on content and publishing.
4. I agree with the other members of the editorial team and initiate a new, more restrictive pseudonym policy amongst the editorial team.
5. I suggest we should respect the author's wish to be pseudonymous – this is their right after all. I will explain our stance on pseudonyms to the readers in the following editorial.

## Promoting a product I don't like? I

**Matej**, a popular make-up influencer, faces a dilemma after signing a sponsorship deal with a cosmetics brand. Upon testing the products, he finds one item poorly designed and of low quality – something he wouldn't recommend or use himself. In a meeting with the brand, he learns that this disliked product is the campaign's key item, heavily backed by the marketing budget. The brand insists it be featured in his content, assuring him it passed all required tests. They agree to meet again in a week, expecting a draft of **Matej's** promotional content.

What would you do in **Matej's** place?

1. Telling the truth and being honest with my followers is a principle that I will not back down on. I cannot share dishonest information.
2. I politely explain that, for the benefit of everyone, the central product must be changed as the current one would not be suitable for my followers. This way the brand will stay trustworthy for my followers.
3. I decide to include the product in the promotion. I acknowledge that while it may not fully suit my own preferences, it could be a great fit for others. This way, I maintain my relationship with the partner, while giving my audience the chance to form their own opinion.
4. At the meeting, I will only talk about the products that I like. I am ready to continue cooperation on the condition that I can positively emphasise the products that I really liked, and I try to find a compromise where we focus on creating content specifically for them.
5. I am only willing to move forward with the collaboration if I can be fully honest about my experience. That means highlighting the products I truly liked and being transparent about the one that didn't suit me.

## Promoting a product I don't like? II

**Kristi** has followed makeup influencer **Matej** for over three years and has often bought products he recommended, always with good results. She trusts him and sees him almost as a friend.

Recently, **Matej** promoted a new makeup line in a post and story, especially praising one key product. Although the post was marked as a collaboration, **Matej** stated, "It's a collaboration, yes, but I only agreed because this product IS good."

Trusting his judgement, **Kristi** ordered the product at full price. However, upon trying it, she was disappointed. It had a strong, cheap-smelling scent and, while it didn't cause irritation, it felt unpleasant to use.

What would you do in **Kristi's** place?

1. I will write to **Matej** and express my disappointment with his latest promotion. I will ask him to review his future promotions more honestly.
2. I will share my bad experience in the comments section of the post and question the integrity of the poster, in the hope that it will help others make better choices.
3. I do nothing. I do not see anything changing based on my comment and I do not want to engage with the hostile comments I would then receive.
4. I would write to **Matej** personally, to warn him that fans wouldn't like **Matej** becoming a sellout. However, I would not make a public post, because I don't want to fan the flames.
5. I understand that **Matej** may have truly believed that this product was good, or that he had to work with some limitations in the campaign. Thus, I choose to remain silent so as not to embarrass the content creator.

## Storytelling in documentary I

**Marc**, a filmmaker working on a documentary film about everyday people making small but meaningful changes, faces creative pressure from colleagues who argue for more dramatic content to boost ratings. Marc, however, values the portrayal of ordinary lives and doesn't want to sacrifice the message for monetary value. Before releasing the film, a major cinema company offers to screen it but insists on producing the trailers themselves. **Marc** knows that the company is famous for making visually appealing but simplified trailers that sometimes distort the result.

What would you do in Marc's place?

1. I would decline the offer. I do not want to release my film with a misleading trailer, which might confuse the moviegoers.
2. I would accept the offer, so that people could see my film. If I must sacrifice my trailer to achieve this, it's worth it.
3. I would ignore the offer and do the trailer myself. I like my film too much to let it have a misleading trailer.
4. I would accept the offer but explain to the people represented that even though the trailer simplifies the film, their experiences get published and promoted.
5. I would decline the offer, as it would be a disingenuous representation of the people who were documented.

## Storytelling in documentary II

**Joan** heads the production company behind Marc's documentary and usually takes a hands-off approach to creative decisions. However, she must ensure the company stays financially viable. A major cinema company offers a generous deal to screen Marc's film but wants control over the trailers. Marc is hesitant to give up that control and asks **Joan** for advice. Joan knows the company is struggling financially and that accepting the deal could help it stay afloat.

What would you do in Joan's place?

1. I tell Marc that I trust his judgment and leave the decision to him. I do not tell him about the financial difficulties, because that would force his decision.
2. I would inform Marc of the financial difficulties the company is facing in hopes that he might agree to the deal.
3. I would tell Marc to accept the deal if he cannot provide a better solution on how the company could make their payments.
4. I would suggest trying to discuss the terms with the company. Perhaps it is possible to sign some kind of extended contract, which would even be good for Marc.
5. I would offer to take over the decision-making process while ensuring that I protect his interests. That way Marc could get some peace of mind.

## On-air conflict I

**Leena**, a retired political scientist, remains active in public debate, advocating for fair policies. Invited to a live-TV debate on a policy she knows well, she soon realises she's been cast not as an expert but as a representative of the elderly. Feeling reduced to her age rather than recognised for her expertise, **Leena** feels insulted. She faces a decision: whether she should correct the mistake or not.

**What would you do in Leena's place?**

1. I would correct the mistake, because the most important element of a debate is honest communication.
2. I would correct the mistake, because this will lead to a more productive conversation, as I can give my expert opinion.
3. I would not correct the mistake, because I don't want to look bad on live-TV.
4. I would not correct the mistake, because I don't want to undermine the credibility of the show host.
5. I would correct the mistake, because speaking under a false pretence is misleading for the listener of the show.

## On-air conflict II

**Kaisa**, a TV host at a major news outlet, was asked to moderate a debate on a new policy. She agreed and prepared thoroughly... or so she thought. When the show started, **Kaisa** introduced all the participants, however, when she introduced **Leena**, a representative of the elderly, she was met with confrontation. **Leena** stated that she had been given the wrong introduction, because she had come on the show as an expert. **Leena** then questioned the credibility of the news outlet, saying: "I didn't have high hopes coming on the show, but this surpassed my expectations. Absolutely disgraceful!"

**What would you do in Kaisa's place?**

1. I would admit that I made a mistake and apologise. However, I would ask **Leena** to be more respectful on the show from this point onwards.
2. I would correct the mistake by letting **Leena** introduce herself. After that I would ask a question from another participant, whose answer would hopefully give me enough time to generate new questions for **Leena** the "expert".
3. I would go on with the show and not bring attention to the outburst. I would also try to signal my producer to come up with new questions I can ask **Leena**.
4. I would recognise that there could have been a mistake. I decide to give her more time in the show to share her expert opinion.
5. I would apologise and ask **Leena** if talking about the experience of the elderly as an expert is suitable.

## BOOK 2: Cases for organisation representatives

Constructive interpersonal dialogue generally generates positive emotions, as being listened to and included in discussions fosters a sense of being a valued member of a collective. In practice, however, organisations may declare collaboration and openness in their mission and vision statements without these principles being reflected in everyday communication.

For example, a manager may convene a meeting, assign tasks, and then announce that employees must now begin cooperating. Or during a performance review, an employee may propose changes to work processes, the manager may nod in agreement, yet in subsequent practice the employee perceives no change and receives no explanation as to why the proposed changes were not implemented. In such (and many similar) situations, people are likely not acting in bad faith; rather, the absence of dialogue often goes unnoticed. It is also true that dialogue requires both effort and time.

The principles of dialogic communication ethics, along with the cases from everyday organisational life presented below, help individuals better recognise situations that call for ethical decision-making regarding which communicative solution is most appropriate in a given context.

The ethics of dialogic communication in organisations largely depends on leaders' openness, skills, and motivation to listen to employees in such a way that they are genuinely involved in decisions that affect them or in areas where they possess relevant expertise. It also often depends on leaders whether the use of manipulative techniques is tolerated in meetings – that is, whether someone employs manipulation and the meeting chair fails to intervene.

In other words, a culture of dialogic communication within organisations requires that every leader be willing to receive critical feedback, as listening, inclusion, and the communicative empowerment of subordinates demand sustained effort and commitment.

## Civic activism in the face of prejudice I

Due to ongoing reforms, **Ruth** has risen to be a community activist, leading a citizens' initiative to save a vital local service. She aims to maintain a constructive tone, though some in the movement take a more radical stance. At a meeting with the reform unit, a group of supporters joins in. Before the speakers can begin, the affiliated group starts whistling and shouting over them.

What would you do in Ruth's place?

1. Troublemaking is unacceptable. I will intervene and demand that the whistlers and out-shouters cease their activities immediately. If needed, I call for the security guards.
2. I will intervene and speak up, urging everyone to be polite to each other. I will promise that everyone who wishes will have the floor in due order.
3. I will do nothing. Managing interactions with radical actors is part of the responsibility of those leading the reform.
4. I will go to the reform unit and apologise about the members of the community and offer to move the meeting to another, smaller room.
5. I will apologise to all those gathered and suggest that the group that has joined could first voice their concerns in a polite manner.

## Civic activism in the face of prejudice II

Due to a national savings policy, agency X must explain why ending a local service allows for better quality provisions in a nearby city. **Anna** is sent to present the plan and prepares a talk titled *Quality or availability? Risks and opportunities*. However, as soon as she begins, the audience responds with angry shouting and whistling.

What would you do in Anna's place?

1. Rudeness must not be tolerated. I would ask publicly if I understood it correctly that I was invited to speak at an informative meeting or if it is a protest meeting. If it is the latter, I will leave immediately.
2. I will ask publicly the organisers if they could escort the hecklers out so that everyone could go on with the program.
3. There is no point in continuing as planned. I will explain to those present, using the microphone, that I came to speak honestly about the future of the service – both the associated risks and opportunities – but unfortunately, it is impossible for me to do so.
4. I will calmly present my story so people can decide for themselves who they will listen to. I will pass on the information that I have been asked for and have carefully prepared, despite everything.
5. I will use the microphone and explain that I would listen to the concerns of those people who would no longer receive the service in their neighbourhood first. I will ask the organiser to give the people a chance to talk.

## The new manager's mistake I

**Brian**, an expert but new to management, becomes head of a small unit of seven. One member, **Carmen**, has extensive project management experience but a heavy workload and isn't directly involved in the current project. At their first meeting, she mentions her workload to **Brian**. As the organisation prepares the interim report, **Brian** is still unfamiliar with the project's requirements. Just before submission, a mistake in personnel costs is found and corrected. The team, frustrated, questions why **Brian** didn't seek **Carmen's** help.

What would you do in **Brian's** place?

1. I will apologise for my mistake and promise to keep **Carmen's** expertise in mind going forward.
2. I will tell the staff of the unit at a meeting that I will work on mapping the competencies of the unit's employees and redistributing duties.
3. I will ask the staff to give suggestions before starting a project in the future.
4. I tell the staff that I understand their concerns and suggest creating a bulletin board where people can ask for assistance, which might enhance cooperation.
5. I will say to the department staff at a meeting that I thought it was most important that I listen to **Carmen**, who made it clear to me that she felt overwhelmed with work.

## The new manager's mistake II

**Brian**, an expert but new to management, takes charge of a small unit of seven. One member, **Carmen**, has extensive project management experience but a heavy workload and isn't directly involved in the current project. She informs **Brian** she can only briefly attend the team meeting due to tight deadlines. **Carmen** is aware that the unit must soon submit an interim report on a major project, and that **Brian** likely won't have time to familiarise himself with its content.

What would you do in **Carmen's** place?

1. I will not give advice to anyone until it is explicitly asked.
2. As I anticipate that there may be problems with the interim report, I will tell colleagues that if they feel they want to use my help, I will find a way to give advice, but certainly not at the last minute.
3. Since I am not the leader my responsibility is only to look out for my own wellbeing while doing work I am assigned. I will avoid taking on additional tasks, because I am close to burnout.
4. After the introductory meeting, I will send an email to **Brian** in which I briefly regret that I had to leave so early and add that if **Brian** wants to know some more about my areas of competence, we will definitely find a suitable time for such a meeting.
5. I will be worried that the new manager will not have enough time for the project. I will send him an email after the meeting, saying that I have experience with similar projects and if he feels he needs my advice, I will try to help.

## Message from a state authority on a condemned social media platform I

**Stephen**, who works in the PR department of a state agency, needs to reach young adults with information about the institution's services. After researching their media habits, he finds they spend most of their time on social media channel Y, which is known for spreading disinformation. Officials have therefore been advised not to use this channel for state communication.

What would you do in Stephen's place?

1. Social media channels, for which it is not known what information the algorithms filter and whose interests the channel serves, must be avoided.
2. The security rules established by the state are important, but it is also important to inform the target group. I will turn the message into a meme and spread it in as many channels as possible.
3. I will use the channel to send a very short message to invite interested young people to visit our institution's website for more information.
4. I will present the dilemma to my boss and ask which value is more important for our institution: whether not to use suspicious social media or to reach our young people in the most direct way.
5. My job is to make sure that young people are critical of the use of social media. I will write an article about the problem of my moral choice and distribute it in the media and on the website of our institution.

## Message from a state authority on a condemned social media platform II

**Oscar**, a 19-year-old critical of propaganda by major social media platforms, has created a small training programme as a hobby. He notices that social media channel Y, popular among his peers, has shared a brief state agency message about a youth-related reform, directing users to the agency's website for more details.

What would you do in Oscar's place?

1. I will do nothing, because everyone has the right to decide where they disseminate their information and what channels they use.
2. I will write a critical comment in the public media to give users an example of how they and the state authorities feed and support propaganda channels.
3. I will do nothing, because the views of a single critic will not change anything.
4. I will write a letter to the government agency and suggest that instead of spreading their messages on the suspicious social media channel Y, they could use, for this purpose, young people like me who have networks among people of their own age.
5. I will do nothing, because the views of a single critic will not change anything. I will add this case to my collection of examples, on the basis of which I will prepare a lecture on the security risks posed by a state agency and disseminate it on a video platform.

## Speaking truth to power I

Professor **Red**, long critical of the university's communication culture, has observed a pattern of silencing dissenting voices. At informal gatherings, colleagues cautiously share experiences of being discouraged from expressing critical views, which Professor **Red** finds troubling in an institution meant to uphold academic freedom.

After learning that a vocal colleague's contract wasn't renewed, Professor **Red** posts on the public mailing list, outlining concerns (without naming anyone) and calls for a faculty meeting with the dean. During the meeting, Professor **Red** notices that whenever he talks the dean becomes increasingly agitated.

**What would you do in Professor Red's place?**

1. I will talk about the concerns I posted about. The dean's responsibility is to accept critique about his leadership and decision-making.
2. I will try to steer the discussion towards solutions and ease the critique directed at the dean.
3. I would not do anything – the dean has deserved the critique and since he is the leader in this situation, it is his responsibility to deal with it.
4. I'm concerned about the way the dean reacts and propose that we could continue the discussions at another, more suitable, time so everyone has the chance to cool off.
5. I'm concerned that this meeting could have negative consequences for my colleague if I continue criticising the dean. I will stop with the critique and allow others to share their views.

## Speaking truth to power II

Professor **Blue**, the faculty dean, is struggling with rising tensions and criticism at the university. A detailed letter appears on the faculty mailing list, pointing out leadership mistakes and suggesting that outspoken staff risk losing their jobs. The author of the letter – Professor **Red** – calls for a faculty-wide meeting, specifically requesting Dean **Blue's** presence. The meeting becomes emotional, and Dean **Blue** feels publicly attacked and humiliated.

**What would you do in Dean Blue's place?**

1. My responsibility is to sit and listen to what my colleagues have to say.
2. The meeting has become volatile, so I suggest a short recess to ease the tension.
3. I excuse myself from the meeting and say I'm sorry if they feel this way, but I find this critique unfair and cannot attend the meeting any longer.
4. I will try to make a good face and attempt to understand their concerns. I will ask additional questions to clarify their concern and reflect some of the criticism.
5. I propose to Professor **Red** to have a smaller meeting and ask him also to invite the people who he believes have lost their job for speaking the truth.

## Publishing disrespect? I

After finishing high school in Colombia, 19-year-old **Fernando** took a 6-month babysitting job in a European capital to gain international experience. A beginning vlogger, he shares his daily life moments – both good and bad – on his channel "**Fernando** in Europe". His host parents are aware of his content and have appeared in several videos. In his latest vlog, while filming, they entered the room irritated, asking him to clean the kitchen more often. **Fernando** isn't sure if they noticed he was recording.

What would you do in Fernando's place?

1. I post the video as my host parents know about me sharing my authentic experiences in Europe.
2. I edit the video to include my explanation to the situation.
3. I post the video as I would usually do. I am here for a short period of time and publicity helps with my future endeavours.
4. I show the parents the video and ask if they agree that the video be released.
5. I do not post the video. I do not want my host parents to face any kind of backlash.

## Publishing disrespect? II

**Lisa**, 24, volunteers for the small non-profit "Protect the Babysitters" and follows various influencers. She comes across Fernando's video where his host parents, seemingly unaware of the filming, scold him for not cleaning the kitchen. **Lisa**, who campaigns for babysitters' rights, finds the tone inappropriate and notes that cleaning isn't part of a babysitter's duties. While Fernando's other videos seem positive and engaging, she feels the tone of the parent towards Fernando crosses a line and shows disrespect towards the babysitter.

What would you do in Lisa's place?

1. I contact Fernando and explain that the parents' behaviour is unacceptable and offer to inform the social welfare services on his behalf.
2. I write publicly under Fernando's video how disturbing the video is and encourage Fernando and others to stand up against such injustice. I also mention my NGO that can offer help to anyone in need.
3. Since I do not see any indication for it to be a systematic issue and Fernando does not seem to be helpless in the situation, I do nothing.
4. I share the video with activists and contacts in my group asking them about their opinions on the video and if we should contact Fernando.
5. I write to Fernando privately and ask him if he has any questions in relation to babysitters' rights.

## Autonomy or pleasing the funder I

**Savannah**, a funder for an environmental NGO, attends another meeting on an upcoming climate change campaign. However, the campaign team's indecisiveness has halted progress. What's more, **Savannah** has poured substantial funds into the campaign, and no results have been produced. She believes the issue is critical and wonders whether she should contact the campaign manager and force their hand to get some results.

What would you do in Savannah's place?

1. I would state at the meeting that, in my opinion, we are not moving forward. I would ask for concrete solutions on how to achieve the agreed goals.
2. Climate change is an important issue in achieving the public good. I would demand that the campaign team pick up the pace.
3. I would offer the campaign team additional monetary compensation if immediate results are achieved.
4. Since the campaign team consists of experts, I encourage the team about their great work on engaging as many people as possible.
5. I would speak with the manager after the meeting and ask him what kind of help is needed for the team to achieve results.

## Autonomy or pleasing the funder II

**Luca** works for an environmental NGO focused on climate change awareness. He is managing a public campaign, which will engage as many people as possible. During a brainstorming session about finding the right tone for the campaign, the team is struggling to decide between a hopeful or fear driven solution. **Luca** feels that the decision shouldn't be rushed but he also knows that he must produce results. **Luca's** problems manifest when the main funder of the campaign asks for immediate results and hints at a bonus if **Luca** complies.

What would you do in Luca's place?

1. I tell the funder that we should let the creative team do their job independently and not rush the decision.
2. I think the campaign must engage people, so I propose we test different solutions and choose the one that drives meaningful action no matter the time it takes.
3. I will make an executive decision that will move the project forward and work towards the bonus.
4. Since our NGO cannot function without external resources and our funder is displeased, I will present what we currently have and ask which choice they prefer.
5. I know that my team has been working very hard to achieve good results. Thus, I take on additional work myself.

## Offensive expression in the internal list of the organisation I

Allan, a new employee, discovers that a regulation, previously interpreted narrowly, could be understood differently. He considers this important and shares his view on the organisation's mailing list. Kim, a long-time employee, publicly replies, claiming Allan lacks the professional background to make such a statement.

What would you do in Allan's place?

1. I write on the list that I think there should be a practice in the organisation that no one is attacked in person and/or in public.
2. I use the list once more and explain that my letter was meant to draw attention to the problem, I propose to arrange a special seminar to discuss this issue.
3. I believe that the colleagues understand that Kim's attack was inappropriate, however I use the I-statement and write: "I feel that questioning my competence was unjustified."
4. I write to the list that, "It seems that I accidentally touched an issue here and people have controversial opinions. I propose that it would be good if myself and others have an opportunity to listen to Kim's experience concerning the interpretation of this law."
5. I understand that Kim is especially sensitive about the issue that is raised. Therefore, I shall go to Kim and ask him if he would explain his reaction.

## Offensive expression in the internal list of the organisation II

Kim has long worked in a field dealing with regulations related to X. After reading a post by new employee Allan, who suggests the regulation has been interpreted too narrowly, Kim feels Allan lacks sufficient understanding. He responds publicly, stating Allan is not competent to make such claims. Later, a colleague calls Kim, saying his comment was a disproportionate personal attack.

What would you do in Kim's place?

1. I understand that Allan saw this as an attack and apologise to him in the list.
2. I understand that Allan might have felt like being attacked and send a clarifying letter to the list to highlight how new interpretations should happen in our field
3. I decide to stand my ground – Allan does not have competence in this area, and his letter was an attack at my expertise.
4. Although I still feel my expertise was attacked, I take note from my colleague's perspective – I write to the list, apologise, and propose to listen to Allan's perspective of the interpretation.
5. I understand that Allan might have been hurt, therefore I ask how he perceived the situation.

## The burden of advocacy I

The umbrella organisation for people with special needs has successfully advocated for their rights, with representatives now involved in all relevant policy discussions and document reviews.

**Aarne**, one of the representatives, notices a growing number of requests: giving opinions, joining discussions, facilitating roundtables, and commenting on draft bills.

He receives another urgent request from a government adviser to review a politically sensitive draft bill before Christmas. **Aarne** realises only one team member, **Mirko** – already nearing burnout – could take it on. Yet, the bill is highly significant for people with special needs.

**What would you do in Aarne's place?**

1. I will explain that while we fully understand the importance of the topic, we must adhere to our internal principles. Currently, we are unable to guarantee the level of quality this matter deserves.
2. I will include **Mirko** in the decision and suggest we proceed only if his wellbeing is not compromised.
3. Because this task could strengthen our position, I will ask **Mirko** to make a final effort and promise compensation or recognition later.
4. I will ask the team if someone can assist **Mirko** or take over part of the work to ensure at least a limited contribution.
5. Since this bill is highly significant, I will ask **Mirko** to review it, helping anywhere I can. The people we are fighting for need us to be as vigilant as possible, even if that means sacrificing our health for the cause.

## The burden of advocacy II

**Mirko** works for an advocacy organisation and has had an intense few months. He urgently needs rest, but just before the holidays, his team lead, **Aarne**, asks him to review a new draft bill from the ministry, with feedback due before the break.

**Aarne** downplays the task as minor, saying **Mirko** is skilled at clarifying complex ideas. However, **Mirko** knows the document is detailed and demanding, requiring several days of focused work.

He's torn: accepting means sacrificing his break and time with family, while refusing might suggest he's indifferent to an issue he deeply cares about.

**What would you do in Mirko's place?**

1. Even if it's inconvenient or personally costly, I feel morally obliged to comment on the document, because defending the rights of vulnerable people is part of my professional duty.
2. I choose to do the work because I believe that, even at the cost of my personal time, my contribution could significantly improve the outcome of the law.
3. I politely decline and explain that I am currently close to burnout and need rest. I believe that taking care of my mental and physical health now will allow me to contribute more effectively in the future.
4. I seek a compromise by offering **Aarne** to comment only on the most important parts of the document, but not the entire text. This way, I can provide meaningful input without letting my family fall completely by the wayside.
5. I recognise that I have been investing a lot of energy into my work, and now my family, partner, and children need me to be truly present. I choose not to take on the task, because caring for those closest to me is a priority.

## Tensions at a meeting I

**Martin** realises five minutes late that his project meeting has already started. He quietly joins and listens to Emma's presentation, which is valuable to him as he hasn't had time to familiarise himself with the new project. Just as Emma is about to summarise, Anna interrupts to ask for specific instructions for the team, then immediately begins outlining her own ideas on workflows and responsibilities. Emma appears visibly annoyed by the interruption, and **Martin** senses the tension rising in the room.

What would you do in Martin's place?

1. I believe that a respectful communication culture should prevail in an organisation, so I stand up and say that the conversation has become disrespectful.
2. I would suggest to Anna that she let Emma finish and send us her ideas and workflows suggestions in a document after the meeting since there isn't enough time left in the meeting to have a significant discussion.
3. I won't do anything because I'm already overloaded in terms of time and cognitive capacity, and I'll find out what I need to do later anyway.
4. I say that Emma's presentation was important for me, and perhaps for others, to get an overview of the project, since things have been so busy that I have forgotten the details. It is important for all of us to understand what needs to be done overall and when.
5. I feel that Anna has been unreasonably aggressive towards Emma. I ask to speak and say that we should listen to Emma and let her finish her presentation.

## Tensions at a meeting II

**Anna**, the project manager and meeting moderator, begins by stating the goal: to agree on specific responsibilities within 45 minutes. Emma, responsible for the work area, presents the activities. After 35 minutes, she offers to summarise if there are no questions. Feeling pressed for time, **Anna** interrupts to ask about specific instructions for team members, then starts explaining her own workflow ideas. Emma, visibly irritated, asks who is presenting. **Anna** insists time is short and begins sharing her screen without waiting. Emma angrily tells her to stop. Martin, who joined late, comments that the exchange is rude and Emma wasn't given space to speak calmly.

What would you do in Anna's place?

1. I would say that for me politeness means respecting people's time, which means that people who come to a meeting should get answers they were promised.
2. I would argue that for the project to be completed on time, we need to agree on the division of responsibilities right away. We don't have time for pleasantries.
3. I would defend myself against Martin's accusation, which I find inappropriate because Martin was late to the meeting and didn't hear that the purpose of the meeting was to get an overview of people's tasks. It is my task as a moderator to make sure we achieve these aims.
4. I say that I am sorry if my intervention came across as rude and suggest that we should now listen to the questions that the participants have.
5. I would apologise and say that my intention was to support Emma with her responsibilities. I suggest that myself and Emma stay a bit longer in the meeting and discuss what happened between the two of us.

## BOOK 3: Cases for higher education

Academic knowledge is largely grounded in dialogue. Free, respectful, honest, analytical, and critical deliberation is a prerequisite for the creation of academic knowledge and for academic education. Contemporary universities, however, have drifted away from this academic ideal, as the acceleration of social time and prevailing funding models have created conditions in which publishing ideas and research results is often more beneficial than engaging in sustained discussion. It is true that, with the spread of generative artificial intelligence, the need for dialogue between lecturers and students is likely to increase; however, it is difficult to predict the forms this dialogue may take.

Higher education institutions constitute a distinctive communicative environment. On the one hand, they operate within hierarchical structures (e.g., junior lecturer, lecturer, associate professor, professor). On the other hand, as noted, academic learning and deliberation function best under dialogic conditions, where those with greater institutional power bear a responsibility to empower those with less. Thus, the ethics of dialogic communication forms an integral part of higher education culture, yet it is the responsibility of those participating in higher education to interpret and implement it in everyday practice.

This collection of communication-ethical narratives designed for higher education contexts presents a variety of communicative situations among different parties – whether between lecturer and student, supervisor and subordinate, or student and student. Some cases concern the boundaries of academic freedom and sensitive topics; others relate directly to situations arising in the classroom.

Dialogic communication ethics also intersects with research ethics. For example, it rejects the practice of honorary or gifted authorship – attributing authorship in exchange for position or favour rather than for genuine contribution to an article. However, if a well-meaning colleague includes, for the sake of maintaining amicable relations or avoiding conflict, the name of an individual whose only contribution was securing

funding, a communication-ethical choice arises. Whether and how should one tell the colleague that they have violated a principle of research ethics? Should one remain silent to preserve the relationship? Or report the matter to a body responsible for upholding research ethics?

There are also points of intersection with principles of good teaching and learning. For instance, giving and receiving feedback concerns both pedagogical practice and communication ethics. Traditionally, feedback is anonymous, with the aim of providing students with a sense of security when expressing critical views. But what happens when a student abuses this right by including insulting remarks or false claims about a lecturer in their feedback? For example, a student might write that a lecturer was repeatedly late, when in fact the lecturer was late only once, and even then, only slightly. One of the core values of dialogic communication ethics is equality in communication. Applying this value to the evaluation of feedback systems raises the question of whether the system assigns equal responsibility to students and lecturers to ensure that what is said or written is truthful and supportive of human dignity and dialogue.

One of the aims of the narratives presented here is to invite players to reflect on where good research or good teaching practice ends and where communication ethics begins.

## Awkward question I

**Brian** attends a course where students must write an essay and then discuss each other's work. Thanks to his work experience, **Brian** is more familiar with the topic than his peers. He notices that most questions from fellow students are vague and overly supportive, even when essays have clear flaws. For instance, one student says, "You've outlined everything important, but what do you think is the key message?" **Brian** disagrees, as he believes the essay confuses some key concepts.

What would you do in Brian's place?

1. I will proceed from the principle that mistakes do not help anyone. I calmly draw attention to them and point out how these mistakes could be corrected.
2. I will proceed from the task set by the lecturer and present my criticism in such a way that my question already contains a possible correct answer.
3. I understand that most fellow students have not delved into the task, but I will not point out their mistakes because that is the teacher's job. I will commend all the presenters for some of the details they have taken close note of.
4. My role in this seminar is not to demonstrate to fellow students my expertise in the field, however, I will ask clarifying questions while avoiding criticism. I will begin my questions with the wording, "Do I understand correctly that ...?"
5. Since my questions could put the presenters in embarrassing situations where they may not be able to answer my questions, I will only ask a few questions from the more confident students.

## Awkward question II

Lecturer **Anne** assigns students to write a short essay on topic X and asks others to pose clarifying and critical questions, with both tasks graded. She knows this is challenging, especially as students are often reluctant to criticise peers. **Anne** is also aware that Brian, who is well-versed in topic X, has a clear advantage.

What would you do in Anne's place?

1. I will immediately give feedback and scores on each question. I will also note that whoever learns to ask better questions by the end of the course will receive a higher grade for asking questions.
2. At the beginning of the seminar, I will determine the order of those students who ask questions, putting Brian first. I hope Brian would create a certain standard of good questions.
3. Some people have advantages in life. I will hold the seminar as planned and grade the students in accordance with their performance.
4. I will encourage students to submit criticism along with recognition, adding, however, that recognition must be justified. For unjustified recognition, the inquirer will receive negative points.
5. I will give more time to the students who engage with the topic. I offer the students who are afraid to ask critical questions the opportunity to send them to me via email and I will grade them separately.

## Lecture on a sensitive topic I

**Jane** is a gender studies lecturer at a university. She has noticed an increase in traditionalist views on gender, both in academia and public discourse. In one of her lectures, **Jane** gets a bit too carried away and gives a personal and emotional response to a polarising topic. Later, one of **Jane's** colleagues sends her screenshots of a discussion **Jane's** students are having on social media over her outburst.

What would you do in Jane's place?

1. In the next lecture, I would tell the class that the view I present is my opinion, and that they are welcome to discuss it with me. However, if they disagree, they should be willing to express it.
2. In the next lecture, I would apologise for my outburst and explain my views in more detail.
3. I would do nothing and go on giving the lectures as I see fit.
4. I would add discussion boards, where students could anonymously express themselves by voicing their opinions and ideas that I could use to better my lectures.
5. I would do nothing so as not to expose my colleague.

## Lecture on a sensitive topic II

**Sam** is a colleague of Jane's. He has a few friends who take Jane's class. Because of his friends, **Sam** has access to the different social media groups of the students. One day, **Sam** sees the students of Jane's class discussing an outburst Jane had had in her lecture. While there are a few students defending her actions, the majority find Jane's outburst unprofessional. Some even start to make fun of Jane.

What would you do in Sam's place?

1. I would write a message to the group chat that defamatory statements can have a legal response. I would not send pictures of the chat to Jane to protect the students' privacy; however, I would inform Jane of the discussion.
2. I would talk to Jane on how her personal opinions were received and workshop on possible solutions to rectify the situation with her. If needed, I would show Jane the social media discussion.
3. I would do nothing, as the topic does not concern me.
4. I would talk to Jane on how her personal opinions were received without exposing the students, and offer advice on how to reduce such sharing in future lectures, because it upset some of her students.
5. I would write a message to the group chat, in which I defend Jane against insulting statements. I would share screenshots of the group discussion with Jane so she could be informed.

## Friend sends obscenities to famous people

I

**Maret** is a former teacher turned pensioner who has been using social media to talk to her friends. Some of her pensioner friends, however, have begun expressing more radical thoughts online. **Maret** figures that this change is due to the influence of social media. One day, she notices that her friend Leida, who is a grandmother, is actively commenting under a news piece shared on social media by sending obscenities to a famous politician.

What would you do in Maret's place?

1. I would publicly reply to Leida's comments by pointing out that such personal opinions are not appropriate for a news post.
2. I would publicly reply to Leida's comments by calling out that her actions are also visible to her grandchildren.
3. I would not react to the post, since the topic does not concern me.
4. I don't want to argue with my friend, but I see her comment as offensive. I report it to the social media manager, hoping they will discipline her.
5. I would send a private message to Leida urging her to consider taking down any statements that she would later regret.

## Friend sends obscenities to famous people

II

**Leida**, a pensioner new to social media, has begun following political content she finds credible, which has influenced her views. One day, she sees a post praising a politician she believes to be corrupt. Frustrated, she comments using offensive language. Later, her friend Maret publicly criticises her for it.

What would you do in Leida's place?

1. I would publicly reply to Maret's criticism by citing my right to express my opinion.
2. I would publicly reply to Maret's criticism by proposing to discuss our disagreement privately.
3. I would publicly reply to Maret's criticism by defending my position by citing relevant sources.
4. I would write a private message to Maret, proposing a mutual removal of the comments.
5. I would accept my friend Maret's difference of opinion, although I think she is misinformed.

## The role of public intellectuals I

**Louis**, a young scientist, researches Indigenous communities in an ecologically sensitive area. His findings show that a proposed government-backed industrial project would damage biodiversity and disrupt local life of a community. He spent long hours compiling a detailed analysis for the ministry. In response, he receives a lengthy thank-you letter from the ministry's PR department. However, **Louis** feels his concerns weren't truly considered, and the project is still moving ahead.

What would you do in Louis's place?

1. I decide to post the information on my social media profile, so that it would spread.
2. The information needs to be made public, so I turn to a respected journalist with my material and with the letter from the ministry.
3. I did what I could, if they decide to ignore the scientific fact, there is nothing I can do about it.
4. I compose another, more thorough response to the ministry's PR department with the aim to convince them to take more action.
5. I send my information to the leaders of the Indigenous community so they could also write their own letter to the ministry.

## The role of public intellectuals II

**Markus**, a specialist in the ministry's PR department, is managing a surge in information due to a planned industrial project in an area inhabited by an Indigenous community. He comes across a thorough and well-argued analysis – far better than previous ones – and shares it with relevant officials, including the minister. After a brief glance, the minister states that the political decision has already been made and there's nothing left to discuss.

What would you do in Markus' place?

1. I find that the public needs to know about this analysis, so I send the analysis to my friend who works in journalism.
2. I share the analysis with the minister's advisors, so they can be informed about this matter.
3. If the minister has made up their mind, there is little I can do about it. I drop the matter.
4. I will try to convince the minister to take the information into account as decisions can be remade if needed.
5. I send an official thank you to the person who has sent us the analysis and praise them for the effort.

## Who is responsible for information? I

When **Lisa** started university, she chose all the mandatory courses and added French as an elective one simply because there was space. Later, her friend Mona mentioned she had joined an experimental course on future technologies, which was open to all but not widely known. **Lisa** realised she hadn't heard about such options and didn't know where to find them.

What would you do in Lisa's place?

1. I would turn to the study coordinator, explicitly asking to be kept up to date with future study options as it is their responsibility.
2. I would turn to the study coordinator, asking what my possibilities are for finding relevant and interesting voluntary courses.
3. I would make a complaint to the student council about limited information on voluntary courses.
4. I would approach the lecturer and ask them about the course and if it is possible to join it late.
5. I would accept that I missed an interesting course, but my timetable is already full.

## Who is responsible for information? II

**Ango**, a researcher in emerging technologies, opens a voluntary course for students to test project materials. Due to time constraints, he only manages to share the info with the programme manager Anju, who includes it in the faculty newsletter. After the course begins, many students request late enrolment, finding the course interesting. **Ango** feels overwhelmed, as the course was planned for a limited group and demand exceeds available spots.

What would you do in Ango's place?

1. This is the first come, first served principle – I will accept those students who contacted me earlier until the places are filled.
2. I will open a few more spots, even if this means more workload, because this maximises learning impact and makes the most of the material.
3. I will note the interest, but for my own mental clarity and workload, I will not increase enrolment now.
4. I will consult with the academic team to find a collaborative solution – perhaps open an open-access version of the course.
5. I will personally reply to each student, thank them for their interest, and let them know I plan to offer the course again and will keep them informed.

## Challenging important conversations? I

**Jonas**, a university student, is increasingly drawn to political and societal debates. He values open discussion but often ends up in tense arguments, especially on sensitive topics like environmental and gender issues. He's realised that some subjects are better received than others.

One evening, while out with friends, Jonas is eager to talk about recent environmental news. However, **Lance** – who previously got angry during a debate with **Jonas** – joins the group. As the conversation continues, **Jonas** is asked to share his views.

**What would you do in Jonas' place?**

1. I speak my mind; freedom of speech is the basis for meaningful discussions.
2. Although I find different opinions to be important, I hesitate to answer – I put out half of my opinion to keep the discussion running.
3. I won't censor myself because **Lance** doesn't like my opinions. He can leave if he wants to.
4. I decide not to share my real opinion but agree with what has already been said.
5. I turn to **Lance** and ask what his opinions on the matter are.

## Challenging important conversations? II

**Lance** is studying in higher education but isn't sure it's the right fit. He finds some peer discussions complex and frustrating. While he wants to enjoy life, he also hopes to learn a profession that leads to a job.

Among his friends is **Jonas**, who enjoys deep debates on societal and environmental issues – topics **Lance** finds exhausting. They once had a heated argument where **Lance** lashed out.

Now, meeting the group again, **Lance** joins just as they ask **Jonas** for his opinion on an environmental issue. **Jonas** hesitates to respond.

**What would you do in Lance's place?**

1. **Jonas** has a right express his opinion. I will apologise to **Jonas** for the way I reacted the last time and excuse myself from the group as this topic doesn't interest me.
2. I will try to support **Jonas** now and stay calm in the discussion to maintain peace in the group.
3. I ask the group if we could change the subject because it makes me uncomfortable.
4. I will acknowledge the tension between us and let **Jonas** finish talking before calmly giving my own opinion.
5. I will encourage **Jonas** to share his thoughts and show that we, as a group, value his voice.

## Group work dilemma I

**Zoe** is taking a communication course where the final assignment is a group project analysing a public communication ethics case. She's grouped with **Jamie** and **Anja**, whom she barely knows. **Zoe** takes the lead and does most of the writing. She sees little of **Jamie** during the process, with **Anja** providing most of the input. When submitting the project, they must state each member's contribution. **Jamie** claims he was involved in all activities. **Zoe** hesitates, but **Anja** confirms his participation, explaining he missed meetings due to family issues.

What would you do in **Zoe's** place?

1. I write the contribution as I see it – that **Jamie** and **Anja** worked together, and I did not see **Jamie** participating.
2. I would suggest the lecturer to change the format of the course work so that other students could not take advantage of group work.
3. I highlight my contribution and tell others to write what they think they did for the project.
4. I would write what **Jamie** and **Anja** told me. Whether I believe them or not it's still a group project and I don't want to ruin our relationship.
5. I would consider that **Jamie** was unable to attend the meetings due to family issues, and I would trust that he was still involved in all activities essential to the project's completion.

## Group work dilemma II

**Jamie** is attending a communication course with his friend **Anja**. In their studies, **Anja** usually handles the writing, while **Jamie** contributes ideas. He struggles with writing and often makes mistakes. During the final project, family issues affect **Jamie's** ability to participate fully. He stays in touch with **Anja** by phone to share ideas but misses meetings with the other group members and contributes less than expected.

When it's time to submit the project, **Zoe**, the group's project manager, asks **Jamie** and **Anja** to outline their contributions.

What would you do in **Jamie's** place?

1. I would honestly say that I contributed to generating ideas necessary for the completion of the project.
2. I would say that we all contributed to the completion of the project by using our individual strengths and my strength was idea generation.
3. Although my contribution is not that visible, I advocate for positive grade.
4. I would discuss with the other group members what each person's contribution was, to make sure everyone is satisfied with what gets written down.
5. Given that everyone worked hard and I had to be absent at times, I think it's only fair to be honest about my contribution, so I don't take credit at the expense of others.

## Misunderstood assignment I

**Anna** has taught a university course for ten years, focusing on both theory and practice. From the start, she highlights that the course uses inquiry-based learning: students first learn analysis methods through five formative tests, then apply them independently in the second half, without detailed task instructions. Feedback is provided to support development.

At semester's end, about ten out of 50 students report unclear assignment instructions in anonymous course evaluations. That same year, during faculty review, the evaluation chair asks **Anna**: "What could you do to make the assignment instructions clearer?"

**What would you do in Anna's place?**

1. I would say that this question is not entirely appropriate. Based on anonymous feedback alone, I cannot take specific action because I don't know whether the critical students attended the first lecture or how well they understood my explanation of the inquiry-based learning method.
2. I would explain the specific methodology used in the course, where students must first engage deeply with the learning process. I would point out that if students fail to do so, it naturally becomes more difficult for them to move on to the next stage.
3. I would say that's a good question – of course, I can make the instructions clearer. I'll add a few explanatory sentences to the assignment guides for the next academic year.
4. I would say that I have always encouraged students to ask for help and clarification throughout the course – and many have. This type of feedback helps both me and the students understand where additional guidance might be needed.
5. I would acknowledge that there were likely students for whom independent problem-solving felt difficult, and I've considered dedicating more of my time and attention to supporting them in the future.

## Misunderstood assignment II

**Johanna**, a first-year student in Professor Anna's course, works part-time as a waiter, leaving limited time for studies. She tries to be efficient and do her best. After submitting a practical assignment, she receives feedback showing she misunderstood the task and completed much of it incorrectly. She takes time to redo it properly, now paying close attention to the instructions.

**Johanna** eventually passes the course and is asked to give anonymous feedback at the end.

**What would you do in Johanna's place?**

1. I would give positive feedback about the course because I received useful comments from the instructor and achieved a good result.
2. I would write that the course takes more time and is demanding for the overburdened students, therefore the instructions could be shorter and more easily interpreted.
3. I feel that redoing the assignments was frustrating. The lecturer could be more flexible and accept work that is not totally in line with the instructions even if I get a lower grade.
4. I would approach the lecturer and share my experience with suggestion on how to change the assignments. This would mean less stress for the students and the lecturer.
5. I must be honest that I did not fully engage with the course from the beginning.

## Viral video I

**Viktor**, a political science student, regularly attends extra lectures featuring experts on current issues. At one event, Julija, a cyber-security specialist, discusses the information wars and their societal impact. **Viktor** finds the examples engaging and records short videos of the talk, as it wasn't marked off-the-record. Reviewing the footage later, he notices one particularly striking segment that could work well as a short reel.

What would you do in Viktor's place?

1. I did not ask permission for filming, therefore I would delete the clip.
2. I did not ask permission, but the clip is really good – I would only share it with my close friends.
3. This is a good clip and there was no indication that the information cannot be shared, therefore I would post it on my social media.
4. I would like to use the clip, but I do not know how Julija would feel about it, therefore I write and ask her whether the information can be used.
5. Although I like the clip, I decide not to use it, since I do not know if Julija would be okay with it.

## Viral video II

**Julija**, a cyber security expert, gives a talk to political science students as part of her societal engagement. John, the organiser, assures her that students are responsible and the sessions focus on current issues. After the event, **Julija** sees a viral social media clip from her talk. The segment misrepresents her message, lacking the necessary context due to its brevity.

What would you do in Julija's place?

1. I would reach out to the author of the post and demand that it be taken down from social media.
2. I would ask for the post to be removed and explain to the author that posting content out of context can cause significant harm if it results in the original message being misinterpreted.
3. I wouldn't do anything, since I can't control everything that gets posted or how others interpret the content.
4. I would ask for the post to be taken down, but I would give permission to share a longer clip from the same speech that includes the necessary context.
5. I would provide the relevant context in a comment beneath the post to ensure that viewers are not misinformed and fully grasp the intended meaning.

## BOOK 4: Cases for schools

Dialogism is a philosophy of education that emphasises dialogue between teacher and learner as the foundation of teaching and learning. The tradition of dialogic pedagogy dates back to the time of Socrates and Plato. Today, when the teacher is no longer merely a one-way transmitter of knowledge, meaningful dialogue as a pedagogical tool has become increasingly important. The principles of dialogic communication are also embedded in the updated version of the Estonian Teachers' Code of Ethics.

The core values of dialogic communication ethics include mutual listening and understanding between teacher and learner, respect, and honesty. In everyday school life, situations arise in which all parties involved (students, educational staff, parents and family members, community members) must recognise communication-ethical decision points, weigh alternative courses of action, and determine the most appropriate way to respond.

Consider a situation in which Student A continuously makes loud comments during class, until Student B loses patience and snaps: "Students with autism should be in special education!" What options does the teacher have in this situation? When and how should the teacher respond? Should Student B be reprimanded for labelling, even though in that moment they were defending their right to work without disruption? If a remark is made to Student B, how and at what moment should it be delivered? In communication ethics, there is a significant difference between addressing an issue immediately and publicly or later and privately.

Developing a culture of dialogic communication requires continuous practice: learning to recognise ethical decision points, carefully considering different response options, identifying the most appropriate course of action, and reflecting on its consequences.

At times, it can be difficult to distinguish communication-ethical choices from general ethical choices. For example, the teenagers Julia and Romeo have ended their relationship, and the young man now has a new girlfriend. In a social gathering, the new girlfriend remarks that Romeo's

former girlfriend dresses provocatively. No one present responds at the moment, but later Julia's best friend tells her what the new girlfriend said about her. As a result, Julia refuses to attend her best friend's birthday party if Romeo and his new girlfriend are invited. The friend feels hurt and says it is unethical for Julia to force her to choose between friends.

This situation begins with communication-ethical choices. Should someone have intervened immediately and said that making critical remarks about someone behind their back is inappropriate? Should Julia have been informed about the comment at all? Yet the story ultimately develops into a broader moral dilemma – whether Julia prioritises her own sense of well-being at the party or loyalty to her close friend.

A characteristic feature of communication ethics is that the application of principles often occupies a grey area, where clear-cut interpretations are rare in everyday interaction. In some cases, however, a violation of good practice is obvious. In such instances, deciding how to respond becomes an ethical question. How should one react if one is the victim? Or if one is a bystander? Does a bystander even have sufficient information to intervene? These are questions suitable for reflection by teachers, learners, school support staff, and parents.

## Aggressive messages in an online chat I

**Mike**, a teenager, recently got a smartphone and chats with both peers and relatives, including his aunt Megan. Megan, often busy at work, sends short, fragmented messages during brief breaks. **Mike**, who prefers writing full thoughts, finds this style odd. During a discussion on a societal issue, Megan sends multiple messages in quick succession, which makes **Mike** feel she is being aggressive or shouting.

What would you do in Mike's place?

1. I will write honestly to Aunt Megan that I don't understand why she's so mean in messaging.
2. I will ask my mother if she understands why Aunt Megan is kind of mean to me.
3. I will not write to Aunt Megan anymore. I would rather write with my mates – to preserve my peace of mind.
4. I will suggest to Aunt Megan that we would talk when we meet.
5. I will ask Aunt Megan what way she would like to talk to me, because it seems to me that communication through the app is not suitable for her.

## Aggressive messages in an online chat II

**Megan's** teenage nephew Mike recently got a smartphone and now mainly chats via a phone app, including with **Megan**. She enjoys their conversations, which cover various topics, but due to her busy schedule, she sends short messages and adds details gradually. After a colleague mentions that young people may find such fragmented messages harsh, **Megan** realises her messaging style differs significantly from Mike's.

What would you do in Megan's place?

1. I will text Mike that I just learned that it is not polite for teenagers to send short fragmentary messages. I would apologise for being rude, which wasn't my intention.
2. I will let Mike know that I heard that my fragmentary messages may seem rude to him and ask if it is okay with him if we continue to send our messages while both of us consider better and more appropriate ways to communicate.
3. I will not do anything directly, because, since I am comfortable with this kind of communication, I think that if there is something disturbing to Mike, he will let me know himself.
4. I will call Mike and let him know what my colleague told me. I will say that I really enjoy interacting with Mike and suggest that when we meet face-to-face, we talk through how we could do it in the best way.
5. Since I am the adult and thus more accountable, I will try to change the style of my messages. I will take my time for longer messages.

## A disagreement with a parent I

Adolescent **Kevin** sees a clip on social media about a top athlete making an offensive joke about a celebrity. He goes to show this to his mum, who says that it is not a big deal as the athlete is known for questionable comments. **Kevin** finds this to be over the top and does not agree with his mum.

What would you do in Kevin's place?

1. I would explain to my mum that just because this sort of behaviour is common, it does not mean it is excusable.
2. I would show her the reactions under the clip, so that she might consider alternative viewpoints.
3. I would not discuss this further as I see no point in it.
4. I would tell my mother that she is right and that I had not considered the possibility that the athlete made the offensive joke to gain attention.
5. I would suggest that my mother think about how she would feel if she were publicly insulted.

## A disagreement with a parent II

**Anni's** son Kevin shows his mother an interview in which a top athlete makes an inappropriate joke about a well-known person. Although the remark may be considered offensive, it is not comparable to statements the same athlete has made in the past and from which he has escaped public criticism. **Anni** concludes that a relatively minor incident has been blown out of proportion, creating excessive attention that merely feeds the athlete's vanity. Her son, however, becomes upset, believing that making offensive jokes should be publicly condemned.

What would you do in Anni's place?

1. I would explain that freedom of speech means that not all statements will please everyone.
2. I would encourage my son to consider why an athlete known for making offensive remarks continues to be repeatedly invited for interviews.
3. I would say that there is no need to become upset over our differing views.
4. I would propose that we take time to discuss both the interview and the social media comments in depth.
5. I would tell him that I appreciate his stance that people should not be the target of offensive jokes.

## Problems in the classroom I

**Mary**, a secondary school maths teacher, has her final-year lessons first thing in the morning. She's told her students that being on time is crucial for the exam, as lateness disrupts everyone's focus. **Michael**, a strong maths student, has been repeatedly late for class. Though **Mary** has tolerated it, she is upset. After **Michael's** sixth late arrival, she addresses him in front of the entire class, saying that his repeated lateness shows disrespect and inconsideration toward both her and his classmates. **Michael** says nothing, leaves the class and skips the next maths class.

**What would you do in Mary's place?**

1. I would write to **Michael**, explaining that disregarding agreed rules demonstrates a lack of consideration for others. If he had objective reasons for being unable to arrive on time, he should have communicated this when the rule was established.
2. Since **Michael** does great with maths, I see no reason to pressure him to attend classes if he doesn't arrive on time. I will inform him of this in writing, indicating also when he is obliged to take written mid-term and assessment tests.
3. It is ultimately up to **Michael** himself to decide if and how he gets to maths class or not. If I start negotiating with each and every pupil about the permissibility of being late, I will soon be mainly engaged in this communication.
4. I will find **Michael** and ask how he sees ways to resolve the situation.
5. **Michael** may formally be an 18-year-old adult, but he is still a pupil. I will find him to figure out why he left without saying a word.

## Problems in the classroom II

**Michael's** maths lessons with teacher **Mary** are scheduled first thing in the morning. **Mary** has established a strict no-lateness rule, as arriving late disrupts both her and the other students' concentration. **Michael** is good at maths but struggles to arrive on time since moving out of town with his mother and sister after his parents' divorce. As his mother has been ill for an extended period, he also takes his sister to kindergarten, which sometimes delays him. **Michael** keeps his family issues private.

One morning, after arriving late again, teacher **Mary** tells the class his tardiness shows disrespect and lack of consideration. **Michael** leaves the class without a word.

**What would you do in Michael's place?**

1. Rules are rules, and since I don't want to lie, I don't go to class if I'm late. I will also write a message to teacher **Mary**.
2. I would write a letter to teacher **Mary** saying that I fully understand that my being late interferes with the teacher's and other students' class rhythms. I will explain that since I cannot promise, for personal reasons, that I will not be late in the future, and ask whether the school could make an exception and allow me to complete the course independently.
3. I would call my mother and tell her that I can no longer afford to be late for school, and that she must find alternative arrangements for taking my sister to kindergarten.
4. I would go to teacher **Mary** after class and thank her for her patience with my coming late. As I do not want to touch the topic of my situation at home, I will say that I have problems with waking up in the morning. I would clarify that I am not being inconsiderate, and that if I am late again in the future, it is not due to disrespect toward her.
5. I feel sorry for teacher **Mary** and would go to her office. I would apologise and would honestly say that I cannot explain the reasons for my coming late as they are related to my personal family life. I would ask what solutions she sees.

## Giving advice to a best friend? I

The European elections are coming. **Tim** already knows who he'll vote for and wants his party to succeed. He uses social media to stay informed. His friend **Ben**, voting for the first time, also uses social media for political info, as TV is too complex and he dislikes reading news articles. Many parties and politicians post there, and Ben follows them.

Both friends know from previous conversations that their political views differ significantly, which is why they have avoided discussing the elections. One day, when they meet at a café, Ben admits to **Tim** that the sheer volume of information and the abundance of possible choices have become overwhelming. In conclusion, Ben says, "There's just so much of it that I might not vote at all."

### What would you do in Tim's place?

1. I should not influence Ben's opinion when it comes to the election, especially because he didn't ask for my help. It is his right to vote for any party he desires or not vote at all. Interfering with that right would be unethical.
2. It is better for society if more people participate in voting. Thus, I would encourage Ben to vote, even if his vote goes against mine.
3. Since Ben is still undecided, he might as well choose my party, because I have made my choice rationally. I tell this to Ben and try to explain the benefits of choosing my party over the others.
4. I would ask Ben if he wanted my help with deciding. If he says "yes" I would help him map out his preferences and do a quick analysis on what parties are most suited for him. I would also tell him that the choice he eventually makes has no impact on our relationship.
5. I know that politics and elections can be a bit hard to navigate at first. Thus, I would provide general informative content that can help Ben understand a bit better. I would also tell Ben that in the end it is ok if he doesn't vote.

## Giving advice to a best friend? II

**Ben** can vote for the first time in the European elections. He wants to use this right but is not yet sure which party suits him. **Ben's** best friend **Tim**, however, already knows who he'll vote for. **Ben** considers asking **Tim** for advice because **Tim** knows more about politics and voting. He hesitates; he wants help, but he knows that his and **Tim's** views differ heavily and that **Tim** has peer-pressured him into doing unwanted things in the past. One day, their conversation naturally goes to voting.

### What would you do in Ben's place?

1. I don't ask for suggestions about who to vote for as this is my personal decision to make. I would say that we should talk about other topics instead.
2. I'd like to hear **Tim's** suggestions, so I mention I am indecisive on the matter. I don't have to vote as he says, but I can listen to his perspective.
3. I would ask **Tim** for advice, since I don't want to exhaust myself by doing independent research.
4. I ask **Tim** to send me different videos of his favourite party and give me a suggestion on who to vote for.
5. I ask **Tim** to send me the videos of who he thinks is suitable with my views – this would help me to make up my mind.

## Grandma and algorithms I

**Hollie**, a young adult active on social media, often posts updates for her friends. Her grandmother Annie, who calls her about three times a week, is very interested in **Hollie's** life. While **Hollie** enjoys the calls, they sometimes come at inconvenient times. To stay connected more easily, **Hollie** suggests Annie get a tablet and follow her on social media.

Now that Annie is online, she not only follows **Hollie** but also other content. For example, she discovered an account promoting herbal remedies over traditional medicine and, being influenced by it, stopped taking her blood pressure medication. **Hollie** is concerned and questions whether suggesting the tablet was a good idea.

**What would you do in Hollie's place?**

1. I have no right to tell my grandma what she should and should not consume. That being said, I check the channel for misleading information and report it to the social media platform if I find anything.
2. I explain to my grandma how she can check if the information is right or wrong and how to report channels on the social media platform.
3. I do not believe it is solely my responsibility to teach my grandmother how to recognise misinformation, so I would ask other family members to help monitor her social media use.
4. I would tell my grandmother that I am glad the tablet provides her with entertainment and a pleasant way to pass the time, but when it comes to her health, she should follow her doctor's advice.
5. I want to protect my grandmother from misinformation as effectively as possible, so I would suggest that from now on she send me a direct message with a link to any page whose reliability she questions. That way, I could feel more at ease about her social media use.

## Grandma and algorithms II

**Annie**, a retired lady with lots of free time, loves calling her only grandchild, Hollie. Their chats bring her joy, as she doesn't interact much with others. Lately, Hollie has been busier and suggested **Annie** get a tablet to stay in touch via social media. With Hollie's help, **Annie** learns the basics and starts chatting regularly through the app.

The app also shows her engaging videos, especially from a young health and lifestyle content creator. One video discussed the downsides of a blood pressure medication **Annie** takes. Thinking she might have similar side effects, **Annie** stops taking it for a week. When she tells Hollie, Hollie gets upset, warns her not to trust everything online, and suggests that **Annie** should use the tablet only for communicating with her.

**What would you do in Annie's place?**

1. The tablet has brought me many benefits and enjoyable ways to spend my time. I would tell Hollie that I am an adult responsible for my own media consumption.
2. I would suggest that Hollie compile a list of reliable channels for me.
3. I would remind Hollie that it was she, due to her limited time, who proposed communicating via tablet - and that for a pensioner, such communication alone is not enough.
4. I would tell Hollie that I was probably too trusting and that I will not experiment with my blood pressure medication again. However, I would promise myself that in the future I will not tell her what I enjoy doing online.
5. I would not want Hollie to worry about me. I would tell her that from now on I will use the tablet only to communicate with her.

## Student's difficulties in class I

In teacher **Martin's** Year 6 maths lesson, students do mental arithmetic exercise in seating order. Each student must answer when it's their turn, even if unsure.

When Katariina, a student who has struggled with maths, confidently gives a correct answer, the class falls silent in surprise. **Martin**, suspicious, responds: "Did you really calculate that yourself? That was quick for you," and gives her a more difficult question.

Katariina goes quiet and tries but fails to solve the new problem. Another student answers, and the class giggles. The lesson continues, but **Martin** notices Katariina's eyes well up with tears. **Martin** remembers how just last week, Katariina eagerly raised her hand, even with wrong answers. Now she sits silently, withdrawn.

**What would you do in Martin's place?**

1. I acknowledge that I breached the principle of trust and speak to Katariina privately, clearly apologising for my doubt and the hurt I caused.
2. I recognise that my behaviour may have reduced motivation not just for Katariina, but for other pupils, too. In the next lesson, I publicly acknowledge that Katariina instead of giggling, classmates could have recognised that Katariina had to solve two problems while others solved only one.
3. I don't draw attention to the incident, but I become more mindful of my tone and body language in the future.
4. In the next lesson, I apologise openly and explain why it's important never to underestimate anyone.
5. I approach Katariina after the lesson and show her that I believe in her abilities ask what I could do to help her feel more comfortable in maths class.

## Student struggles in class II

**Katariina** struggles with maths, and teacher **Martin's** lessons are always challenging. Today feels especially tense. The teacher announces a mental arithmetic exercise where everyone must answer in turn, not just volunteers.

**Katariina's** heart races, but to her luck, her father helped her prepare for this exact topic the night before. When her turn comes, the answer comes quickly and confidently. But instead of praise, **Martin** says, "Did you really calculate that yourself? That seemed a bit quick for you." He then gives her a much harder problem, which she cannot solve. A classmate answers, and the lesson moves on.

Now, **Katariina** feels that getting the right answer doesn't even matter if no one believes her. She's disappointed by the one person she hoped would notice her progress and wonders whether there's any point in trying again next time.

**What would you do in Katariina's place?**

1. I respond directly, telling the teacher that I prepared thoroughly and independently. It feels unfair to be doubted.
2. I choose to speak to the class teacher or a trusted adult, in hopes that my experience might help improve how the teacher speaks to other pupils.
3. I decide I don't need to prove anything to anyone but myself. I don't answer in class for a while but continue practicing at home.
4. I try to calmly explain during break that I had practised the evening before and answered independently, but the follow-up question was just too difficult for me.
5. I approach the teacher during break and explain that I felt he didn't believe me and that if others were treated the same way, they might stop trying altogether.

## Introducing AI tools in school? I

**Paul** is a secondary school student. He is not particularly enthusiastic about school. When lacking time or energy, **Paul** sometimes uses AI to do his homework. One day, during a computer science lesson, the teacher gives a presentation on the ethical implications of AI. The teacher explains that it is wrong to take full credit for content partially generated by AI. At the end, the teacher explains that he had used AI to help write the presentation. The teacher then asks the class whether they've used AI before, and to what extent.

What would you do in Paul's place?

1. I would respond honestly that I had used AI for doing my homework.
2. I would point out the hypocrisy in asking students to confess to something that might be considered unethical.
3. I would stay quiet. I do not gain anything from exposing myself.
4. I would talk about my AI usage so that the whole class could learn how to more effectively use AI for learning.
5. I would not talk about my AI usage, since that could negatively affect the rest of the students. I don't want the students to be interrogated because I couldn't keep my mouth shut.

## Introducing AI tools in school? II

**Andrej** teaches computer science at a secondary school. AI is a topic that is creating hesitance in school board as to what should be allowed and what not. Therefore, the school board asks **Andrej** to give a presentation about AI – its uses, benefits, and risks – aimed at sparking discussion about AI use. **Andrej** is advised to keep the content up to date, because students are already well-informed about online issues. He decides to use AI to help write part of his presentation, as an example of what AI can be used for.

At the end, he explains how he has used AI in preparing this presentation and ask how they've used AI themselves in their experience. One student replies that since it is not prohibited, he has been using AI for most of the school year to help with homework. Others are nodding.

What would you do in Andrej's place?

1. I would acknowledge the student for honesty and ask him if they can formulate a rule for AI use for homework.
2. Based on the discussion in my class, I would advise the school board that the teachers should give clearer guidelines on how AI could be used in their classes.
3. I would recommend following the suggestion in my presentation. My job was to give a presentation, not to deal with the moral dilemmas of the students using AI.
4. I would later speak to the student privately and advise him to keep the AI usage to a minimum. This is because AI is prone to making mistakes, and using AI hinders the student's ability to learn crucial information that might negatively affect the student in the future.
5. I would say that if students have questions about using AI in homework, I am available for discussions.

## Getting access to test questions I

**Freja** is studying for the history test coming up in her high school. With their classmates, they have a chat where they share their learning difficulties. One evening, Matteo posts the test questions in the chat, noting that those who were nervous about the test no longer need to worry, as he has gained access to the questions. Although **Freja** is not good at history, she does not want to cheat.

What would you do in Freja's place?

1. I would send the pictures to the teacher, saying that students got access to the questions.
2. I would try to persuade the other students not to cheat, because if everyone answers suspiciously well, the teacher will become suspicious, and we will all suffer the consequences.
3. I would do nothing, because after reading the questions I understand better what the teacher considers important.
4. I would inform the teacher after the test, that they need to check their security as some sensitive information has been leaked.
5. I would try to persuade the other that only those students who really need to improve their history grades use the questions.

## Getting access to test questions II

**Sven** is a history teacher in high school. There is a test coming up for which **Sven** has prepared questions. One day, there is an emergency in the hall, and he forgets to log out from his computer. When he comes back to the computer, he has a feeling that someone had been at the computer – the test questions are on the screen and things have been moved around on his table.

What would you do in Sven's place?

1. Before the test, I would say that accessing another person's computer without permission is unacceptable. Since I suspect this has happened, I can no longer trust the class. Instead of a written test, I will conduct oral examinations.
2. I would modify the test questions in small but significant ways. This would allow me to see who has genuinely studied and who is attempting to cheat.
3. I would do nothing, because I cannot prove anything. I do not want to draw attention to my own carelessness, so I would treat it as a lesson learned and quickly change a few questions.
4. Before the test, I would share my suspicion with the students and explain that, instead of the planned test, they will write a reflection on whether they had prior access to the questions, how much they knew, and how they acted on that information. I would make it clear that the more honest and thorough their account, the higher their grade will be.
5. Since I was careless, I would decide to proceed with the test as originally planned. Perhaps a weaker student might receive a better grade as a result, and that is also important.

## School trip and a protest I

**Jordan** is a homeroom teacher at a secondary school. A joint field trip is planned for several classes, including **Jordan's**, to a well-known historical site that requires entry tickets. **Jordan** asks pupils to get permission from their parents, and tickets are purchased in bulk based on confirmed attendance.

The night before the trip, **Jordan** and other teachers are informed that a controversial political protest will take place at the site. This puts **Jordan** in a difficult position because the tickets are non-refundable.

**What would you do in Jordan's place?**

1. I would talk to the other teachers, that we should cancel the trip to the historical site and if possible, choose a new location for the field trip. It is not right to expose the children to such an environment even if the tickets cannot be refunded.
2. I would call the administration of the historical site in the morning, to see if they could get us priority access so that the children don't have to wait in the protest crowd.
3. I would inform the school board and ask how to proceed.
4. I would write an email to the parents informing them of the situation. Thus, the parents can decide for themselves if they want to send their children on the field trip or not.
5. I would not change the initial plan, because the children are very excited about the field trip. I would, however, write an email to the parents explaining the situation.

## School trip and a protest II

**Franz** is a single parent to a child in secondary school. The school regularly organises field trips, and this time, **Franz's** child says the class will be visiting a historical site for the day. **Franz**, who values history and knows his child wants to go, gives permission and helps with preparations.

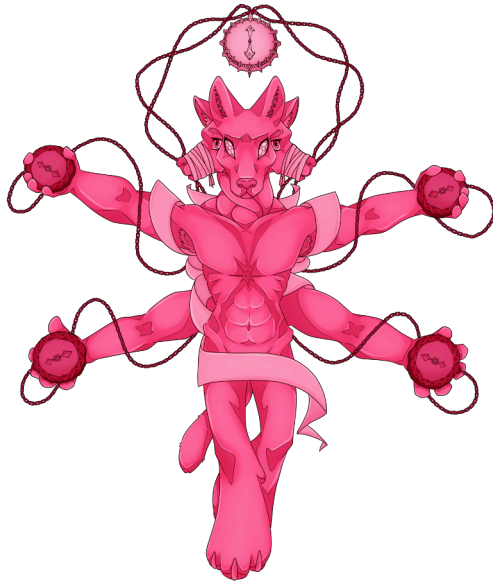
On the day of the trip, **Franz** sees on the news that a protest is taking place at the same site. He spots his child and other pupils among the crowd. When the child comes home, they excitedly describe the day, believing the protest was part of a performance.

**What would you do in Franz's place?**

1. I would write a formal complaint to the dean. The school is not allowed to put my child in potentially harmful situations, especially without my permission.
2. I would write an email to the other parents informing them of what had happened and asking if anyone had known beforehand. I would also suggest a meeting among the parents to discuss the situation.
3. Since the children seemed to have enjoyed themselves then I wouldn't do anything.
4. I would write to my child's homeroom teacher and ask for an explanation. I would also ask to be informed about all future events in detail.
5. I would incite other parents to join me in standing against the school's actions. Protests can be dangerous, and the school should not put children into such situations.

# Feedback

## Principle-oriented type



The principle- or rule-oriented type is inspired by deontological ethics and the general idea that the morality of an action is determined by the action itself; the consequences of the action are not considered important. This type is well suited to following agreed-upon principles and values – what should and should not be done.

In the ethics of dialogic communication, values and principles (codes of conduct) are

articulated in ethical codes. Values are sometimes expressed more implicitly than principles. For example, truth, which is a universal value in communication ethics, may be formulated as a principle such as: "Every participant in communication is responsible for ensuring that truthful information is disseminated."

The rule-oriented type is motivated by ideals, but not all individuals share the same values or principles. Nevertheless, all rule-oriented types tend to think categorically – there is only right and wrong, and no room for grey areas.

A stereotype of the principle-oriented type might be a strict administrator who follows requirements and procedures literally. At the same time, when the meaning of principles has been discussed and agreed upon, a mindset oriented toward values and principles can provide stability and a sense of security. In a rule-oriented mindset, debates may arise over the interpretation of values or principles, but no exceptions are made simply because someone suffers or requires special treat-

ment. For this type, principles should be formulated as categorical guidelines, for example, "lying is impermissible"; it is not considered morally relevant to deliberate whether and when a "white lie" might be justified. For instance, freedom of speech is, for this type, a value worth defending uncompromisingly.

## Large-group or public-interest-oriented type



The type oriented toward the benefit of a large group or the public interest is inspired by utilitarianism. Moral reasoning is based on which course of action produces the most useful or the greatest overall benefit for the largest possible number of people. In communication that benefits a large group or the public, it is justifiable that an individual may have to endure inconveniences. For example, for journalists, informing the public is often so

important that individuals in positions of power must tolerate more criticism than the average person.

The type oriented toward serving the public interest does not follow a fixed set of rules or principles but instead seeks to maximise the common good in each situation. This may require compromises and balancing different, competing values or ideals.

Because this type believes that harm is justified if it is necessary to achieve a greater good, in communication ethics it is likely to prefer transparency over the protection of privacy, and informing everyone over maintaining confidentiality. In the context of the ethics of dialogic communication, it is important for this type that large numbers of people (a group or the public) have equal opportunities to participate in communication.

## Self-oriented type



The self-oriented type is inspired by ethical egoism and subjectivism. This type always proceeds from its own best interests. Although this may appear unethical in many situations, this type is not usually motivated by personal gain. The self-oriented type may simply avoid harm or additional obligations and thereby take care of its own well-being or peace of mind. When possible, the self-oriented type tends to delegate decision-making to others.

In the context of the ethics of dialogic communication, this type tends to think carefully before reacting or expressing an opinion. Especially in disputes, it prefers to remain silent or to respond as neutrally as possible. It does not actively participate in debates, but this does not mean it lacks a personal opinion. For example, privacy in communication is an important value for this type, but ensuring privacy is seen as the individual's personal responsibility about what information about them publicly circulates.

## Relationship-oriented type



This type is motivated by maintaining and developing good relationships and, where possible, avoids damaging them, even if this means setting aside values and principles when necessary. It seeks to balance different interests without favouring anyone. On the one hand, it may be seen as a passive actor who preserves the status quo and avoids tensions. On the other hand, it can be seen as a mediator who seeks consensus on divisive issues.

In the context of the ethics of dialogic communication, this type generally does not criticise individuals in positions of power. It also avoids disputes with people who have significant decision-making authority. For this type, freedom of speech is usually not a value worth fighting for. It values good communication skills that enable successful negotiations. In the context of dialogic communication ethics, a potential problem with the relationship-oriented type is honest and straightforward feedback, as it tends to agree with people and praise people too readily. Because it believes that praise and recognition please people, it does so even in situations where praise becomes insincere or even turns into lying.

## Care-ethics-oriented type



This type is motivated to protect and support the person who, in a given situation, is considered the weakest. It may offer help and support at the expense of its own benefit or interests. Unlike the relationship-oriented type, the care-ethics-oriented individual tends to show favouritism toward the weaker party and does not fear damaging relationships with others.

In the context of the ethics of dialogic communication, this

type is usually a good and empathetic listener and does not give people critical or judgmental feedback. Unlike the type oriented toward serving the public interest, the care-ethics-oriented type is focused on a specific individual in communication. A person with a care-ethical mindset respects everyone's right to determine the boundaries of their own privacy, but believes that inexperienced or vulnerable individuals must be cared for and given timely advice. Telling the truth must not hurt a person.

This type is willing to publicly criticise those in power, if such speech protects someone who has been wronged or who cannot speak for themselves. A care-ethics-oriented person is attentive to situations where someone is excluded from communication. Freedom of speech is therefore not so much a general human right for this type, but rather an issue that requires intervention when specific individuals are deprived of it. A person with a care-ethical mindset usually does not concern themselves with the consequences that standing up for others may bring upon themselves.

## The meanings of colour combinations

Below we propose several possible interpretations of different colour combinations. It should be noted, however, that these interpretations are based on constructed types and experiences gathered during the testing of the game; they should not be regarded as definitive truths. Rather, they are intended to serve as a starting point for further discussion within your organisation, department, or team.

If **purple** and **green** dominate the avatar pieces, this suggests that players prefer to maintain positive interpersonal relationships and avoid conflict. Individuals who make such choices are likely to refrain from public criticism yet remain sensitive to situations in which someone is being overruled or disregarded. More time is typically devoted to communication, listening, and discussion, as this contributes to a more positive atmosphere.

If the dominant colour combination is **blue** and **green**, players likewise tend to avoid conflict, but adopt a more cautious and reserved stance in communication. They are less inclined to direct criticism toward leaders. Communication ethics is understood primarily as a matter of interpersonal relations. In meetings and other public communication settings, the emphasis is on finding compromises, offering reassurance, and fostering reconciliation rather than engaging in criticism.

A combination of **pink-red**, **yellow**, and **purple** may signify a mindset in which certain principles must be upheld even if doing so risks personal social capital or relationships. This combination may reflect a willingness, when faced with a complex ethical dilemma, to place one's own or others' immediate interests in a secondary or tertiary position.

A **pink-red** and **yellow** combination represents a way of thinking in which publicly agreed principles of good communication and shared values must always be defended. Group agreements take precedence over harmonious interpersonal relations, as adherence to values ensures order and security. If it becomes evident that values have not been clearly agreed upon, discussion must be initiated. The dominance of this com-

ination may indicate a view that no exceptions should be made for those who violate established norms (one may understand their reasons, but not justify them).

**Blue** and **yellow** form a contrasting colour combination (**yellow** representing an active, publicly oriented mindset and **blue** a more passive, protective stance). Their combination suggests that choices are determined primarily by the specific nuances of each situation under discussion.

A **yellow** and **green** combination may indicate a mindset that values broad inclusion, recognition, and transparency – even if this requires some flexibility in adhering to certain principles (such as strict truth-telling).

The combination of **pink-red** and **purple/green** is also somewhat contradictory, since rule-based ethical reasoning (**pink-red**) tends to be more time-efficient than the application of care ethics (**purple**) or relationship-oriented values (**green**), both of which require considerably more time and deliberation.

A predominance of **grey** may indicate lengthy discussions or limited mutual listening. It may also suggest that participants' experiences regarding the cases vary widely, leading to fundamentally different interpretations. **Grey** tones can further signify that participants hold genuinely divergent values and consciously agree that consensus cannot be reached ("respectfully agree to disagree"). Such an outcome is also meaningful, as dialogue requires understanding and acknowledging differing value positions.

## Principles for dialogue-supportive communication

### 1. The domain of individual autonomy and informational self-determination

This domain concerns individuals' ability and opportunity to make autonomously informed and considered decisions in communication situations, to consciously define the boundaries of their privacy, to choose the informational environment in which they wish to participate, and to take responsibility for the information they share. Informational self-determination also entails the possibility and the right to control the collection, accuracy, use, and disclosure of one's personal data. Dialogic communication is successful when each person has autonomy and a thoughtful understanding of the boundaries of their own and their close ones' private life. Institutions have a responsibility to protect privacy and to safeguard sensitive personal data in their own practices, including in digital and AI-mediated communication environments where personal data may be collected, processed, or inferred.

- 1.1 Individuals must have the opportunity to exercise their informational self-determination – meaning the capacity and possibility to decide what information about them is disseminated and how it is communicated, within the framework of existing laws.
- 1.2 Individuals must have the right to refuse information or communication that may endanger their well-being or that they consider ethically or personally unacceptable.
- 1.3 The right to informational self-determination must be supported when individuals are inexperienced, lack the necessary resources, and/or are vulnerable in the given communication situation.
- 1.4 Communication partners in a stronger position must empower the informational self-determination of those in weaker positions. It must be taken into account that children's communicative abilities correspond to their level of development, and that the informational self-determination ability of elderly and/or ill persons may be lower than usual.

- 1.5 Individuals must have access to information concerning them that is essential for making their decisions.
- 1.6 The use of digital and AI-mediated systems in communication should respect and support individuals' informational self-determination, including transparency about data collection, processing, and automated decision-making.

## 2. The domain of quality of information and deliberation

The quality of information is a crucial precondition for ethical dialogic communication. High-quality communication means that people communicate honestly, are transparent about their intentions, and share relevant information in the best possible way. For good dialogic interaction, it is not enough merely to verify facts; information must also be presented in a manner that allows for critical evaluation and questioning. High-quality information exchange and reasonable discussions create the foundation for a trustful dialogue. In situations characterised by sensitivity or polarisation, communicators must exercise particular caution with regard to propaganda, partial truths, and misleading information. Participants in communication share responsibility for the proactive dissemination of reliable information in the public interest, especially in moments of crisis or heightened public attention. At the same time, emerging technologies create new opportunities for manipulation, which makes it essential to clearly disclose and appropriately label AI-generated content.

- 2.1 Participants are responsible for assessing the reliability of the information available to them.
- 2.2 Participants in communication should disclose their sources in order to ensure transparency and trust.
- 2.3 All participants in dialogic communication must provide and receive clear answers regarding the purpose of the communication.
- 2.4 Manipulation and/or deception – such as sharing false information, hidden advertising, propaganda, manipulative generalisations, or partial concealment of information – are unethical.
- 2.5 Communicators should ensure transparency when using digital and

AI-assisted tools, including the clear disclosure of AI-generated or AI-modified content, in order to prevent manipulation and support informed evaluation by communication partners.

## 3. The domain of ethical conduct in situations of confrontation and disagreement

Differences of opinion and open discussion of their causes support dialogue between individuals, within organisations, and in society at large. Participants in communication should take responsibility for their messages by clearly and transparently expressing their motives, perspectives, and boundaries. Communicative acts carry ethical implications, and responsibility extends not only to the communicator's intentions but also to the possible interpretation and consequences of what is said. In situations of conflict, it is important to understand whether it was a communication barrier<sup>1</sup> that triggered the conflict and what kind of barrier it was. Courtesy remains essential in conflictual communication.

- 3.1 Each person has a responsibility to remain open to differing opinions and to listen to the reasons behind them. Disagreement should not be feared. Dialogue can lead to shared understanding, compromise, or a peaceful recognition of remaining differences.
- 3.2 When agreement cannot be reached, dissent should be accepted and the reasons for disagreement should be clearly articulated, as constructive engagement with disagreement is an essential element of meaningful dialogue.
- 3.3 When disagreements arise, it is important to distinguish whether the issue stems from misunderstanding or from a genuine value conflict.
- 3.4 In cases of conflict, it is necessary to check whether, and to what extent, the information underlying the conflict may be false, inaccurate, or distorted.
- 3.5 Labelling or stereotyping must not be used to strengthen one's arguments.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication barriers can take many forms, such as talking past one another (as if they were not speaking the same language), over- or under-asserting oneself, moralising or nagging, offering empty praise, making unfounded assumptions in conversation, and more.

## 4. The domain of equality, freedom, and safety

The core values underlying dialogic communication are freedom of expression, human dignity, safety, courage, and confidentiality. Safety cannot exist without courage, and courage cannot exist without safety. Freedom of expression is the right to hold an opinion and share information, while safety in dialogic and respectful communication refers to an environment in which all participants are able to engage in honest and unobstructed dialogue. Human dignity requires equality. This principle should be supported by appropriate structural and organisational measures to ensure that equality is respected and upheld in communication practices. Dialogue-supportive communication values diversity across cultures, societies, and languages and encourages the active participation of people from all backgrounds and identities – including, but not limited to, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, minority status, and educational background. Safety ensures that individuals can express diverse and critical opinions without fear of repercussions. However, the expression of critical views must remain respectful and must not insult or demean others. When sharing information that may cause harm, confidentiality must be upheld.

- 4.1 Everyone has the right to express their thoughts freely – personally, within organisations, and through the media. This freedom must be exercised responsibly.
- 4.2 Communication should take into account the specific needs and circumstances of participants in order to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to be heard and understood.
- 4.3 Leaders and individuals in positions of greater power have a duty to ensure that people are able to express critical views safely.
- 4.4 Information should not be classified as confidential for the purpose of avoiding reputational harm. In certain situations, this may require prioritising the disclosure of critical information in the public interest, even when this conflicts with other loyalties or hierarchical expectations.
- 4.5 When communication takes place between people whose positions – or whose ability to participate and assess consequences – are un-

equal, the more influential and/or competent party has an obligation to help those in a more vulnerable position understand the potential consequences of the communication.

- 4.6 Harassment and emotional manipulation<sup>2</sup> in communication are unacceptable.
- 4.7 Manipulation such as tone-policing (as a conversational tactic)<sup>3</sup>, grooming, or shaming, is unacceptable, particularly when it targets protected characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation, including their intersections.

## 5. The domain of active listening: response and inclusion

Active listening is a central component and core value of dialogic communication, as it fosters inclusion and mutual understanding. By responding appropriately, the listener demonstrates attention to the conversation and understanding of their communication partner.

- 5.1 In dialogue, communication partners must listen to one another with full attention and respond in ways that support mutual understanding.
- 5.2 Attentive listening requires awareness of non-verbal cues and an attitude free from prejudice, which in communication means refraining from unfounded judgments.
- 5.3 Decisions concerning an individual must not be made without involving that person in the communication process. The guiding principle is: "Speak *with* the person, not *about* the person."

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<sup>2</sup> Examples include *gaslighting* (a form of manipulation in which someone attempts to undermine another person's self-esteem and perception of reality); manipulation through silence (*the silent treatment*); denial or belittling; victim-blaming; inducing guilt; and passive-aggressive communication.

<sup>3</sup> *Tone-policing* is a practice in which attention is directed toward *how* a message is delivered rather than *what* is being said. This conversational tactic shifts the focus away from the substance of the original message and onto the speaker's emotions – for example, suggesting that a person expressing a critical viewpoint should speak in a "calmer" or "more pleasant" tone in order to be taken seriously. Tone-policing delegitimises a person's experience, story, or standpoint.

## 6. The domain of constructive feedback

One reason why dialogic communication may fail in educational processes, leadership practices, or interpersonal relationships is the giving or receiving of inappropriate, excessive, or negative feedback. Feedback based on dialogic communication includes: prior agreements about the purpose, method, timing, and setting of feedback; active listening; and mutual respect. Above all, constructive feedback should help answer the question: *What should we do next?*

- 6.1 Constructive feedback is appropriate in tone and content; the person giving feedback avoids personal or excessive criticism and instead encourages dialogue about possible solutions.
- 6.2 Dialogic feedback requires a shared understanding between giver and receiver regarding when and on what issue feedback will be given.
- 6.3 Before giving feedback, the giver should consider whether the principle "*Do not offer advice before it is requested*" should apply.
- 6.4 The person giving feedback should assess their own competence and offer guidance only within the limits of their expertise.
- 6.5 The feedback giver should guide the recipient toward finding their own conclusions or solutions by asking relevant and supportive questions.

