



Reasoning with Ethics

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A Project of The School for Ethical Education | www.ethicsed.org

Ethics in action creates character.

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

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Ethics of Health Mandates

Democratic societies depend on their citizens to have a vested interest in their shared values and the success of society. For the success of society, there are actions citizens are expected to take that include responsibility for able citizens to support themselves and pay taxes, vote in elections, and obey laws.

In the current pandemic, state governments have taken on authority rarely exercised to mandate a variety of rules in the effort to reduce deaths from COVID-19. As the pandemic drags on, the unity of citizens to support mandates is being tested.

There is much that remains unclear about the best response to the virus. The most serious challenges in New York City, while tragic for thousands, fell well below the model predictions. As the pandemic death curve appears to be going down, the US deaths/million is far below what happened in Spain, Italy, France, or the UK. Sweden, a nation that did not completely shut down its economy, appears to be weathering the pandemic with a death rate below these same European countries.

These observations and the recognition of how diverse the pandemic's effect is in the US, have led some to begin to protest the continuation of mandates that keep businesses closed in most states. Commentators note the business closures are "killing business", which represent the economic life of many business owners. Advocates for continued closures want to resist the spread of COVID 19. See additional background in the links provided.

Assuming a suburban or rural population with no new COVID cases, students are asked to consider the core ethical values of supporting government mandates that continue to close businesses versus the ethical values of protestors or mayors who want to open businesses while sustaining social distancing rules. Given what we know, how would students recommend the nation move forward?

Supplemental Links

Thousands protest closures (Denver-- <https://nypost.com/2020/04/19/thousands-in-denver-protest-business-closures-over-coronavirus/>)

ABC 13 News, Protestors across country- <https://abc3340.com/news/nation-world/protests-to-reopen-the-economy-flare-as-some-businesses-face-permanent-closure>

Several video links with folks seeking business opening, "you are killing my business."

People crowd CA beaches-- <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/26/us/southern-california-beaches-coronavirus-heat/index.html>

Louisiana Pastor hosts service in violation of Governor's order-- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tony-spell-louisiana-pastor-house-arrest-church-services/>

Mayor resists Governor's order and opens town, News 13 local news link:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-grants-new-mexico-mayor-martin-hicks-showdown-police-lockdown/>

Covid 19 International Statistics-- <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>

