Reasoning with Ethics

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.

Visit the online Ethics Blog.

Hi-Tech Crime Pandemic
High tech crime is one thing that is flourishing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people who have been laid off and then apply for unemployment are learning that their social security number has already been used to make an unemployment claim. Criminals who have acquired databases with names, addresses, birthdates, and social security numbers have been successful in making fraudulent claims that ultimately block the true owner if they become unemployed and make their own claim.

This fraud has been reported in multiple states and there are estimates that billions of dollars are at risk of being stolen in criminal false claims. CBS reports that the state of Washington indicated they have recovered $333 million out of an estimated $550 million paid to fraudulent claims. With the large number of claims in the system, victims of identity theft who then need unemployment assistance can be frozen out of their own account. Individuals who suspect their identity has been stolen in this fraud are encouraged to inform their employer, contact their state unemployment office, and file a police report.

Clearly, there is no rational ethical argument that can be made in support of this criminal activity. It harms society and the individuals who in time of need have lost their safety net. SEE asks students to consider two larger questions. Is there anything that society can do, in or out of schools, that might help the creative and industrious youth who become these high-tech criminals to develop an ethical core and resist a life of crime? Can any ethical instruction or program be a realistic strategy to resist crime?

Supplemental Link: CBS News- https://www.cbsnews.com/news/unemplyment-benefits-criminals-stealing-surging-claims/