

# Basic Concepts in Ethics

The chapter aims to initiate you into the world of morality, ethics and values, and help to understand them better.

These abstract concepts need to be understood to formulate the objective of leading a satisfying and blissful life.

*Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the study of moral standards and edicts that are intended to govern our behavior.*

*Bottom line is individuals own perception about morality and ethics.*

You may be able to distinguish between right and wrong actions based upon your experiences and beliefs. It is also true that your decisions are often based on your individual perceptions. The intention of this chapter is to enter the world of ethics by understanding the different aspects of human existence.

# Terminology

## Moral and Morality

- The word moral is defined in the Oxford dictionary as **“concerned with the principles of right and wrong behavior “ and “ a lesson that can be derived from a story or experience”**.
- **Morality on other hand is defined as :**
- **Principle governing right and wrong and good and bad and so on**
- **The degree to which something is right or wrong ,good,bad,and so on.**
- **A system of moral principles followed by particular group of people.**



*"Slow and steady, wins the race."*



*UNITED WE STAND ;DIVIDED WE FALL*



*THE GRAPES ARE SOUR*



*THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU ACT*



*If you try hard enough, you may soon find an answer to your problem*



Morality (*Latin word **moralitas*** ), meaning manner, customs or proper behavior.

It can be classified in 2 ways :

- **Descriptive Morality** : in its simplest form it refers to moral code of conduct formulated by group of people (religious or otherwise)
- **Normative morality** : it denotes by code of conduct but it specifies the conditions under which it is valid and considered acceptable by all rational people.

## Morality synonyms with Ethics

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies the ethical codes required for moral behavior and is considered identical to morality.

*OALD defines ethics as “the moral principles that control or influence a person’s behavior” or “a system of moral principles “ or “rules of behavior”.*

## Ethics can be categorized as :

- **Meta ethics** : deals with origin of ethical principles that govern the specification of right and wrong behavior.
- **Descriptive Ethics** : people or society consider right or wrong
- **Normative Ethics** : behaviors are judged against moral conduct rules
- **Applied Ethics** : relates to controversial issue . Morality is simply a system for helping humans stay happy and alive.

**Values** : beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important to life.

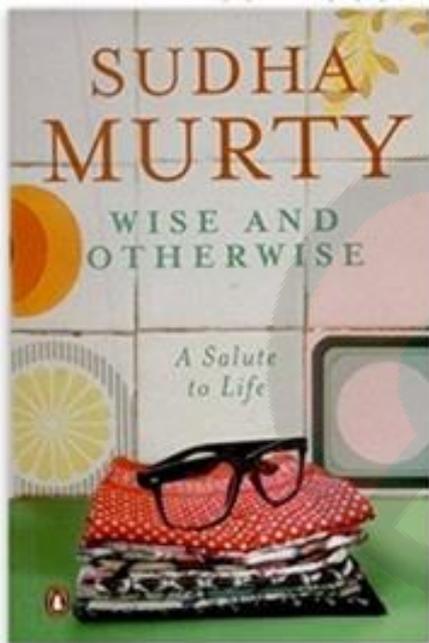
**Spirituality** : concerned with human spirit ,rather than body or physical things, concerned with religion .It is said to refer to matters concerning the soul.

# Stake holders

In moral issues, the stakeholders include individuals ,organizations ,society and religion and political entries for governance also have a say.

- **Individuals:**

- 1) They make up organizations and the society .
- 2) Etiquettes, legal directions, religious edicts.



- **Organizations**

1. Entities that employ groups of people such as company ,an officer or an institution.
2. Organizations lay emphasis on certain codes of ethical conduct while other do not.
3. Inform or train employees to adhere to good conduct
4. Salutary effect on the society in general.
5. Work ethics are important to implement efficiency at work and prevent corruption.





## **Society**

1. Individuals and organizations form part of the society.
2. Appropriate behavior in societal conduct evolves over time.
3. Dynamic system of code of conduct that changes with time.

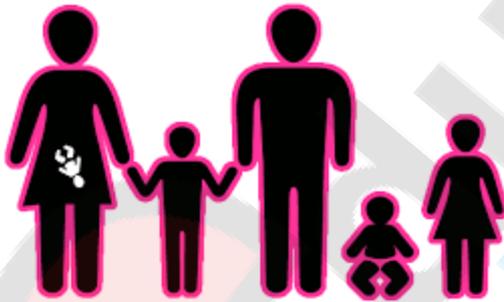
# Governing Edicts

Lives are often governed by certain controlling edicts or orders implemented through religion, society or the constitution.

- Religious Edicts (religion play an important role in shaping our behavior )

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## Family Planning



- Social Edicts (acceptability behavior as per social or community standards)
- E.g.Untouchability ,village panchayat has power to dictate and enforce certain behavior codes amongst individuals.



Constitutional Edicts (these are provisions granted by the constitution and the laws under its umbrella which give direction for appropriate behavior)



Universality (moral or ethical norms and standards that are applicable universally )



# Personal Ethics

Personal ethics refer to those behavioral patterns that apply to individuals in their personal life. It is very difficult to make a list of all that is important. The following list may be taken as a sample and further expanded.

- ✓ Refrain from causing harm to others by your actions.
- ✓ Be benevolent or do good to others and the society as a whole.
- ✓ Show concern for the well-being of others.
- ✓ Respect individual freedom and accept that others have autonomy in their thinking and behavior ,hence, refrain from imposing your will on others.
- ✓ Ensure that justice is meted to all.
- ✓ Respect the law willingly and voluntarily. Many ills in the society are caused by ignorance and lack of respect for the law of land.
- ✓ Adopt and practice values such as honesty,integrity,trustworthiness and truthfulness.
- ✓ Do not be opportunist and take unfair advantage of a situation.
- ✓ Practice non violence.
- ✓ Provide service to the poor ,or any disadvantaged individual also.

# Professional Ethics

Depending upon the profession you are in, there are ethical codes related to that profession.

- ✓ Openness is a desirable virtue in professionals .Transparency in all actions must be the motto.
- ✓ You should be impartial while dealing with people and in your actions. It is a desirable attribute in professionals.
- ✓ Be objective so that you are not influenced by any personal bias while taking decision.
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality of the information available to you as a professional for the sake of organizational growth.
- ✓ Carry out the work allotted diligently.
- ✓ Make professional judgments impartially ,showing innate sense of responsibility.
- ✓ Be loyal, strong belongingness to organization.
- ✓ Avoid situations leading to conflicts.

# Social Ethics

Social ethics can be defined as a set of rules that is obeyed by the members of a community so as to maintain good community relations within the social order.

- ✓ Social ethics is thus normative and not mandated by law .
- ✓ It can be considered as the moral or ethical principles based on collective wisdom of the people.
- ✓ These generally act as ethical codes to control the behavior of people.
- ✓ Social ethics evolve over a period of time and depend on many factors such as language, ethnicity ,gender and culture.
- ✓ Social ethics vary widely with communities, countries and globally.



# Life Skills

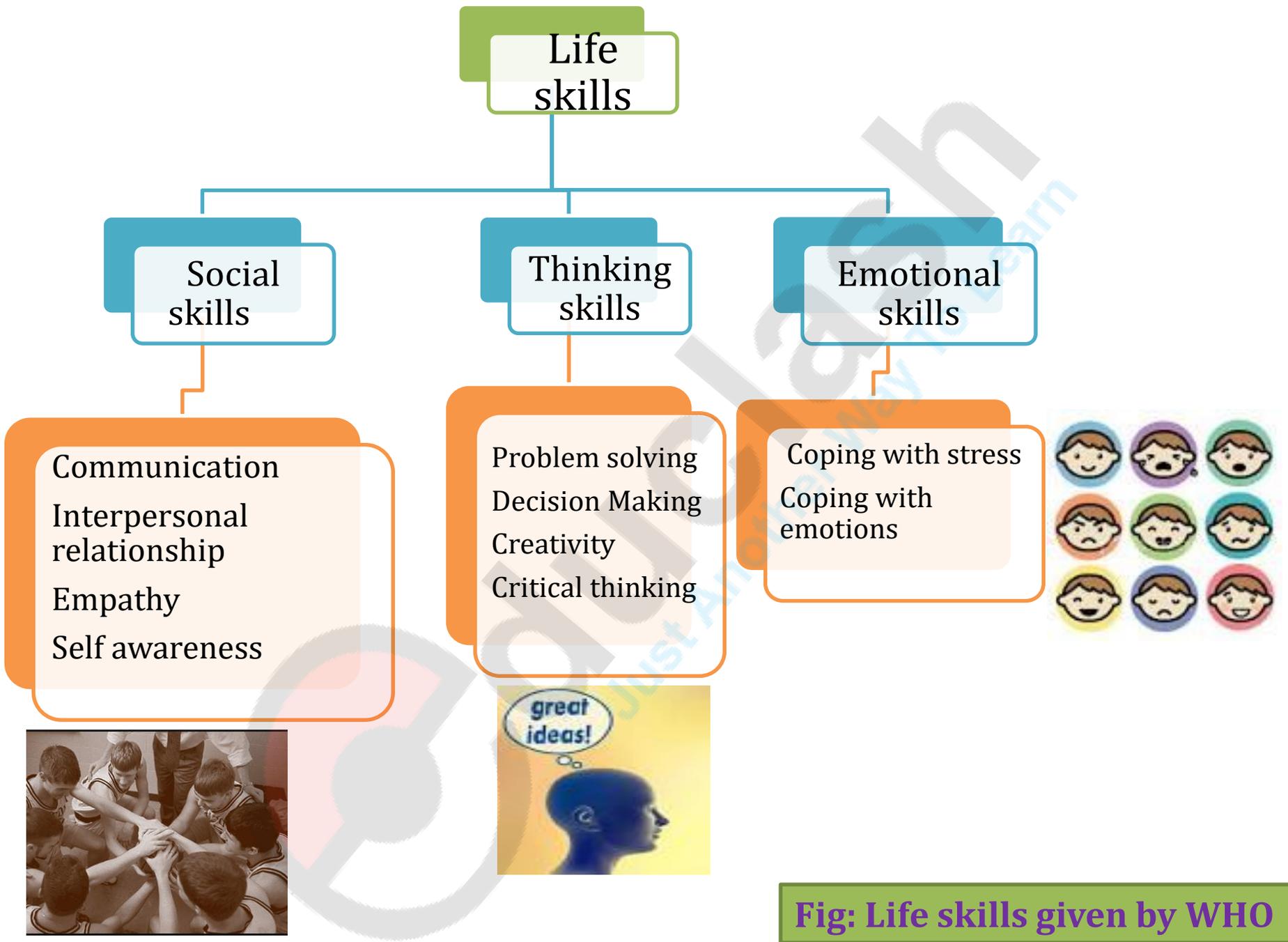
Life skills also known as generic skills, core skills ,employability skills or foundation skills ,are skills that apply across a wide spectrum of functions and together with job related technical skills form the backbone of effective performance.

Life skills are defined as the ability to solve problems on the personal and professional fronts.

- ❖ *Skills are the learned capacity which helps us to do a task effectively.*
- ❖ *Skills are abilities to use know-how to complete tasks.*
- ❖ *Skills are acquired through practice and patience*
- ❖ *A skilled person uses less time, energy and resources to do a job and produces*
- ❖ *quality results.*
- ❖ *Skills are gained through school/college, work experiences, hobbies, books, elders, peers etc*

*“Life Skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO)”.*

- Adaptive means that a person should have the flexibility to adjust according to the situation.
- For positive behavior, a person needs to have positive thinking and look at opportunities even in difficult situations, in order to cope with the situation.



**Fig: Life skills given by WHO**

## Social skills

# Self-Awareness

- The ability to introspect, analyze and accept one's thoughts actions and feelings; recognizing and acknowledging one's needs and desires.
- **Ability to know our self:** Our Character, desires, likes, dislikes and our strengths and weaknesses.
- Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

# Empathy



- Is the ability to be sensitive to another person's situation .
- Is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with.
- Ability to imagine oneself in the shoes of someone else temporarily, i.e. a friend, parent or others and experiences their emotions, understand their concerns, worries, fears and needs and feeling.

# Empathy



- **Empathy is the ability to accept and understand others who are different from you.**
- **Empathy encourages a positive behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance.**
- **This skill works wonders when we apply it to our relationships with our loved ones, classmates, parents, friends, cousins and colleagues**
- **Finally it helps you to move closer to findings solutions, to resolve conflicts and enhance quality of life.**

# Effective Communication



- Effective communication means that we are **able to express ourselves**, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations.
- **Listening.**
- Assertiveness.

# Interpersonal Relationship



- **Initiate and maintain positive relationships** and de-link unconstructive relationships.
- Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with..

# Thinking Skills

## Critical thinking

- **Ability to analyze information, experiences, situations and circumstances etc in an objective manner and rationally.**
- **Recognizing and assessing factors influencing our attitude and behavior.**
- **It is not merely criticizing.**

# Creative thinking



**Ability to;**

- **Think differently and out of the box**
- **Look beyond our direct experience**
- **Respond adaptively**
- **Having flexibility to situations in daily life**
- **Achieving the objectives in daily life situations**

# Problem Solving



- problem solving enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives.
- Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.

- **P- Identify / state the problem**
- **O- Examine The Options**
- **W- Weigh Each Option**
- **E- Elect Best Option**
- **R- Review and reflect**

# Emotional skills

## Coping with Emotion

- Recognizing emotions in ourselves and others
- Being aware of how emotions influence behaviour,
- Being able to respond to emotions appropriately.
- Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

# Coping with Stress



- Coping with stress is about recognizing the **sources of stress** in our lives,
- Recognizing how this **affects** us, &
- Acting in **ways that help to control our levels of stress** by changing our environment or life style and learning how to relax so that tensions created by unavoidable stress do not give rise to health problems.

Who is having Life Skills?  
&

Who need Life Skills?

## Life Skills....



- **Life Skills** are present in every individual
- To get the best out of them we need to sharpen them regularly.
- **Every individual needs Life Skills** for healthy and positive ways of living

# Areas where Life Skills can be applied

- Education
- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Violence Prevention / Conflict Resolution
- Media Literacy
- Substance abuse
- Environmental issues
- Career development
- Marriage
- Workplace