

4-H Ethics Training Vignettes

Upholding the University of
California's commitment to Integrity,
Excellence, Accountability & Respect

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Scenario 1

A 4-H member takes the lamb she has raised & trained to show at the fair. Once at the fair, she gets 'caught-up' in the excitement of the fair and forgets about her animal – she doesn't clean its cage, doesn't brush it or answer fairgoers questions about her animal. What would you do?

- a) Take over the responsibilities of caring for the lamb – after all, you don't want the club to look bad.
- b) Ignore the situation – it's not your problem.
- c) Talk with the member about the duties & responsibilities she has agreed to take on with this project.
- d) Yell at the member for being so irresponsible.



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Answer 1

- a) Take over the responsibilities of caring for the lamb – after all, you don't want the club to look bad.

This is the member's project – not yours. You should never take over their responsibilities and duties.

- b) Ignore the situation.

Ignoring the situation will not make it better and will send a message to the member it is allowable to not to follow through with their responsibilities.

- c) Talk with the member about the duties & responsibilities she has agreed to take on with this project.

Correct answer.

- d) Yell at the member for being so irresponsible.

Yelling at anyone is never acceptable. As Leaders, we need to set positive examples for the members.



Scenario 2

A large group of teen members are travelling to a 4-H conference. Everyone is looking forward to all things new: The activities and, of course, the opportunities for social gatherings. There will be swimming and dancing. Everyone received a detailed dress code, however, one girl “bravely” decides to wear inappropriately revealing clothing.

What should you do?

- a) Say nothing, it’s not your problem and girls will be girls so let them be individuals.
- b) Talk to her before she leaves the room and firmly, but politely, remind her of the dress code and tell her she needs to change.
- c) Remind her that she is representing 4-H and to consider wearing other clothing.
- d) Let the State office deal with it.



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Answer 2

a) Say nothing, it's her problem and girls will be girls so let them be individuals.

As an adult leader, saying nothing provides no guidance or direction for the youth.

b) Talk to her before she leaves the room and firmly, but politely, remind her of the dress code and tell her she needs to change.

Correct answer. As an adult leader, you are charged with enforcing and abiding by all 4-H rules, policies and procedures.

c) Remind her that she is representing 4-H and to consider wearing other clothing.

Asking her to 'consider' wearing other clothes opens it up for debate and there is no debate on whether to follow the rules, policies & procedures.

d) Let the State office deal with it.

It is not the job of the State office – or anyone else's for that matter - to enforce 4-H rules, it is the leader's.



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Scenario 3

A new 4-H member wants to be a part of his club swine project. He purchased a market pig in late June. The 5 month old pig weighed 200 lbs. He is excited about the opportunity to show and sell his pig at the fair. He is a freshman in High School and doesn't have much time to manage and care for his animal, but he knows his dad will help out. What do you think?

- a) It's a good idea that he bought the pig so close to fair time. Otherwise he would not have had time to meet competition requirements.
- b) The member's dad has other animals. It wouldn't be much trouble to care for another big healthy animal.
- c) Speak to the member and remind him of the project guidelines and agreed to responsibilities with this project.
- d) Berate him at at the next club meeting so other members won't do the same thing.



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Answer 3

a) It's a good idea that he bought the pig so close to fair time. He did not have the time to care for it for a longer time period.

This does not follow local fair guidelines. The member won't have owned his animal for the minimum time required to meet fair entry and competition requirements. (San Diego 60 consecutive days for swine)

b) The member's dad has other animals. It wouldn't be much trouble to care for another big healthy animal.

This project is the youth's responsibility. It is dishonest & does not follow 4-H protocol for this animal to be cared for by someone other than the member.

c) Speak to the member and remind him of the project guidelines and agreed to responsibilities with this project.

Correct answer. It is the Project Leader's responsibility to see that all projects meet all the 4-H requirements.

d) Berate him at the next club meeting so other members won't do the same thing.

Humiliation is never acceptable. Leaders need to communicate compassionately yet clearly to reinforce 4-H goals.



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Scenario 4

A member who is raising and showing cattle has a sick cow. She remembers that someplace in the barn there was a cabinet containing medication that had been used 2 years ago. She found the tattered, partially closed container. The proper dosage instructions were no longer legible. She administered it as best she could figure. What do you think?

- a) The girl was right to immediately try and remedy the situation herself, this is her project animal after all.
- b) She now needs to adopt a wait and see attitude to gauge the animals reaction.
- c) The girl should have talked to an adult who could seek counsel with a veterinarian.
- d) The girl should be ridiculed for doing such a stupid thing.



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Answer 4

a) The girl was right to immediately try and remedy the situation herself.

This is never a good choice. Without knowing what dosage is appropriate, she could make her animal more ill or possibly kill the animal. She should be aware of the procedures to follow when an animal becomes ill.

b) She now needs to adopt a wait and see attitude to gauge the animals reaction.

She should not risk damaging her animal by just waiting to see what happens. She should immediate contact the project leader.

c) The girl should have talked to an adult who could seek counsel with a veterinarian.

Correct answer! She should have spoken with a parent or project leader who would determine if appropriate medications were on hand and if not pursue the correct steps to follow with a veterinarian. As this is after the fact, the member needs to be trained on the recommendations for general care and drug usage in animals.

d) The girl should be ridiculed for doing such a stupid thing.

Demeaning or ridiculing anyone is never acceptable behavior.



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