***Lesson***: 9 Checkpoints in Ethical Decision Making

* Setting a plan and guidelines to held address ethical issues as a journalist is critical, especially under deadline and when dealing with sensitive stories. It’s important to practice and develop a plan to help formulate a thoughtful course of action based on structure, similar to those outlined in Kidder’s “9 Checkpoints in Ethical Decision Making.”

***ACTIVITY:***

* Develop an understanding of the checkpoints in ethical decision making to help address an issue as presented by your course instructor.

***READ:***

* Kidder’s “9 Checkpoints in Ethical Decision Making.”

***UNDERSTAND:***

* How would you use *the 9 Checkpoints in Ethical Decision Making*?
  + How would this help you as a journalist?
    - Determine how the steps help to address an issue.
      * Example: Gathering facts, applying legal tests
  + Is it possible to follow under deadline?

***WORK:***

* Work in small groups to address an issue presented by your instructor. (Case provided below.) Each group will work on a separate checkpoint.
* Groups will present their findings to their class.
* A final class discussion will follow to address a final solution or answer.

**CASE:**

**A student has heard information stating that a teacher in the school district was caught driving under the influence this morning. Another student has accused the teacher of drinking alcohol before and during classes. It’s close to deadline for the daily publication. Your staff wants to publish an article immediately. What do you do?**

*Take Kidder’s 9 checkpoints for ethical decision making and determine the best decision for how to handle this situation. Fill out the chart below with your findings.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Recognize that there is a moral issue.** |  |
| **Determine the actor(s).** |  |
| **Gather the relevant facts.** |  |
| **Test for right-versus-wrong issues.**   * **Legal test** * **Regulations** * **Stench Test** * **Front-page test** * **Mom test** |  |
| **Test for right-versus-right paradigms.** |  |
| **Apply the resolution principles.** |  |
| **Investigate the “trilemma” options.** |  |
| **Make the decision.** |  |
| **Revisit and reflect on the decision.** |  |