



A Framework for Deliberation

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What this lecture will do:

- Identify challenges to moral deliberation and decision-making
- Clarify the difference between deliberation and debate
- Illustrate how moral deliberation and ethical accounting can be used to engage ethical problems

Goals in teaching ethics

- Stimulation of moral imagination
- Recognition of ethical issues
- Development of analytical skills
- Elicit a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility for one's actions
- Tolerance for disagreement and ambiguity

Obstacles to moral deliberation: three easy routes to a closed mind

- Dogmatism
- Off-hand self-justification
- Relativism

Weston, 2001

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Dogmatism

- Dogmatists are firmly committed to a particular answer or way of thinking
- Thinking about ethical issues is unnecessary, because to argue about an ethical issue suggests the dogmatist's view needs defending, thus legitimizing doubts

Offhand Self-Justification

- Automatically making excuses to defend a view
- Self-defense is more important than asking whether challenges are legitimate
- Provides an excuse for not thinking

Weston, 2001

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Relativism

- “It’s all relative”
- Any moral opinion is as good as another
- Moral values differ fundamentally between people and cultures
- There is no legitimate basis for arguing about moral values

Weston, 2001

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The case of the morally relevant differences between the dog and the pig

Question posed to students in Animal Sciences:

“What is the morally relevant difference between the dog and the pig that allows us to raise pigs in crates that allow them only to stand and lie down, but makes doing the same to dogs abhorrent?”



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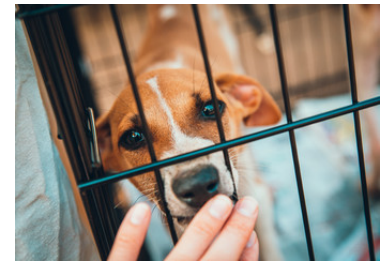
Sample responses

- “Who’s going to pay to change the system?”
- “There is no other way to do things.”
- “Dogs emote.”
- “We eat pigs.”
- “Pigs don’t do much anyway.”
- “What are the dogs being used for?”
- “How much are the dogs worth?”
- “Dogs are smarter than pigs

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Interpreting responses

- Utilitarianism permits concluding “it is ok to raise dogs in cages”
 - Defense of status quo
- Economics trumps ethics
- Does not address concerns about morally correct treatment of farm animals
- Illustrates poor grasp of the issues
 - failure to link moral philosophy and science
- Illustrates inadequacy of directions to students
- A systematic approach is needed to merge science with ethical concerns



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Fostering moral reasoning and productive discussions on animal bioethics

ETHICS:

“Knowing the difference between good and evil and choosing to go the good”

- Socrates

Ground Rules for Progress

- Interrogate reality
 - Set your personal position/agenda aside and look for the truth
 - Things change – What do we know, what don't we know, and what do we need to find out?
- Speak, listen and participate
 - Easy to withdraw when an issue seems insurmountable
 - Shift power and responsibility to others if you don't
- Confront and tackle the challenge
 - Identify the obstacles to making headway
 - Work to remove the obstacles

(Adapted from: Fierce Conversations. S. Scott, 2002)

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More rules...

- Allow time for insight to develop
 - Breakthroughs often happen in silence
- Be accountable
 - To each other and to stakeholders affected by change
- Begin with a common goal
 - Focus on what the end result should be

Basic Ethical Principles

- **Autonomy**
 - Freedom to choose
- **Do no harm**
 - Actions to minimize harm
- **Do good**
 - Actions to maximize benefits
- **Justice**
 - Fairness
- **Practice and procedures**
 - Respecting rights and entitlements
- **Promoting the collective good**
 - Contribute to community well-being



Honesty and Integrity

Identify principles that apply each issue

Issues

- Castration and dehorning without the benefit of anesthetic or analgesic relief
- Government land used for grazing livestock versus public recreation use

Principles

- Autonomy
 - Freedom to choose
- Do no harm
 - Actions to minimize harm
- Do good
 - Actions to maximize benefits
- Justice
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 - Respecting rights and entitlements

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Competing Principles

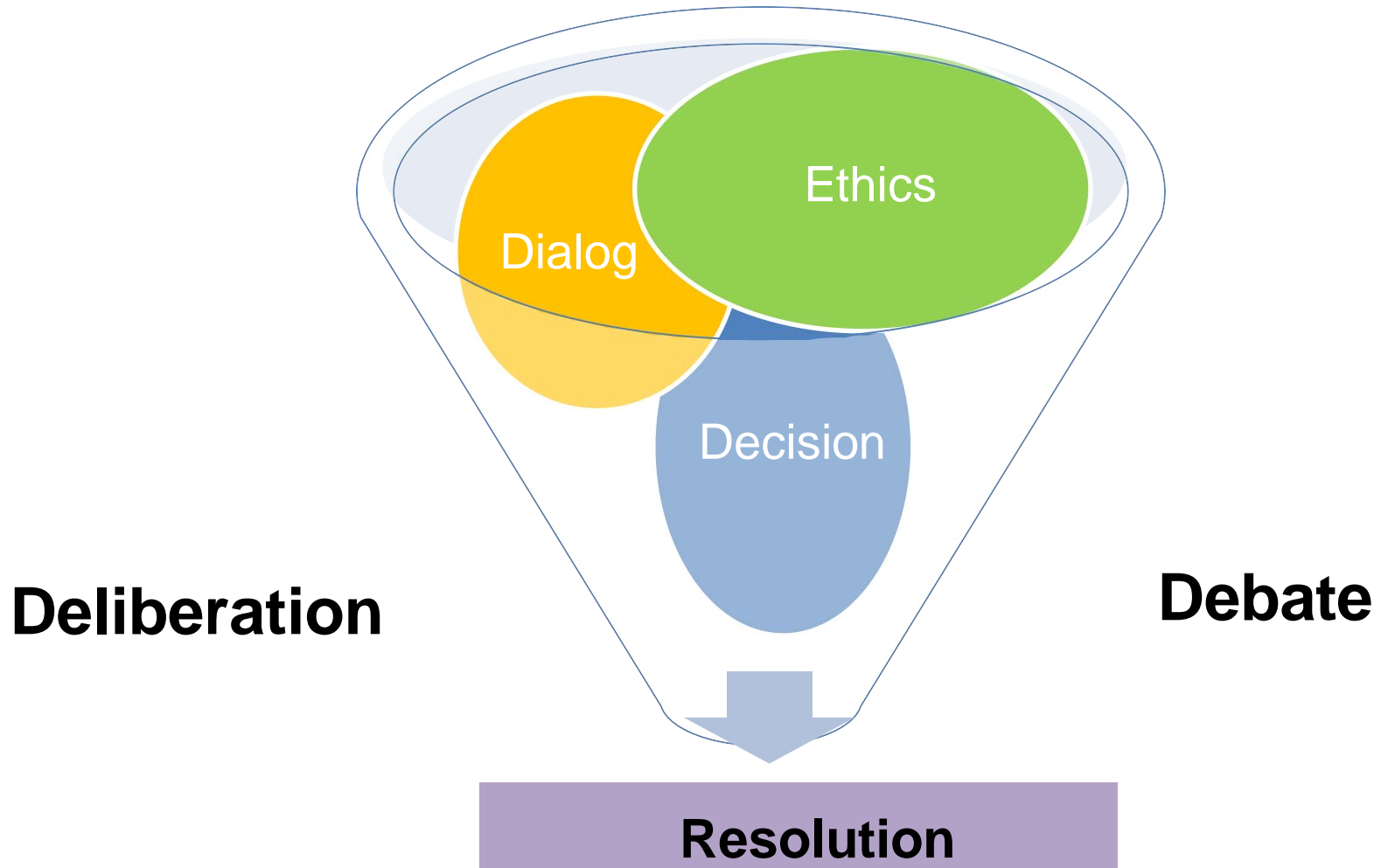
- Castration and dehorning example:
 - Do no harm
 - Do good

- Government land example:
 - Justice
 - Do good

Deliberative and Constructive Dialog

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Resolving Ethical Issues



Deliberation involves critically assessing alternative actions to reach an end or goal.



Debate involves persuading a third party of the correctness of one's position by whatever means works.

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Deliberation or Debate?

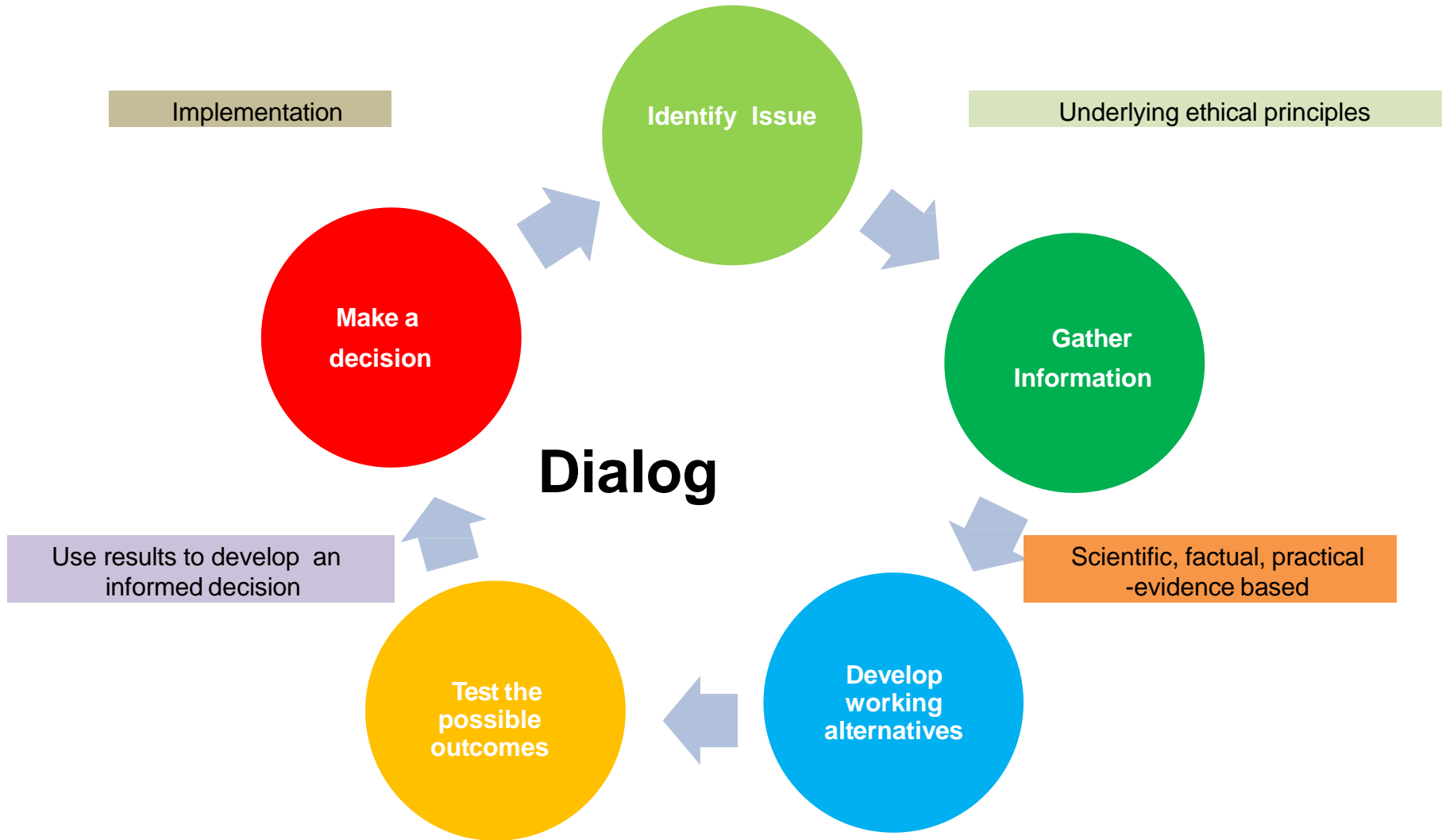
- **Debate**

- Defensive by design
- Often polarizing by nature
- Not geared toward a decision framework and resolution
 - Right or wrong posturing
 - Win-lose outcome

- **Deliberation**

- Investigative by nature
 - Individual and group
- Evidence – based discussion
- Structured toward adopting a studied position or decision-making framework

Steps for Deliberative Decision-Making



Should tail docking be banned?



If practices are not aligned with social ethics, impetus to regulate increases & autonomy decreases (Rollin, 1993)

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Questions to Ask

- What is the central issue?
- Are there competing ethical principles?
- Are there legitimate concerns?
- What else do you want or need to know?
- Is there a common ground from which to work?
- Who does the decision impact?
- What will be the best course of action?



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