

Identifying Norms, Morals, and Ethics
NACCTFO Workshop 2019
“Creating an Ethical Culture”

Norms, morals, and ethics are all related to each other but have distinct definitions and meanings. This exercise will help differentiate the terms and identify political/governmental examples of each.

NORMS: Standards of proper or acceptable behavior. Society-driven, widely accepted, and usually uncodified.

Example: When queuing in line, it is a norm to not cut others before you.

Your (Government) Example: _____

MORALS: Principles used in determining right and wrong behaviors. Usually based on a value and are more individualized than norms (with the latter carrying social/cultural significance).

Example: It is morally right to help someone in need.

Your (Government) Example: _____

ETHICS: Rules of behavior based on ideas about what is right and wrong. A systematic, formal approach used in making behavioral decisions. Often take the form of behavioral proscriptions and are usually individualized assessments.

Example: It is ethical to not steal.

Your (Government) Example: _____

Consider the following questions:

How are these three concepts the same?

How are they different?

How do they build off one another?