The Dilemma Method for Moral Case Deliberation

For more information on (research on) (methods for) case deliberation see:

(1) Personal introduction, introduction to MCD, determination of goal(s) and expectations of MCD-facilitator, appointments regarding notes and confidentiality of notes.

(2) Case presenter presents his/her case briefly, using concrete facts ('film').

(3) Case presenter formulates her/his core dilemma according to the following format:

Should I do A or B?

Option: Case presenter briefly mentions his/her view on the moral loss at each side of the dilemma.

(4) Participants ask questions for clarification in order to imagine what it means to be in that situation so that later on in the MCD they can answer the dilemma question for themselves.

(5) Table with '(non-) present perspectives/persons', 'values', 'norms/rules/actions'. Ask each participant to describe his/her core values and norms with respect to the dilemma question.
   (a) Connect values/norms to original dilemma (A or B).
   (b) Position dilemma(s) in scheme by placing a, symbol between the values or norms that conflict according to the owners of the values/norms.

(6) List possible alternatives (without discussing feasibility).

(7) Participants write down on paper the following answers for themselves:
   (a) I think the right thing to do is . . .
   (b) Because . . .
   (c) Therefore I'm not able to do . . .
   (d) How can I cope with or decrease the moral loss related to the other side of the dilemma?
   (e) Which virtues and actions are necessary to do the right thing?

(8) Reflect upon possible group consensus or decision:
   (a) What are remarkable points of consensus and disagreement? What kind of underlying questions does that raise?
   (b) Given the points mentioned, which answer to the dilemma is possible for the moment?
   (c) If there is any substantial disagreement: how should we deal with that?

(9) Make practical appointments and plan date and place to evaluate those appointments. Distribution of the confidential notes.

Closure of MCD.

(10) Evaluate (oral and by questionnaire) the MCD. What about the process? Have we met our goals? What could be improved the next time?

Molewijk & Alhzen, 2011. Should the school doctor contact the mother of a 17-year-old girl who has expressed suicidal thoughts? In: Clinical Ethics, 6, p. 5-10.