

# Harmony and Discord: Managing Moral Dilemmas in Music Teaching

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What if a tough moment only ruined a couple of hours of your day instead of the whole week? Facing ethical dilemmas and conflicts can overshadow the joy of teaching music, making entire days stressful. 'Harmony and Discord' empowers you with strategies to confine conflicts to mere moments. Through the Breathe-Reflect-Respond method, engaging scenarios, and practical solutions, this clinic transforms how you navigate challenges, ensuring your focus remains on inspiring students, not managing stress. Join us to lead with integrity and teach with a clear conscience.

1. Introduction: This Session is Our Rehearsal Space
  - a. It's Always Hard The First Time! We can manage stress and conflict by rehearsing, just like we prepare for a concert.
  - b. We place our emphasis on what we can control, while also planning for discord and unforeseen issues.
  - c. Objectives:
    - i. Core Principles: Communication, Responsibility, and Community and Culture
    - ii. Understanding and Responding to Conflict
    - iii. Practicing with Real-World Scenarios
    - iv. Actionable Techniques for Educators

## 2. Communication: The Key to Understanding and Collaboration

### a. The Importance of Effective Communication

- i. Understanding the nuances of verbal, non-verbal, and written communication.
- ii. Recognizing the impact of communication style on professional interactions.

### b. Strategies for Handling Complex Interactions

- i. Balancing direct and indirect communication based on context.
- ii. Understanding when to use various communication styles.

### c. Maintaining Professional Boundaries and Integrity

- i. Saying "no" as a complete sentence and setting healthy boundaries.
- ii. Prioritizing student well-being and the educational environment in decision-making.

## 3. Responsibility: Building Trust and Reliability

### a. The Core Responsibilities of Educators

- i. Emphasis on education and safety as primary responsibilities.
- ii. Moral, ethical, and legal obligations tied to these responsibilities.

### b. Understanding and Accepting Responsibility

- i. The layers of responsibility, including trustworthiness, commitment, and awareness of consequences.
- ii. The importance of acting with authority and independently in gray areas.

### c. Handling Complex Situations with Responsibility

- i. The concept of "staying in your lane" while being aware of when to escalate situations.
- ii. The role of educators in building trust and setting clear expectations for students' safety and well-being.

## 4. Culture and Community: Why It Matters So Much

### a. Understanding Community and Cultural Dynamics

- i. Emphasizing the importance of teachers making efforts to understand the diverse communities and cultures of their students to enhance educational experiences and avoid misunderstandings.

- b. Building and Utilizing Rapport
    - i. Strategies for developing rapport through authenticity, active listening, empathy, and consistency, and its role in fostering a positive classroom environment and community engagement.
  - c. Navigating Cultural Intricacies
    - i. Addressing the importance of cultural intricacies in rapport building, avoiding stereotypes, patronization, and inconsistency, and using real-life applications to assess and improve rapport with students and parents.
- 5. Breathe-Reflect-Respond (BRR) Method
  - a. Step-by-step guide
    - i. Sometimes we need to breathe-reflect-breathe-breathe-reflect-and even breathe again before we respond!
  - b. Applying the BRR Methods in Real-World Scenarios
    - i. Managing Conflict and Scenarios Effectively.
- 6. Scenario Workshops: Participant Interaction and Small Group (these are in addition to the ones on our presentation!)
  - a. Student Scenarios
    - i. "A Box Cutter": You discover one of your most reliable students has a box cutter in their backpack during a routine check. They work at the local big-box store overnight to help support their family. The school's policy is very strict on this; also, you have a concert tomorrow, and this student has an important solo that no one else can cover. How do you handle this?
    - ii. "A Severe Storm and a Student Walking Home": After an evening rehearsal, a severe storm hits unexpectedly, leaving a student with no option but to walk home in dangerous conditions. The student's safety and the educator's responsibility are put to the test.
    - iii. "Inclusion vs. Performance": Striving for inclusivity, a student with special needs joins the ensemble; other students, sparking debates on balancing inclusivity with performance standards.
  - b. Parent Scenarios

- i. "Mid-Year Musical Withdrawal": Parents request their child's withdrawal from a year-long music class halfway through, citing unforeseen personal reasons. How does this impact the ensemble and the individual?
  - ii. "The Overzealous Music Booster": A music booster parent bypasses the director, making decisions that could alter the course of the program. Where does the line between support and overreach lie?
  - iii. "The Irate Parent Confrontation": A parent vehemently disagrees with the ensemble's selection process, questioning fairness and transparency. How to navigate parental expectations and program integrity?
- c. Administrative Scenarios
  - i. "The Scheduling Conundrum": A scheduling error threatens the existence of the ensemble class, putting the music program in jeopardy. Can creative solutions save the day?
  - ii. "Policy Changes and Performance Nightmares": New school policies unexpectedly conflict with long-established music performance traditions. How does one adapt to maintain tradition in the face of change?
  - iii. "The Biometric Privacy Predicament": A proposed biometric system for logging teacher attendance and time in the building raises privacy concerns among faculty. Where does technology serve versus intrude?
- d. Colleague and Other Party Conflicts
  - i. "The Field Trip Sabotage": An upset colleague attempts to undermine a meticulously planned music field trip. How does one address internal conflicts without compromising student experiences?
  - ii. "The Battle Over Budget": Music educators face off in a heated debate over the allocation of a limited department budget. How do priorities align with program needs?
  - iii. "A Competitor Undercuts the Program": A competing music service offers cheaper options to students, threatening the school's music program. How does one advocate for quality over cost?

## 7. Conclusion and Reflection

1. Recap of Key Learnings and Strategies
2. Encouragement for Continued Ethical Practice and Professional Growth
3. Q&A Session if Time Allows

Let us know your thoughts! [Click here to leave feedback.](#)

[Click here to check out the book Harmonizing Ethics and Education: Scenarios and Dilemmas for Music Educators.](#)

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