

Triune Ethics Orientations

(4-item versions; Narvaez & Hardy, 2016)

Triune Ethics Meta-theory (Narvaez, 2008; 2014, 2016) identifies the different mindsets (triune ethics orientations or TEO) that people use in moral situations based on neurobiological functioning of different brain systems. The mindsets measured here are based on dispositional orientations that derive from neurobiological functioning shaped in early life, during other sensitive periods or from trauma.

When children have good early care that matches up with evolved needs (Evolved Developmental Niche; EDN) and there is no trauma, they will develop capacities for relational attunement (ENGAGEMENT ETHIC). Their executive functions and cortical controls of subcortical survival systems will be well developed. When Engagement is enhanced with abstracting capabilities, the result is COMMUNAL IMAGINATION. These are the ethics that are apparent among communities that provide the EDN to their children (Narvaez, 2007).

When in early life a child is undercared for, resulting in excessive, regular stress at sensitive periods, the stress response systems can become sensitized or misdeveloped. This can result in a dispositional self-protective orientation that influences moral functioning (SELF-PROTECTIONIST ETHIC) or dispositional social stress-reactivity (SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL or SOCIAL OPPOSITION). When abstracting capabilities are combined with these self-protective orientations, the result is VICIOUS or DETACHED IMAGINATION ETHICS.

NOTE: We used to call these “moral identities” but now prefer “ethical orientations” or “moral mindsets” because the individual’s orientation will change by situation.

ITEMS:

Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.
I strongly desire to have these characteristics.
My friends think I have these characteristics.
My family thinks I have these characteristics.

ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS WORD LISTS:

GENERAL TYPES (most studied; see references below):

ENGAGEMENT: Caring, Compassionate, Merciful, Cooperative

GENERAL PROTECTIONISM (aka Safety/Security): Controlled, Tough, Unyielding, Competitive

IMAGINATION (aka General/Reflective): Reflective, Thoughtful, Inventive, Reasonable

ADDITIONAL ORIENTATIONS:

COMMUNAL IMAGINATION: Humanitarian Neighborly Inclusive Broad-Minded

SELF-PROTECTIVE:

SOCIAL OPPOSITION (aka Bunker, Combative Safety): Combative Vigilant Belligerent, Fierce

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL (aka Compliant, Wallflower Safety): Submissive Yielding Timid Unassertive

VICIOUS IMAGINATION: Domineering Aggressive Zealous Pushy

DETACHED IMAGINATION: Aloof Apathetic Withdrawn Unemotional

SURVEY DESIGN

It is best to spread out the different ethical sets (4 questions for an ethical orientation) throughout a questionnaire instead of having them come one after the other.

FORMATTING THE WORD LIST WITH THE ITEMS

Here is the format for presenting each set of questions.

Please respond to your view of how you are in SOCIAL SITUATIONS in terms of these characteristics: <i>[Put list of terms for an ethical orientation HERE, e.g.,: Caring, Compassionate, Merciful, Cooperative]</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My family thinks I have these characteristics.	1	2	4	3	5
I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	1	2	4	3	5
My friends think I have these characteristics.	1	2	4	3	5

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