



# **SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**(An Autonomous Institution)**



**COIMBATORE-35**

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Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai**

**DEPARTMENT OF AUTOMOBILE ENGINEERING**

**COURSE NAME: 19GET201 Professional Ethics and Human Values**

**IV YEAR / VII SEMESTER**

**Unit 1 – Engineering Ethics**

**Topic 1: Kolberg's theory- Gilligan's theory**



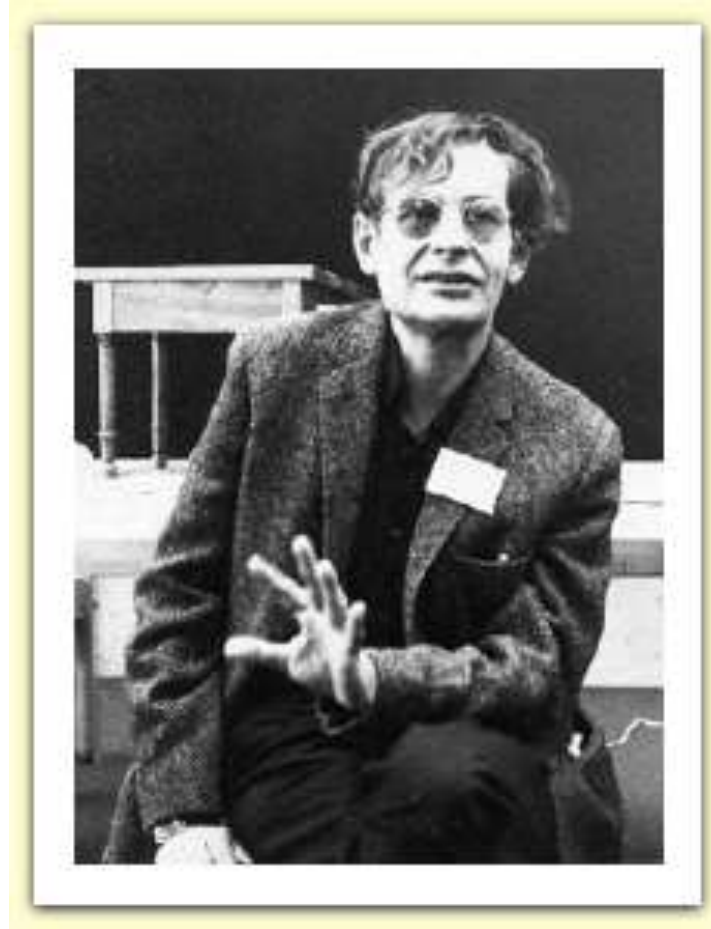
# What We'll Discuss

## TOPIC OUTLINE

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development  
Levels of Moral Reasoning  
Carol Gilligan's Model



# Lawrence Kohlberg



- Author of a three-level theory on how moral reasoning develops
- Moral reasoning is the aspect of cognitive development that has to do with the way an individual reasons about moral decisions



# Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- Assessed moral reasoning by posing hypothetical moral dilemmas and examining the reasoning behind people's answers
- Proposed three distinct levels of moral reasoning:
  - **preconventional, conventional, and postconventional**
- Each level is based on the degree to which a person conforms to conventional (Typical) standards of society
- Each level has two stages that represent different degrees of sophistication in moral reasoning



# Levels of Moral Reasoning

**Preconventional—moral reasoning is based on self-interest - external rewards and punishments**

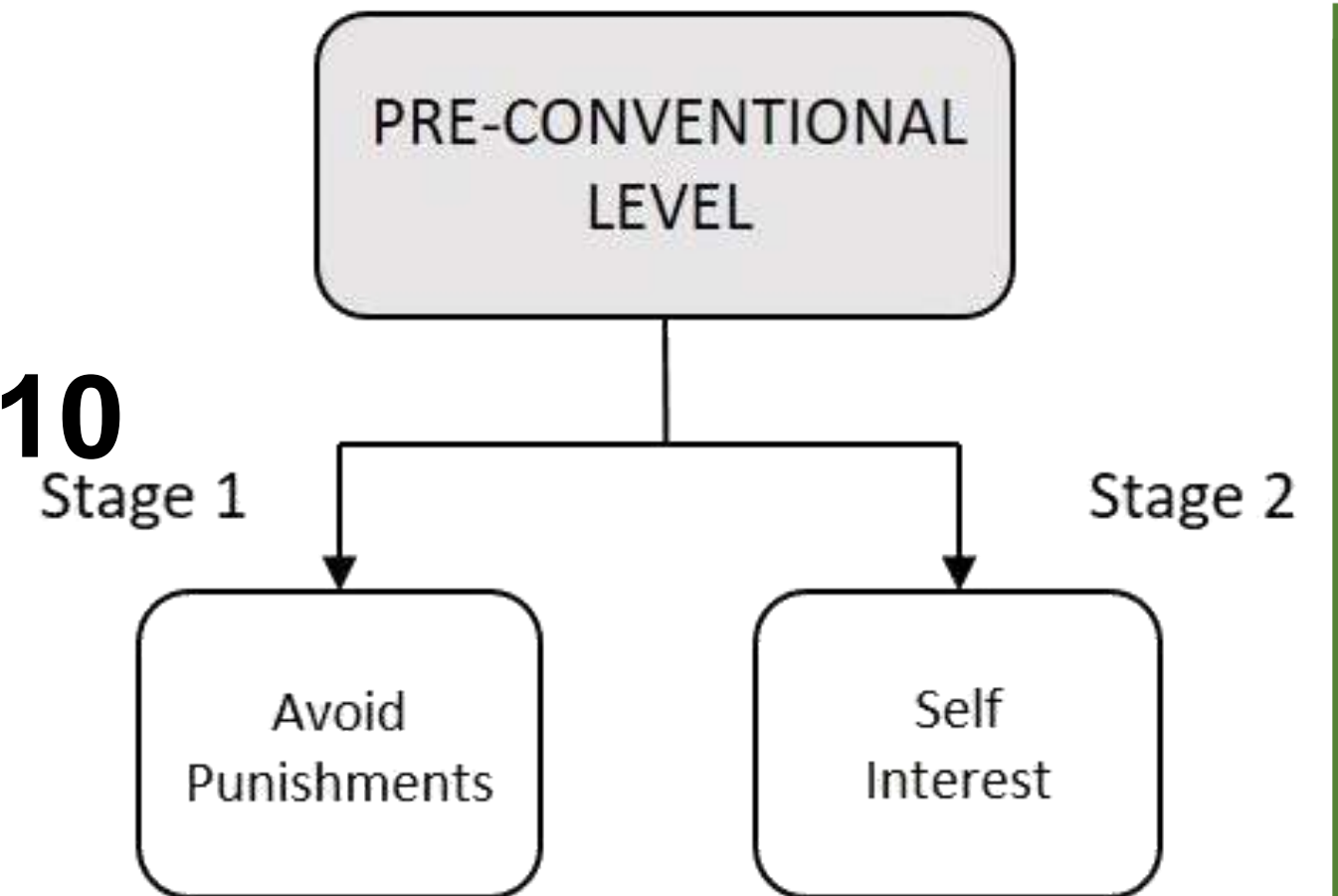
**Conventional—laws and rules are upheld to gain approval or keep order**

**Postconventional—reasoning based on basic rights & personal ethical standards**



# LEVEL 1: Preconventional Moral Reasoning

- **Characterized by the desire to avoid punishment or gain reward**
- **Responses are self-interested**
- **Typically children under the age of 10**





# Stage 1: Punishment & Obedience

- **A focus on direct consequences**
- **Negative actions will result in punishments**
- **EXAMPLE: Heinz shouldn't steal the drug because he'd go to jail if he got caught**



## Stage 2: Self-Interest

- **What's in it for me?**
- **Morals guided by what is “fair”**
- **EXAMPLE: Heinz should steal the drug because the druggist is being greedy by charging so much.**

**OR**

- **It is right for Heinz to steal the drug because it can cure his wife and then he would not be all alone.**

**OR**

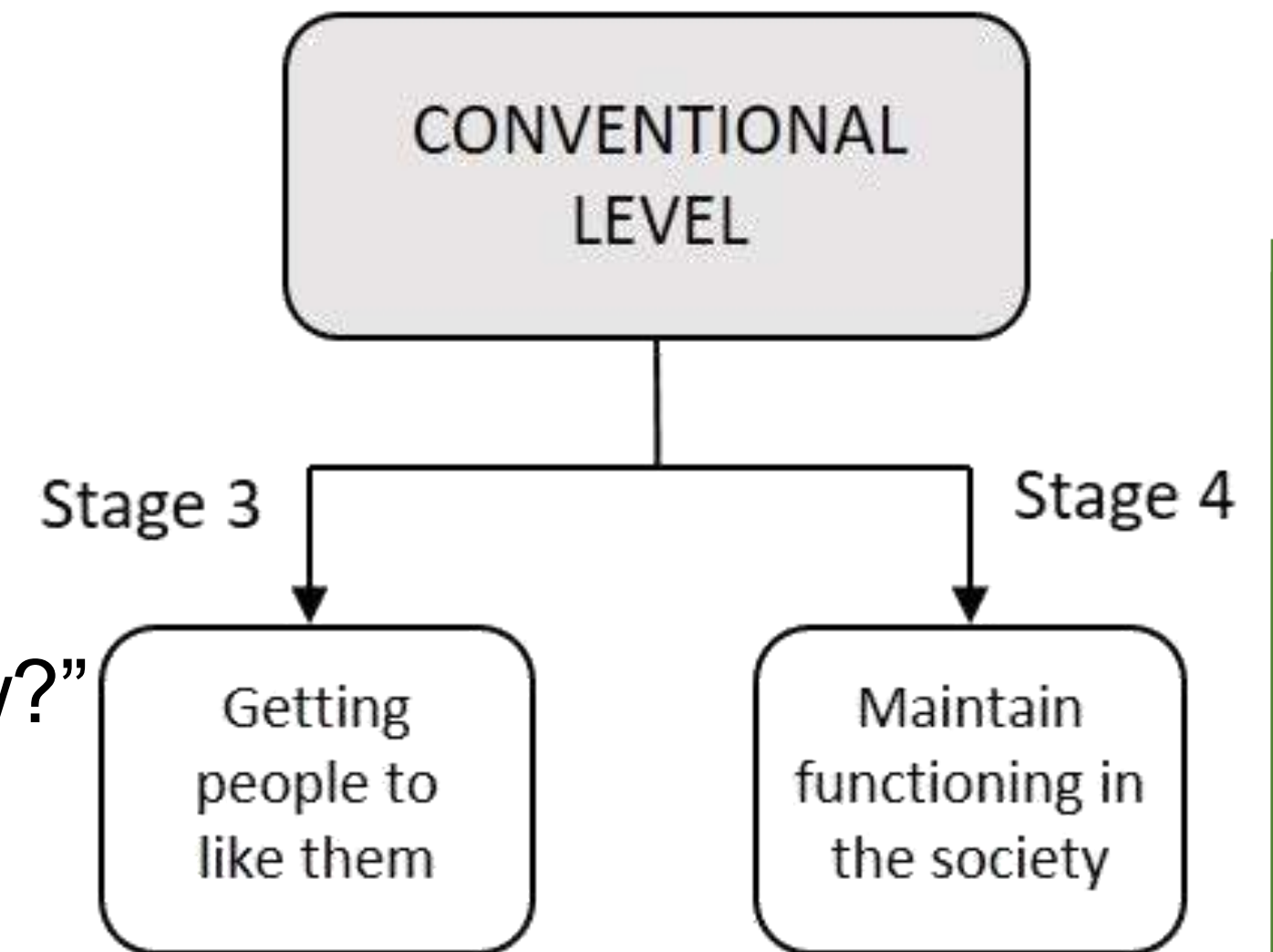
- **The doctor scientist had spent lots of money and many years of his life to develop the cure so it's not fair to him if Heinz stole the drug**





# LEVEL 2: Conventional Moral Reasoning

- Primary concern is to fit in and play the role of a good citizen
- People have a strong desire to
  - Gain Approval/Avoid Disapproval
    - “What will others think of me?”
  - Avoid Dishonor or Guilt (Duty to Society)
    - “What are the rules we’ve all agreed to follow?”
- Typical of most adults





# Stage 3: Interpersonal/Social Expectations

- An attempt to live up to the expectations of important others
- Follow rules or do what others would want so that you win their approval  
avoid disapproval
- Negative actions will harm those relationships
- **EXAMPLE:** Heinz should try to steal the drug because that's what a devoted husband would do.



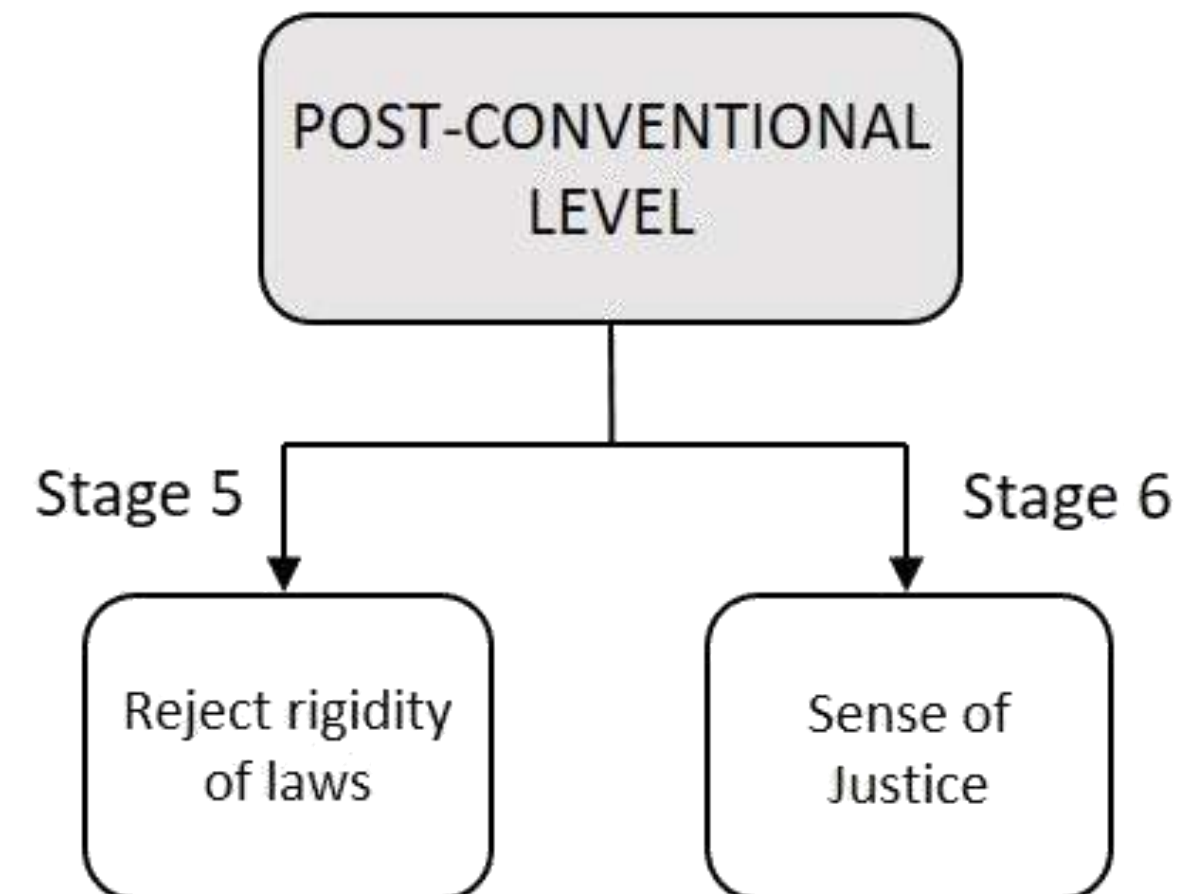
# Stage 4: Law and Order

- To maintain social order, people must resist personal pressures and follow the laws of the larger society
- Respect the laws & authority – no vigilante justice
- **EXAMPLE:** Heinz should not steal the drug because that would be against the law and he has duty to uphold the law.



# LEVEL 3: Postconventional Moral Reasoning

- Characterized by references to universal ethical principles that represent protecting the rights of all people
- Decisions based on personal, internal judgments of right and wrong
- Most adults do not reach this level





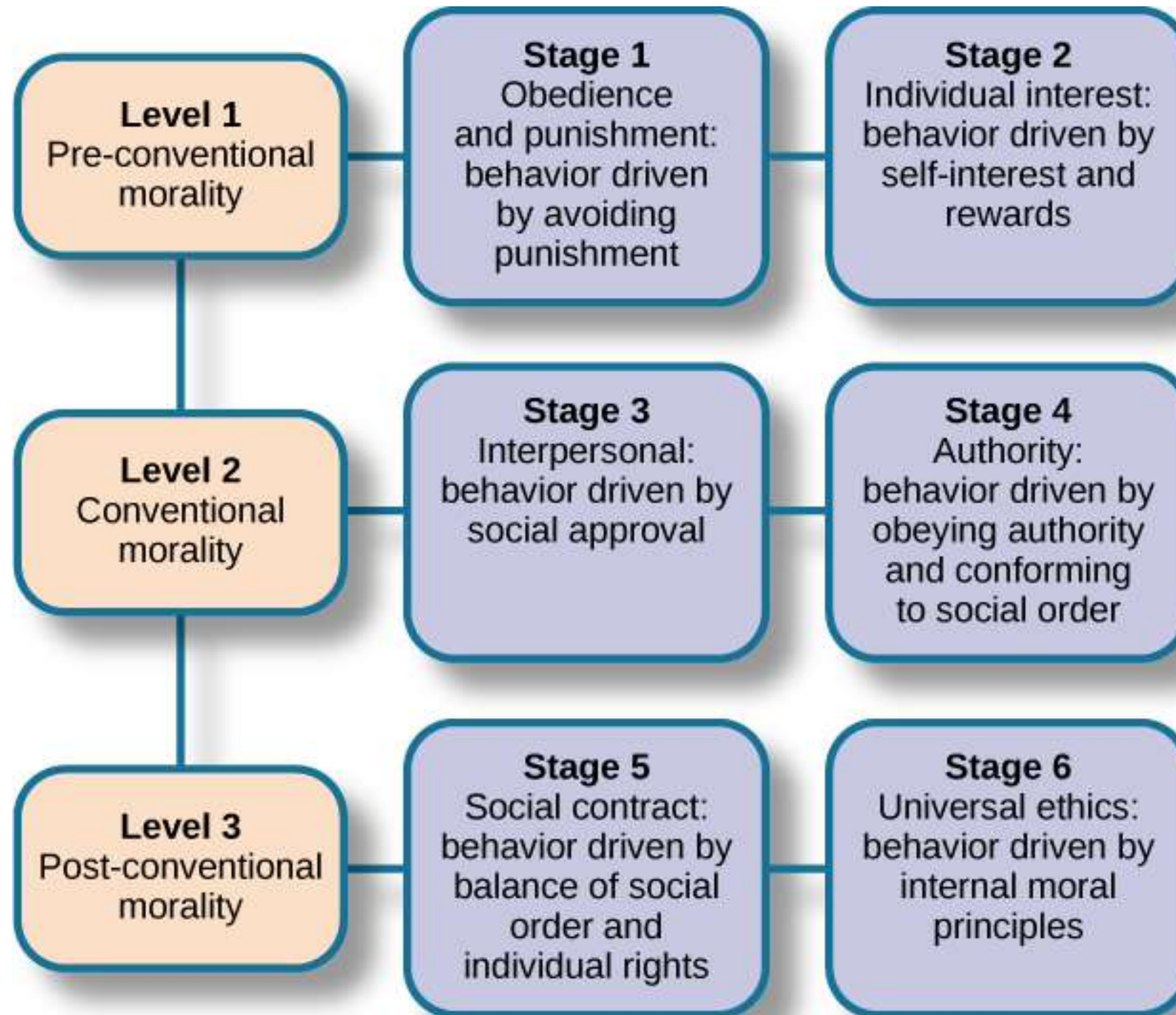
# Stage 5: Social Contract/ Legal Principles

- Must protect the basic rights of all people by upholding the legal principles of fairness, justice, equality & democracy.
- Laws that fail to promote general welfare or that violate ethical principles can be changed, reinterpreted, or abandoned
- **EXAMPLE: Heinz should steal the drug because his obligation to save his wife's life must take precedence over his obligation to respect the druggist's property rights.**



# Stage 6: Universal Moral Principles

- Self-chosen ethical principles
- Profound respect for sanctity of all human life, nonviolence, equality & human dignity
- Moral principles take precedence over laws that might conflict with them,
- Conscientious objectors – refuses to be drafted because they are morally opposed to war.
- **EXAMPLE:** Heinz should steal the drug even if the person was a stranger and not his wife. He must follow his conscience and not let the druggist's desire for money outweigh the value of a human life.





# Criticisms of Kohlberg's theory

- **Research has not supported** Kohlberg's belief that the development of abstract thinking in adolescence invariably leads people to the formation of idealistic moral principles
- Some cross-cultural psychologists argue that Kohlberg's stories and scoring system reflect a Western emphasis on **individual rights, harm, and justice that is not shared in many cultures.**
- Kohlberg's early research was conducted entirely **with male subjects**, yet it became the basis for a theory applied to both males and females.





# Carol Gilligan's Model

- Feels Kohlberg's model is based on an ethic of individual rights and justice, which is a more common perspective for males
- However, when subjects are carefully matched, there do not seem to be systematic gender differences in moral reasoning
- Gilligan's model of women's moral development is based on an ethic of care and responsibility.



# GILLIGAN'S THEORY



## Pre-conventional Level

- This is the same as Kohlberg's first level in that the person is preoccupied with self centered reasoning, caring for the needs and desires of self.

## Conventional

- Here the thinking is opposite in that, one is preoccupied with not hurting others and a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests in order to help or nurture others

## Post-conventional Level

- Achieved through context-oriented reasoning, rather than by applying abstract rules ranked in a hierarchy of importance. Here the individual becomes able to strike a reasoned balance between caring about other people and pursuing one's own self-interest while exercising one's rights



# THANK YOU