Integrating Ethics into your work with Staff and Volunteers

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Chat Question

Think of the most ethical person you know.
How would you describe that person?

1

## Ethics is…

- A guide for navigating confusion and conflict
- More than a written "code"
- Influenced by history, culture, faith, experience
- A management tool
- Connected to effective leadership

Ethical Organizations

- Are accessible to diverse groups
- Operate ethically with all stakeholders
- Strive for excellence
- Maintain the public trust
- Sustain a helping environment
- Are at low risk for legal actions against it

Types of Ethics

Personal

Organizational

Professional
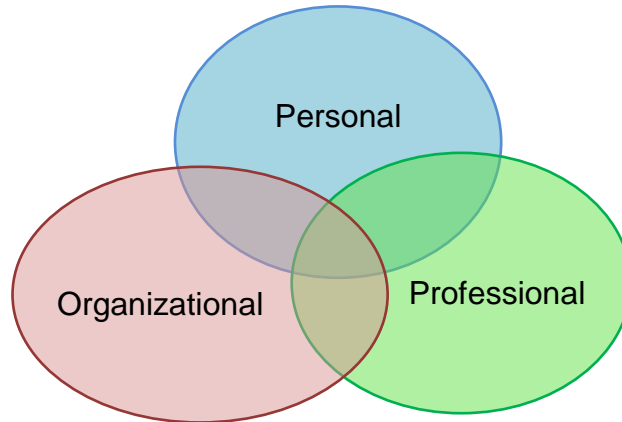
Recognizing an Ethical Dilemma

- Am I trying to determine the "right" course of action?

- Am I asking a "should" question?

- Are values and beliefs involved?

- Am I feeling uncomfortable?

- Is there a downside to making the "correct" choice?

Poll Question

Does your organization have a
written code of ethics?

Developing a Code of Ethics

- Involve board, staff, and volunteers

- Identify core values

- Develop an organizational statement of values

- Develop a set of principles about how to put
those values into practice

- Secure Board approval of the code

Developing a Code of Ethics

For Example…

Value Statement: *"We believe all staff and volunteers should be treated fairly and equitably."*

Ethical Principles:

"Grounds for termination or dismissal will apply equally to paid staff and volunteers."

"Volunteers and staff will be recognized and rewarded for providing high quality service to our clients."

Nonprofit Sector Values

- Commitment beyond self
- Obedience of the laws
- Commitment beyond the law
- Commitment to the public good
- Respect for the worth and dignity of individuals
- Tolerance, diversity, and social justice
- Accountability to the public
- Openness and honesty
- Responsible stewardship of resources

Source: "Obedience to the Unenforceable", Independent Sector

Universal Core Values

Six "Pillars of Character":

Citizenship and Philanthropy
Respect
Responsibility
Compassion and Generosity
Justice and Fairness
Trustworthiness

Josephson Institute of Ethics

Individual Options for Action in the Workplace

- Ignore the situation

- Acknowledge it but don't push

- Confront and attempt compromise

- Confront and take a stand

- Quit or be fired

Chat Questions

➢ Why do staff or volunteers NOT report unethical behavior when they observe it?

➢ How do people justify unethical behavior?

Ethical Behavior

"An ethical person often chooses to do more than the law requires and less than the law allows...There is a big difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."

Justice Potter Stewart

Ethical Decision-Making Steps

➢ Identify the facts.
  Evidence
  Situational context
  Multiple perspectives
  Relevant policies

➢ Determine the ethical issue.
  Which ethical values & principles are involved?
  Where is the conflict?
  Who will be most affected by your decision?

Ethical Decision-Making Steps

➢ Explore the options.
  Harms and benefits
  Legal implications
  Policy implications
  Connection to org. mission and values
  What is the path of least harm?

➢ Make a decision and test it.

➢ Act, with confidence and courage.

Testing Your Decision

Consequence

     Legal

         Image

             Culture

                Knot

<u>Source:</u> Gardenswartz, Rowe & Digh for Florida Power Corp.

Exploring A Real-Life Scenario

- Mr. G. is director of a small nonprofit NGO and is always seeking ways to increase support for his MOW programs.
- The wife of a well-known government official contacts Mr. G. and says she would like to volunteer with his program. Mr. G. is pleased, because her husband often makes decisions about funding for local NGOs.
- Mr. G. assigns her to his most successful program. Several months later, Mr. G. discovers that this volunteer has been talking badly about the program to others in the community. He is very concerned about this, and wonders if he should tell her not to volunteer anymore.

Where is the conflict? Why is this an ethical dilemma?

9

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What else does Mr. G. need to know before deciding what to do?

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What can we learn from this situation?
How could it be prevented from happening again in the future?

Ethics as a Management Tool

- Managing diversity with fairness

- Balancing passion and policy

- Maintaining public reputation and trust

- Walking the talk (integrity)

- Sustaining a culture of service

Ideas for "Exercising" Ethics

- Develop or revisit an organizational code of ethics

- Discuss ethics at staff and volunteer orientations

- Use scenarios as a discussion starter

- Devote time at staff or board meetings to focus on each ethical principle

- Convene a training on ethical decision-making, and practice on examples from colleagues.

- Find colleagues to serve as a "sounding board"

Poll Question

Which of these ideas do you think you might pursue?

A. Develop or revisit an organizational code of ethics

B. Discuss ethics at staff and volunteer orientations

C. Use scenarios as a discussion starter

D. Devote time at staff or board meetings to focus on each ethical principle

E. Convene a training on ethical decision-making, and practice on examples from colleagues

F.   Find colleagues to serve as a "sounding board"

Related Resources

Independent Sector *(sample codes)*
    www.independentsector.org

Professional Ethics in Volunteer Administration
    www.cvacert.org

How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living,
    By Rushworth M. Kidder

Josephson Institute of Ethics
    www.josephsoninstitute.org