



National Compliance and Ethics Week

April 29-May 3, 2013

Activity Guide for IntegratedEthics™ Staff

Table of Contents

Introduction _____	3
VA IntegratedEthics™ Value of the Day (ICARE) Discussion Activity _____	4
VA IntegratedEthics™ Value of the Day (ICARE) Email _____	9
IntegratedEthics™ (IE) Journal Activity Leader Guide _____	12
IntegratedEthics (IE) Journal Activity Participant Guide _____	18
Encouraging Staff to <i>Talk About Ethics</i> _____	21
Increasing Awareness of Ethics Consultation Availability Among Patients and Families _____	25

Introduction

National Compliance & Ethics Week is April 29 - May 3, 2013. This year's theme is "Excellence Through Integrity."

The week is co-sponsored in VHA by the National Center for Ethics in Health Care and the Office of Compliance and Business Integrity. Its purpose is to highlight the essential connection between business integrity and ethics quality in providing the best care to our nation's Veterans.

Together with commitment, advocacy, and respect, excellence and integrity make up the core values of VHA, known as [ICARE](#) values. Our commitment to these values ensures that we provide the best possible service to Veterans and their families.

Celebrations and activities are being held at facilities, VISNs, and VACO, coordinated by IE Program Officers and staff across the country. This guide contains a package of activities and tools for you to use during those celebrations. While they are designed for use during Compliance and Ethics week, they can be employed at any time of the year. We encourage you to be creative in adapting this package in observance of other annual events, such as National Hospital Week and National Healthcare Quality Week.

In this guide, you will find:

- Value of the Day Activity Guides (based on Value of the Month activity)
 - Discussion Activity
 - Daily Email
- Journal Club Activity: "The Psychology of Fraud"
 - Leader Guide
 - Participant Guide
- Talk About Ethics Activity Guide
- Increasing Ethics Consultation Awareness Among Patients and Families Tool

Please let us know what you think of this guide. We welcome your suggestions for making it more usable in the future. Thank you for your work in highlighting ethics quality during this week, and every week of the year.

VA IntegratedEthics™: Value of the Day

Discussion Activity

Activity Overview

The Value of the Day Discussion Activity prompts staff to talk about VA core values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (**ICARE**)—and how they can affect the work that is done in VA on a daily basis. The goal is to hold an open, respectful discussion of what the ICARE value of the day means to staff members, how they see the value acted on—or not—at work, and how they can demonstrate the value in their daily activities. Participants seek to understand each other’s perspectives, not to persuade or solve problems.

(This activity is a modification of the Value of Month activity, which was based on an activity developed by the IE Council at the Providence VA Medical Center. For more information on the Value of the Month activity and other Ethical Leadership tools, see <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ELCtools.asp>.)

Things to Consider

Value of the Day discussions can be conducted with employees from many different work groups, or with employees from the same unit or team. Discuss with facility leadership whether these activities should be conducted in central locations among employees from different areas, or in work groups with fellow team members. Groups should be of manageable size so that all participants get a chance to contribute. Remember to consider employees who work evenings, nights, weekends, or in locations other than the main facility. Consider conducting Value of the Day activities in locations all over your facility, inviting leaders from those locations to facilitate the discussions.

Recommended Process

1. Identify a discussion leader for each session. See below for more information on selecting a discussion leader.
2. Reserve one or more conference rooms (one per discussion leader) for 30 minutes, every day for one week. If possible, please schedule activities at multiple times to cover all shifts.
3. One week before the first session, send an email to employees inviting them to a discussion session. Make sure employees from all shifts and all areas of the facility are invited. See below for a sample invitation.

4. Send an email reminder early in the morning of the first discussion session.
5. Print copies of the Value of the Day handout (attached).
6. As the discussion session begins, the leader should welcome participants and provide a brief overview:

“This discussion will get us talking about how VA ICARE values impact the work we do in the VA on a daily basis. The goal is to hold an open, respectful discussion of what the ICARE value of the day, X, means to us, how we see it acted on – or not – at work. We want to understand each other’s perspectives, and don’t intend to persuade or problem-solve.

“Today’s value is X, which is defined as Y. ...”

7. The leader should then proceed by asking the first discussion question, giving people plenty of time to respond. When people stop responding, the leader should prompt involvement of others by asking, “What do others think about this question?” until no one else responds, and then move on to the next question.
8. After going through each of the questions, the leader should thank everyone for coming, encourage participants to continue to consider ways to demonstrate the ICARE values in their everyday activities, and invite them to the next scheduled session.

More Information

Selecting a Discussion Leader. Whoever leads the Value of the Day discussion must be a skilled facilitator. Because people care deeply about their values, they may find it difficult to talk openly and calmly about them, especially when their values seem to conflict with the values of others. Getting people to listen to each other’s values can be an even greater challenge for the leader. Moreover, leaders must be aware of their own values and avoid overprivileging them in the discussion. *In order to increase the impact and significance of this activity, you could request that a member of the facility leadership team or IE Council facilitate the discussion.*

Sample email invitation:

You are invited to a special series of discussions on how values affect the work we do every day in VA. Each day, we will discuss one of the VA core values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence—and the effect it has on our daily activities. Bring your lunch and join an open, respectful discussion of what these values mean to you and your fellow employees, and how you see them acted on—or not—at work.

[OPTIONAL] Discussions will be held simultaneously in several locations. Seating may be limited – come early!

Monday, Month/Day: Integrity
Tuesday, Month/Day: Commitment
Wednesday, Month/Day: Advocacy
Thursday, Month/Day: Respect
Friday, Month/Day: Excellence

Time(s): X:XX – Y:YY, X:XX – Y:YY (etc.)

Location(s):

Bring a co-worker, bring something to eat or drink, and join in the discussion. Hope to see you there!

Value of the Day Discussion Activity Handout

Monday: Integrity

Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

1. What actions have you seen among your co-workers that demonstrate integrity? How do these actions influence your own behavior and/or your relationship with your colleagues?
2. Are there times when “acting with high moral principle” or “adhering to the highest professional standards” seems to conflict with other values? If so, how do you address the conflict in yourself or with other people?
3. Describe a work situation that requires integrity. What would be the consequences for your facility of failing to act with integrity in that situation?

Tuesday: Commitment

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

1. What actions have you seen that demonstrate commitment? Would these actions be possible without “an earnest belief in VA’s mission?”
2. Do other employees share the same level of commitment on a day-to-day basis? What are the consequences when people don’t have the same ideas about commitment?
3. Has commitment ever been a barrier to change in your experience at VA?

Wednesday: Advocacy

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Scenario: A physician requests a level of service for a particular patient that can’t be provided to other patients in the facility. The service chief and the physician meet to discuss the issue.

1. What does it mean for the physician to be an advocate in this situation? Should she “plead” for her patient’s special treatment? What about her other patients?
2. What does it mean for the service chief to be an advocate in this situation? Should he grant the physician’s request? What about other patients?

Thursday: Respect

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

1. In your experience at VA, have you observed a leader showing respect to an employee, even when the employee has done something wrong? What did the leader do or say? What was the outcome? How were you affected by the respect the leader showed?
2. If others are disrespectful, how can you not “drop to their level,” but remain respectful yourself? What motivates you to “treat all those you serve and with whom you work with dignity and respect”?

Friday: Excellence

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better. —Pat Riley

When you realize you've made a mistake, make amends immediately. It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm. —Dan Heist

1. Do these quotes apply to your work at VA? To the work of your facility? To the VA organizational culture?
2. How is excellence supported and recognized in your facility?
3. What are the obstacles, if any, to achieving excellence in your work at VA? How can these obstacles be addressed?

VA IntegratedEthics™: Value of the Day

Email

Email texts for Each Day

Activity Goal

The Value of the Day Email Activity is designed to raise awareness of the VA [ICARE values](#) and their importance among VA employees. Attached is a set of simple, brief email messages to be delivered to VA staff during National Compliance and Ethics Week. Each day's message is keyed to a VA core value—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (ICARE). The goal is to encourage thought and reflection on what these values mean to facility members and how they see the value acted on—or not—at work. This document provides suggested text for each day's email message.

Who Should Send the Emails

Ideally, these emails should come from your facility director or another member of the facility leadership team. This would send a powerful message about ethical leadership at your facility, and underline the importance that your leaders place on ethical practices. If this is not possible, the emails should originate with your facility's IE team.

General introductory text to include at the beginning of each day's message:

In celebration of National Compliance and Ethics week, the IntegratedEthics team at [facility] invites you to reflect for a few moments about one of the VA core values and what it might mean to you and your colleagues. We hope that this message inspires you to be guided by VA's core values in the work you do every day on behalf of America's Veterans.

Messages Day-by-Day

Monday

[subject line] Monday's Value of the Day: Integrity

Today's VA Core Value: Integrity

Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Today's thoughts:

- What actions have you seen in your facility that demonstrate integrity?
- Are there times when "acting with high moral principle" or "adhering to the highest professional standards" seems to conflict with other values?
- If so, how do you address the conflict in yourself or with other people?

Tuesday

[subject line] Tuesday's Value of the Day: Commitment

Today's VA Core Value: Commitment

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Today's Thoughts:

- What actions have you seen in your facility or other facilities that demonstrate commitment
- What are the consequences when people don't share your ideas about commitment?
- Has commitment ever been a barrier to change in your experience at VA?

Wednesday

[subject line] Wednesday's Value of the Day: Advocacy

Today's VA Core Value: Advocacy

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Scenario: A physician requests a level of service for a particular patient that can't be provided to other patients in the facility. The service chief and the physician meet to discuss the issue.

- What does it mean for the physician to be an advocate in this situation? Should she "plead" for her patient's special treatment? What about her other patients?
- What does it mean for the service chief to be an advocate in this situation? Should he grant the physician's request? What about other patients?

Thursday

[subject line] Thursday's Value of the Day: Respect

Today's VA Core Value: Respect

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

- In your experience at VA, have you observed a leader showing respect to an employee, even when the employee has done something wrong? How were you affected by the respect the leader showed?
- If others are disrespectful, how can you not "drop to their level," but remain respectful yourself?

Friday

[subject line] Friday's Value of the Day: Excellence

Today's VA Core Value: Excellence

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better. —Pat Riley

When you realize you've made a mistake, make amends immediately. It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm. —Dan Heist

- Do these quotes apply to your work at VA? To the VA organizational culture?
- What are the obstacles, if any, to achieving excellence in your work at VA? How can these obstacles be addressed?

IntegratedEthics™ (IE) Journal Activity

Leader Guide

[Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things](#), by Chana Joffe-Walt and Alix Spiegel

Joffe-Walt, Chana and Spiegel, Alix. 2012. *NPR* (May, 2012). www.npr.org

Overview

This journal activity provides a venue for reflection, discussion, and inquiry about the concept of “cognitive frames” and the effect certain frames have on ethical problems. While reading and/or listening to “[Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things](#),” by Chana Joffe-Walt and Alix Spiegel, you should consider the types of decisions you face within VHA and the cognitive frames through which you consider these decisions. At the journal meeting, those questions will be used as the basis for collegial discussion about your experience with the ethical environment and culture in your facility.

Objectives for the IE Journal Activity Meeting

- Learn about the concept of “cognitive frames” and how they apply to ethical thinking.
- Reflect on the cognitive frames through which decisions are made.
- Discuss situations in which empathy and a desire to help people you identify with may inhibit your ability to make decisions through an ethical frame.
- Engage in collaborative discussion with colleagues about the ethical environment and culture in your facility.
- Brainstorm organizational solutions to support using an ethical frame for decision making.

Logistics

Participants

Journal Discussions are open to any staff members who wish to participate.

Preparation for the Journal Discussion

At least two weeks before the meeting:

1. Announce the event, and make sure everyone in the facility is aware of it. This may be accomplished by email, posters, or with news and announcements. Consider scheduling the discussion more than once to allow staff on different schedules (e.g. swing shift, etc.) to attend.
2. Reserve a meeting space with a computer, speakers, and a projector. Reserve a whiteboard or flipchart easel if you want to capture participants' ideas and encourage brainstorming.

At least one week before the meeting:

Send an email to facility staff with an attached Participant Handout and a link to the online audio/article: <http://www.npr.org/2012/05/01/151764534/psychology-of-fraud-why-good-people-do-bad-things>

A day or two before the meeting:

1. Confirm the journal event in another announcement, and remind participants to bring their Participant Handouts with them.
2. Make extra copies of the participant handouts and bring to the meeting.

At the meeting:

Depending on time available, begin the meeting either by playing the audio (20min) or projecting the text-and-graphics story from the NPR website (10 min).

After the meeting:

Summarize notes generated during brainstorming and share them with participants. You may also choose to include a summary in a brief write-up that can be included in a facility article, local newsletter, or daily report. A brief summary can help participants who were unable to join the discussion learn about the activity and encourage them to participate in future IE events. If ideas are generated that might be considered for implementation across the facility, the IE Council could be briefed for consideration.

Role of the Journal Discussion Leader

The leader is responsible for getting the meeting started and setting the tone. Discussion should be open, collegial, and relevant to the five journal activity objectives. Consider having a member of the facility leadership team, if available, lead this journal discussion to demonstrate to staff that ethics is a priority.

It is not necessary to cover all the key questions during the meeting. The leader should try to ensure, however, that all participants get the opportunity to share their thoughts on questions that particularly matter to them or have particular relevance to the facility.

Who Speaks When?

Typically, a discussion among a group of six or fewer participants, seated around a table or in a circle, is self-facilitating. However, the leader may need to intervene from time to time if one person is dominating the discussion or if the discussion goes off track. In those instances, the leader may say, "Let's hear from someone else on this," or "Let's go back to the question."

In a larger group, it may be helpful to have participants raise their hands when they want to speak. This can be decided after the discussion starts. If one or more people dominate, or people are talking at once, the leader may intervene and suggest to the group, "Maybe we should use hands to signal who wants to speak?" If it is difficult for the leader to keep track of whose turn it is to speak, the leader or another person in the room can jot down the order in which hands go up.

Timing

The time allotted for discussion of each question depends on how long the session will last, generally about 30 minutes.

The leader should start the meeting promptly, and should announce in the beginning how much time will be spent on each question. The leader is responsible for moving the discussion from one question to the next, when the allotted time is up.

If the leader isn't sure s/he can track the time, s/he may ask for a volunteer timekeeper from the participant group.

Questions about IE Program

When a need for more information about the IE program at the facility comes up in discussion, the discussion leader may call on the IE program staff in the room for a brief response. However, the journal activity is not meant to turn into a Q&A session. If a brief response isn't feasible, the discussion leader should ask the IE program staff to make a note of the question and respond to it later.

Leading the Journal Discussion

1. Introduce the session

(5 min.)

Set Expectations

Welcome participants. If you are not known to the group, introduce yourself by name and ask others to do the same. (IE program staff should quickly explain their IE role when introducing themselves.)

Direct participants to the meeting objectives on the first page of their handout and quickly read through them.

Explain your role as the leader in a Journal Discussion. You are responsible for:

- Facilitating an open, collegial and relevant discussion.
- Ensuring that all participants who want to join in the discussion get an opportunity to do so.
- Keeping the discussion on track.
- Encouraging participants to seek information about the IE program at their facilities, and to follow up on ethics concerns shared during the discussion.

2. Scroll through web story

(10 min.)

Or play audio

(20 min.)

3. Discuss key questions

(30 min.)

For each key question there are two sub-bullet questions (6 total questions):

1. Read the initial statement.

Ask: “Does anyone have a clarifying question about this statement?” Take no more than a minute to clarify any terms, facts, or references in the statement.

2. Read the first question bullet. Allow participants a little time to gather their thoughts, and then look around the room to see who is ready to address the question.

Invite that person (or the whole group if no one volunteers) to start the discussion. (If two or more people look ready to speak, choose one and let the other(s) know they’re in line: “Go ahead, Jane. Marcus, you’re next, then Latoya.”)

3. When about half the time allotted to the first bulleted question is up, or when the discussion seems to flag, suggest to the group, “Let’s look at the second part of this question,” and read the second bullet.

If necessary, prompt the group to re-start discussion. Ask, “Any thoughts about _____?” [Choose one or two key words from the question.]

4. When the time for the question runs out, get the group’s attention and say something like, “I’m afraid we’re out of time on this question. Any last thoughts on it?”

3. Conclude the session

(5 min.)

When there are only five minutes left, inform participants that the time is almost up.

If anyone objects that s/he hasn't had a chance to express an idea or concern about the practice of ethics at the facility, ask the group if they agree to let that person speak for a minute or two. (People will usually agree, if the facilitator has shown an ability to keep to the allotted time so far.)

Follow-up on Questions, Comments, Suggestions

If participants have made suggestions about improving ethical practice at the facility, read out the suggestions.

Close

Thank participants for a good discussion (and good suggestions, if any). As applicable inform the participants that you will include a summary of the discussion and ideas generated in a brief write-up that can be included in a facility article in a local newsletter or daily report. In addition, if ideas are generated that might be considered for implementation across the facility; the IE Council could be briefed for consideration.

Key Questions

Question 1: “Why We Don’t See The Ethical Big Picture”

In the story, Ann Tenbrunsel, a researcher from Notre Dame who studies unethical behavior, says that “certain cognitive frames make us blind to the fact that we are confronting an ethical problem at all.” According to Tenbrunsel, “the business frame cognitively activates one set of goals—to be competent, to be successful; the ethics frame triggers other goals—to be fair and not hurt others.”

- Through what types of frames might decisions at your facility be made?
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which you believe someone was making a decision through a business frame rather than an ethical frame? How might the framing in this situation have changed the outcome?

Note to discussion leader: Question one is really intended to get people thinking about how they frame decisions and what factors they consider when making decisions at work. If no one is eager to answer feel free to share an example from Toby's case in the article. After Toby realized his company was failing, his main concern was to fix it. He believed that by taking out another mortgage on his personal property he could temporarily cover the quarter of a million dollars of shortfall for his business; however, in order to get the second mortgage, he would need to lie. Toby says, “You know, things are going to happen, and I just needed to do whatever I needed to do to fix that.” According to Ann Tenbrunsel, “His sole focus was on making the best business decision, which made him blind to the ethics.” (p. 2 – 5) In Toby's case, had he been using an ethical frame, his mental checklist would have been different and he may not have told that first lie to begin with.

Question 2: “We Lie Because We Care”

Chapter 5 of the print transcript begins by noting the common assumption that people commit fraud because they have a financial incentive to do so. Some psychologists and economists, however, are interested in another possible explanation: we commit fraud because we *like* each other. “We like to help each other, especially people we identify with. And when we are helping people, we really don’t see what we are doing as unethical.” In Toby’s story, his staff and professional colleagues faced a decision in which “future abstract consequences” competed with helping “the very real person in front of them.”

- Can you think of a situation in which empathy or a desire to help someone you identify with may inhibit your ability to make decisions through an ethical frame?
- Have you ever been in a position where you had to weigh abstract future consequences against helping someone who was right there in front of you? What were the consequences?

Note to discussion leader: This question focuses on how we might potentially aid and abet unethical behavior—shifting the emphasis from Toby to those who covered for him. Get people to think of situations they know of, or might imagine, in which they might permit unethical actions to occur out of seemingly benevolent motivations: caring and empathy. Or out of passivity—simply not taking action.

Question 3: Solutions

At the conclusion of this article, the authors say, “If we are all capable of behaving profoundly unethically without realizing it, then our workplaces and regulations are poorly organized...They don’t attempt to structure things around our weaknesses.” In the printed transcript, they end with two concrete proposals to support ethical framing (the audio version includes only the first proposal): 1) force businesses to change auditors every couple of years to eliminate the possibility of business-auditor relationships that can corrupt audits, and 2) place a sentence at the beginning of business contracts which explicitly states that lying on the contract is unethical and illegal.

- Can you think of anything your setting/service line/facility could do locally to support using an ethical frame for decision making?
- How about the larger organization, such as in this facility or across our region?

Note to discussion leader: Capture participants’ ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart paper if available, or you may choose to simply write down the ideas generated by the group. If ideas are generated that might be considered for implementation across the facility, the IE Council could be briefed for consideration. Involving the IE Council as necessary may be a great way to promote ethics and enhance the ethical environment and culture within your facility.

IntegratedEthics™ (IE) Journal Activity Participant Guide

[Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things](#), by Chana Joffe-Walt and Alix Spiegel

Joffe-Walt, Chana and Spiegel, Alix. *NPR* (May, 2012). www.npr.org

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- Learn about the concept of “cognitive frames” and how they apply to ethical thinking.
- Reflect on the cognitive frames through which decisions are made.
- Discuss situations in which empathy and a desire to help people with whom you identify may inhibit your ability to make decisions through an ethical frame.
- Engage in collaborative discussion with colleagues about the ethical environment and culture in your facility.
- Brainstorm organizational solutions to support using an ethical frame for decision making.

IE Journal Activity Format

Optimally, a journal discussion is both the result of prior activity, i.e., reading and reflection, and the catalyst for further activity, as shown in the RADIUS¹ format below.

Read the article critically.

Ask yourself the key questions.

Discuss the questions and follow-up actions with colleagues.

Inquire into IE program resources for help in resolving ethical issues.

Use what you have learned.

Sustain collaboration with others in ethical practice in your facility or VISN.

Read the Article Critically

“[Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things](#)” originally aired on NPR, and is available online both in audio form and as a text-and-graphics article (follow link above). The story is primarily focused on the banking system, but has broad application to health care. As you read, take note of any possible relevance to your own practice of making decisions using an ethical frame.

Ask Yourself the Key Questions

The three key questions below and sub-bullet questions will be discussed in the journal meeting you attend. They offer an opportunity for you to bring up ethics questions and concerns you may have, and to contribute your experience and perspective to the ongoing work of creating a culture that supports open discussion and careful decision-making about ethics.

Question 1: “Why We Don’t See The Ethical Big Picture”

In the story, Ann Tenbrunsel, a researcher from Notre Dame who studies unethical behavior, says that “certain cognitive frames make us blind to the fact that we are confronting an ethical problem at all.” According to Tenbrunsel, “the business frame cognitively activates one set of goals—to be competent, to be successful; the ethics frame triggers other goals—to be fair and not hurt others.”

¹ Adapted from the RADICAL model described in the Annals of Family Medicine Journal Club.
<http://www.annfammed.org/site/AJC/>

- Through what types of frames might decisions at your facility be made?
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which you believe someone was making a decision through a business frame rather than an ethical frame? How might the framing in this situation have changed the outcome?

Question 2: “We Lie Because We Care”

Chapter 5 of the print transcript begins by noting the common assumption that people commit fraud because they have a financial incentive to do so. Some psychologists and economists, however, are interested in another possible explanation: we commit fraud because we *like* each other. “We like to help each other, especially people we identify with. And when we are helping people, we really don’t see what we are doing as unethical.” In Toby’s story, his staff and professional colleagues faced a decision in which “future abstract consequences” competed with helping “the very real person in front of them.”

- Can you think of a situation in which empathy or a desire to help someone you identify with may inhibit your ability to make decisions through an ethical frame?
- Have you ever been in a position where you had to weigh abstract future consequences against helping someone who was right there in front of you? What were the consequences?

Question 3: Solutions

At the conclusion of this article, the authors say, “If we are all capable of behaving profoundly unethically without realizing it, then our workplaces and regulations are poorly organized...They don’t attempt to structure things around our weaknesses.” In the printed transcript, they end with two concrete proposals to support ethical framing (the audio version includes only the first proposal): 1) force businesses to change auditors every couple of years to eliminate the possibility of business-auditor relationships that can corrupt audits, and 2) place a sentence at the beginning of business contracts which explicitly states that lying on the contract is unethical and illegal.

- Can you think of anything your setting/service line/facility could do locally to support using an ethical frame for decision making?
- How about the larger organization, such as in this facility or across our region?

Use What You Have Learned

Apply your learning from the discussion to improving your own ethical practices in health care. Examine your own professional, patient, and personal relationships in your unit/facility in the light of Toby’s story. Are there actual or potential situations similar to his that you are aware of? Note that Toby’s path to major fraud started with one decision to lie. Have you or a colleague ever been faced with such a decision?

Encouraging Staff to *Talk About Ethics*

One way to foster an ethical environment and culture is to make it clear that *ethics matters*. A simple way to express this idea is to do and say things that demonstrate how much you care about ethics. The *Talk About Ethics* tool is designed to make this easier, by suggesting some simple phrases that can be incorporated into daily work. It can be used by all employees to communicate the message that ethics matters in the organization.

Talk About Ethics can be found on the page following this section, or at:
http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/EL_Talk_About_Ethics_20120412.pdf

This tool can be used in several ways during educational fairs or group staff events, such as National Compliance and Ethics Week. Examples are below.

Option 1: Email *Talk About Ethics* to all staff in your facility. Challenge them to complete the activity and discuss it with their supervisor and co-workers at their next staff meeting.

Option 2: Email *Talk About Ethics* to all staff in your facility. Challenge them to complete the activity and return the completed form to the IEPO. Those who submit the form can be entered into a drawing for a small incentive (e.g., an invitation to the next IE Council Meeting).

If you offer a small incentive, be sure it meets incentive guidelines.

Sample email text for Option 1:

Colleagues,

In celebration of National Compliance and Ethics week, the IntegratedEthics™ team at [facility] invites you to foster an ethical environment and culture in your service area by making it clear that ethics is something that matters. One easy way to do this is to incorporate talking about ethics into your daily work. The attached *Talk About Ethics* activity can help you do so.

Staff Challenge: Complete the attached *Talk About Ethics* worksheet and bring it to your next staff meeting. Discuss with your supervisor and co-workers the ways you talked about ethics in your daily work.

We hope that this material inspires you to talk about ethics and encourage others to do the same.

Sample email text for Option 2:

Colleagues,

In celebration of National Compliance and Ethics week, the IntegratedEthics™ team at [facility] invites you to foster an ethical environment and culture in your service area by making it clear that ethics is something that matters. One easy way to do this is to incorporate talking about ethics into your daily work. The attached *Talk About Ethics* activity can help you do so.

Staff Challenge: Complete the attached *Talk About Ethics* worksheet and turn it in to [point of contact/email/room number]. Everyone who returns the completed worksheet will be entered into a drawing for [incentive].

We hope that this material inspires you to talk about ethics and encourage others to do the same.

Option 3: Create a lobby display.

Write the phrases from *Talk About Ethics* on a poster board and display the board in a central area, accompanied by the following:

In celebration of National Compliance and Ethics week, the IntegratedEthics™ team at [facility] invites you to foster an ethical environment and culture in your service area by making it clear that ethics is something that matters. One easy way to do this is to talk about ethics into your daily work, and here are some suggestions to get started.

Ancillary exercises:

- Print out copies of *Talk About Ethics* and provide them to staff who visit the display.
- Invite staff who take a copy of the *Talk About Ethics* handout to participate in Option 2, above.

Option 4: Organize a facility scavenger hunt.

On card stock, print five individual statements of your choice from the *Talk About Ethics* worksheet, and post them in well-traveled areas of the facility. Each day of Compliance and Ethics Week, send an email to all facility staff informing them of the scavenger hunt and giving a clue to the location of the *Talk About Ethics* statement of the day. Inform them that individuals who correctly identify the exact location of the statement of the day will be entered into a drawing for a small incentive (e.g., invitation to the next IE Council meeting). If you offer a small incentive, be sure it meets incentive guidelines.

Sample email text for Option 4, to be sent each day of the week with a new *Talk About Ethics* statement:

Colleagues,

In celebration of National Compliance and Ethics week, the IntegratedEthics™ team at [facility] invites you to foster an ethical environment and culture in your service area by making it clear that ethics is something that matters. One easy way to do this is to incorporate talking about ethics into your daily work. To make that easier, each day this week we will provide some statements you can use to get the message across that ETHICS MATTERS!

Talk About Ethics Scavenger Hunt:

Hidden all around the facility are 4-by-6- inch cards that contain statements you can incorporate into your daily work to demonstrate you care about ethics. Staff members who identify the location of the *Talk About Ethics* statement of the day will be entered into a drawing for [small incentive]. Email the location to [IE staff managing the activity.]

[Monday's] *Talk About Ethics* statement of the day:

["If it's the right thing to do, we'll just have to figure out a way to do it."]

Clue to location:

[Example: It's within sight of the Information Desk in the main lobby.]

Have fun! And talk about ethics!

IntegratedEthics

Talk About Ethics

One of the ways to foster an ethical environment and culture is to make it clear that ethics is something that matters. A simple way to express this is to make it a point to do and say things that demonstrate you care about ethics.

Using the table below, challenge yourself to incorporate several of the phrases into your daily work. Jot down the date you used each phrase followed by a short description of the context, reactions, and the outcome of using the phrase. After completing the table, share the results with your colleagues by discussing it at lunch, or bringing it up at a meeting. You can start the discussion with questions like, "What phrases do you use to talk about ethics?" and "What has worked well for you?"

Phrase	Date(s)	Description
"I see ethics as a priority."		
"If it's the right thing to do, we'll just have to figure out a way to do it."		
"Here's a story that illustrates how important ethics can be."		
"We have an obligation to do the best we can for our patients."		
"Everyone deserves to be treated with respect."		
"How can we balance these competing values?"		
"If you have any ethical concerns about this I encourage you to speak up."		

Increasing Awareness of Ethics Consultation Availability Among Patients and Families

An IntegratedEthics™ Tool for National Compliance and Ethics Week

Scope/Purpose:

Patients and families often face ethical concerns when value conflicts arise during the care of a patient. An ethics program must have an effective mechanism for responding to these concerns. By providing a forum for discussion and methods for careful analysis, effective ethics consultation (EC) promotes health care practices consistent with high ethical standards.

In 2012, only 48 percent of VA IE programs reported that patients and families receive written information about access to EC. National Compliance and Ethics Week is an opportunity to improve patient and family awareness of the availability of EC as a service for responding to ethical concerns.

Goal:

Patients and families will understand how to obtain an ethics consultation and what services the consultation can provide.

Suggestions:

Work with facility administration to:

- Keep EC flyers and brochures stocked in every patient waiting area
 - flyers available at <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ieposters.asp>
 - brochures available at http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/20121121_fillable_ec_brochure.pdf
- Provide an EC flyer or brochure to every Veteran who enrolls for care
- Provide an EC flyer or brochure to every patient admitted for care to the inpatient service and Community Living Center

- Incorporate EC flyer or brochure content into:
 - patient handbook
 - house officers' handbook
- Make EC flyer or brochure available through facility intranet/internet
- Regularly place an “ad” that promotes EC in newsletters that patients and families will read
- Ensure that EC posters (large versions of the EC flyer) are hung in patient common areas
- Provide EC flyers or brochures to the Patient Advocate's Office for distribution as applicable

We encourage you to make these practices sustainable by building processes and procedures that are likely to endure after the educational event.