

IntegratedEthics™ (IE) Journal Activity

Leader Guide

Managing for Organizational Integrity, by Lynn Sharp Paine
Sharp Paine, Lynn. 1994. *Harvard Business Review* (March-April). Cambridge: Harvard Business School Publishing, Reprint 94207.

Overview

This journal activity provides a venue for reflection, discussion, and inquiry about the practice of ethical leadership in your organization. While reading “Managing for Organizational Integrity,” by Lynn Sharp Paine, participants should consider how the author’s observations fit with their own opinions and beliefs about ethical behavior at work, and reflect on the key questions given in the participant handout. 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.

IE Journal Activity Format

Journal Discussions typically take 45-60 minutes, and are suitable for “lunch and learn” settings or other short venues.

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.

¹ Adapted from the RADICAL model described in the *Annals of Family Medicine Journal Discussion*.
<http://www.annrammed.org/AJC/>

In preparation for leading a Journal Discussion, the leader should follow the first two steps of RADIUS like any participant, reading the article critically and asking him/herself the key questions (at the end of this Leader's Guide). The discussion leader should also be committed to following up—and supporting participants in following up—on the last three steps.

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

Objectives for the Journal Discussion

- Provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their own thinking and behavior with regard to ethical practice in their work.
- Familiarize staff with resources available to them in their local IE program.
- Foster collaborative discussion among staff to improve the ethical environment and culture in your facility.

Logistics

Choosing a Discussion Leader

The ideal person to lead the Journal Discussion is a high profile leader, such as the Facility Director, for whom this would be an opportunity to showcase his/her role as Ethical Leadership Coordinator. If no high-profile leader is available, the IE Program Officer is a good choice, or another leader in the facility who is known to be an excellent facilitator.

Confirm the discussion leader as soon as you start planning to hold the journal activity, and book a meeting with him/her to discuss the agenda and logistics. (See Role of the Discussion Leader, below.)

Participants

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

Preparation for the Journal Discussion

At least two weeks before the meeting:

1. Work with your local library to get a copy of the article. Your local library resources can assist you to determine the best way for staff to access the article while following copyright permission requirements. Ensure that staff can easily access the participant handout for the meeting.
2. Reserve a meeting space.

Note: if you plan on addressing the supplementary question (no.4, on last page of this Guide), get a room with a whiteboard or obtain a flipchart easel.

3. Announce the event and make sure all in the facility are aware of it.
4. Choose a Journal Discussion leader and plan a time to prepare him/her to lead the discussion.

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 handout and bring to the meeting.

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

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 three journal activity objectives.

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.

The leader should also bear the RADIUS structure in mind. The ultimate goal of the Journal Discussion is to encourage participants to take action, i.e., to **Inquire** into program resources, **Use** learning, and **Sustain collaboration** with others in ethical practice in the facility or VISN.

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 IE program staff can jot down the order in which hands go up.

Timing

The leader and IE program staff should decide in advance whether or not to include the supplementary question in the discussion. The time allotted for discussion of each question depends on that decision, and on how long the session will last. (Of course, if the discussion moves rapidly through the first three questions, the supplementary question can always be included. See below for treatment of the question.)

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 delegate timekeeping responsibilities to the IE program staff in the room, or ask for a volunteer timekeeper from the participant group.

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

Questions about IE Program

When a need for more information about the IE program at the facility comes up in discussion, the 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 leader should ask the IE program staff to make a note of the question and respond to it later.

Participant Suggestions for Improving the IE Program

The IE program staff attending the meeting will note down any suggestions, along with the names of people who show an interest in following up on them. The notes will be reviewed with the group at the end of the session.

Treatment of (Supplementary) Question 4: “Hallmarks of an Effective Integrity Strategy”

The fourth question is optional, but the discussion leader and IE program staff should be prepared to handle it, whether or not it ends up being addressed in the meeting.

Before the meeting begins, IE program staff should draw the Hallmarks chart (p. 9) on the whiteboard or chart paper, and hide the drawing in some way.

When addressing the supplementary question in the meeting, the leader asks for a show of hands on each question, starting with “best” and following with “worst.” IE program staff puts the number of hands in the appropriate cells on the chart. (After the tally has been made, IE program staff records the completed chart in his/her notes.)

The leader gives the group a moment to study the results, and then asks participants how they chose “best” and “worst.” For “worst” rankings, the leader may ask the group how the facility could improve its ethical environment and culture to meet the hallmarks.

Time permitting, the leader may end the discussion with the summary question, “What does this chart suggest about organizational integrity in our facility?”

Summary of IE Staff Role at Journal Meeting

- Give participant handouts to those who need them.
- Act as timekeeper, if leader has delegated that task.
- Track who speaks next, if leader has delegated that task.
- Take notes on questions, comments, suggestions that require further action. (Follow up on these after the meeting.)
- Reproduce the Hallmarks chart (p.9) on a whiteboard or chart paper. Fill in the numbers on the chart when the discussion leader asks for a show of hands for “best” and “worst” participant rankings. Copy the completed chart in the notes for presentation to the facility's IE Council.
- Take note on how many participants indicate an interest in attending another Journal Discussion and any suggestions made about improving the activity.

Leading the Journal Discussion

1. Introduce the session.

(5 mins)

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 role at the session 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 the facility, and to follow up on ethics concerns shared during the discussion.

2. Discuss key questions.

(about 40-50 mins)

For each key question:

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?”

If the group wishes to continue talking about the question, ask where the time will come from. Do participants wish to reduce the time spent on remaining questions or perhaps eliminate a question altogether?

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

3. Conclude the session.

(5 mins)

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 in the organization, 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.)

Second Half of Radius Model

Remind participants (and yourself): the second half of the RADIUS model focuses on action. Pledge your support for staff action in areas below.

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.

Follow-up on Questions, Comments, Suggestions

If participants have made suggestions about improving ethical practice at the facility, ask the IE program staff in the room to read out the suggestions (from their notes).

Close

Thank participants for a good discussion (and good suggestions, if any).

Ask who would like to attend another Journal Discussion meeting, and how the meeting structure might be improved, if at all.

Key Questions

Question 1: “Organizational ethics has everything to do with management.”

Sharp Paine begins by debunking the idea that organizational ethics is “a question of personal scruples, a confidential matter between individuals and their consciences...In fact,” she says, “[organizational] ethics has everything to do with management... Managers must acknowledge their role in shaping organizational ethics and seize this opportunity to create a climate that... fosters exemplary behavior.” (p. 106)

- In addressing ethical concerns at work, how much are we influenced by our own “personal scruples” and how much by the organizational culture around us?
- Have we observed managers “seizing opportunities” to create a climate that fosters an ethical environment and culture? What did they do?

Note to discussion leader: To get the discussion going on the second bullet, you may need to start with a negative example or two. You might say something like, “It can be easier to identify negative models than positive ones. Have we seen a manager’s behavior damage the organizational climate we need to create an ethical culture? What did the manager do?”

After a participant has described a negative instance, ask the group if they can think of a contrasting instance when a manager’s behavior in a similar situation had a positive effect on the climate.

Here are some more models, taken from the Ethical Leadership Primer, that may be useful in stimulating discussion.

Negative models

A manager dismisses ethical considerations with statements like these:

“I don’t have any control here. Someone higher up wants results ASAP.”

“All that really matters is the bottom line.”

“What are the chances anyone will find out?”

“You’re naive—everyone does it.”

A manager’s unprofessional behavior, such as displays of anger and aggression, discourages open discussion of difficult issues.

Positive models

A manager regularly talks with staff about ethics and values as part of addressing work issues and decisions.

A manager ensures that staff members are informed about the facility’s ethics program—through requiring Integrated Ethics training for staff, inviting IE program staff and leaders to speak at staff meetings, etc.

A manager exhibits courage in acting on his/her values even when it is difficult, risky, or costly to do so.

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

Question 2: Integrity Strategies

Sharp Paine writes, “Though integrity strategies may vary in design and scope, all strive to define companies’ guiding values, aspirations, and patterns of thought and conduct. When integrated into the day-to-day operations of an organization, such strategies can help to prevent damaging ethical lapses while tapping into powerful human impulses for moral thought and action” (p. 107).

- Do we see our facility as having an integrity strategy that defines employees’ guiding values, aspirations, and patterns of thought and conduct? Is the strategy apparent? How does it impact our day-to-day operations?

Integrity strategies are implemented across the organization through the Compliance and Business Integrity Program and the Ethical Leadership component of IntegratedEthics (IE). How well we apply these programs locally, however, is up to us. The breadth and depth of the two programs varies from facility to facility.

- What would we expect to see in our facility as a result of a fully-implemented integrity strategy? What would be different?

Note to discussion leader: The question above could provide an opportunity to talk about ethical leadership initiatives that have been previously rolled out in the facility. Ask if—and how—participants have heard of these initiatives. Ask how the IE program might be improved, or done differently.

Question 3: Ethical Values as a Driving and Unifying Force

Sharp Paine writes, “An integrity strategy is characterized by a conception of ethics as a driving force of an enterprise. Ethical values shape the search for opportunities, the design of organizational systems, and the decision-making process used by individuals and groups. They provide a common frame of reference and serve as a unifying force across different functions, lines of business, and employee groups. Organizational ethics helps define what a company is and what it stands for.” (p. 111)

- How do we, as employees, know what our organization stands for?
- How does our organization ensure that its ethical values “shape the search for opportunities, the design of organizational systems, and the decision-making process used by individuals and groups?” Where are we taking the initiative to make ethics a “driving force?” Where do we lag behind?

IE Journal Activity - Guide for Discussion Leaders

(Supplementary) Question 4: Hallmarks of an Effective Integrity Strategy

Re-read the section entitled “Hallmarks of an Effective Integrity Strategy” (p. 112) to make sure you understand the characteristics of each hallmark. Then, based on your experience and knowledge of the organization, designate one hallmark “best,” i.e., most fully incorporated in the culture of your facility, and one other hallmark “worst,” i.e., least incorporated in the culture of your facility.

Hallmarks of an Effective Integrity Strategy	Best Choose one of the five hallmarks below	Worst Choose one of the five hallmarks below
1. <i>The guiding values and commitments make sense and are clearly communicated.</i>		
2. <i>Company leaders are personally committed, creditable, and willing to take action on the values they espouse.</i>		
3. <i>The espoused values are integrated into the normal channels of management decision-making and are reflected in the organization’s critical activities.</i>		
4. <i>The company’s systems and structures support and reinforce its values.</i>		
5. <i>Managers throughout the company have the decision-making skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to make ethically sound decisions on a day-to-day basis.</i>		

- Which hallmark got your “best” rating? Which hallmark got your “worst” rating? Why did you rank the hallmarks as you did?
- How could your facility improve its “worst” rating?

Note to discussion leader: See p. 4 in this Guide for Treatment of (Supplementary) Question 4.