



Planning a VISN-wide IntegratedEthics™ (IE) Training Program: A Guide for the VISN IE Point of Contact

Introduction:

The National Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC) now has several years of experience working with field staff in developing VISN-wide IntegratedEthics™ training programs. We encourage such efforts as they not only further the development of IE programs, but also promote VISN-wide communications and networking. To make most efficient use of NCEHC staff time and to ensure appropriate stewardship of training resources, NCEHC will only support trainings that are sponsored at the VISN level and which reflect consideration of training needs across the VISN. We would also like to highlight successful alternative mechanisms to deliver cost-effective training – such as videoconference and LiveMeeting. Additionally, because not all IE program needs can be best met through training, facilities and VISNs should consider other mechanisms as well. We hope this training guide will help your VISN think creatively about how to develop a VISN-wide IE training, especially within a restricted resource environment.

All inquiries or requests for support should be submitted to Basil Rowland, IE Manager of Field Operations, basil.rowland@va.gov.

Section I: Pre–Work

- **Establish a VISN IE Training Program Planning Team:** We suggest that VISN-wide IE planning begin with VISN IE Advisory Board (IEAB) approval and support. We also recommend that you set up a planning team that includes, at a minimum, the VISN IE Point of Contact (POC), facility IE Program Officers (IEPOs), Ethics Consultation Coordinator (ECC) and Preventive Ethics Coordinator (PEC) subject matter experts, and one facility or VISN-level Designated Learning Officer. Please invite the NCEHC IE Team to participate in one of your initial meetings to discuss project steps, timeline, and NCEHC involvement throughout the process.
- **Conduct a VISN-wide Needs Assessment:** **Appendix A** outlines recommended steps to conduct a VISN-wide needs assessment. **Appendix B** contains specific needs assessment tools to target each IE core function. As your planning team approaches the needs assessment process, we can help to answer questions and support you as needed.

Section II: VISN Level Planning Steps

1. **Determine VISN Level Training Approach, Goals, Objectives and Methods of Delivery:** The VISN planning team should collect and review needs assessment results for common themes, list and prioritize training goals, and agree on what elements would best be addressed by a VISN-wide approach. [A Quick Guide to Creating Learning Objectives](#) and additional references are available in **Appendix D** to assist you with developing specific learning objectives for each identified goal. For identified local training needs that do not require a VISN-wide approach, encourage facilities to consider whether group training is the best solution or whether other approaches are indicated (e.g., including requirements in IE staff performance plans or using

existing training tools such as EC and PE Beyond the Basics modules, Improvement Forum Call content, and other IE materials to respond to performance gaps). Because considerable IE field expertise has been developed, local ethics experts in your VISN should be tapped to support training needs and to encourage development of local resources. Potential sources of expertise include VA/University of Chicago Ethics Consultation Fellows, Preventive Ethics advisors, and individuals who have participated in NCEHC details. NCEHC staff can be invited to help out in areas that require additional support.

Based on the scope of training identified, the VISN planning team will need to consider the following:

- Number of participants
 - Venue (VHA training facility, private conference facilities, or virtual format)
 - Availability of local VHA or non-VHA instructors
 - Length of training
 - Method of delivery
 - Employee Education System (EES) involvement for accreditation and training evaluation
 - Local funding availability and support
2. **Develop a Timeline:** The VISN planning team should develop a realistic and detailed timeline with a target date for training. Typically, a well-planned VISN-wide training effort will take at least six months from start to finish (includes time for needs assessment).
 3. **Develop Training Session Content and Agenda:** The NCEHC IE Team is able to assist with curriculum and agenda development. Based on needs assessment findings and identified goals and learning objectives from the above steps, the NCEHC IE Team can provide guidance on training session development and arrange for virtual or in-person instruction by the Team's subject matter experts. It is generally beneficial to develop and promote ethics expertise among your own IE staff. Previously used NCEHC training sessions and other materials are available for use by your locally selected instructors. **Note:** See **Appendix C** for a listing of currently available NCEHC training sessions. We are continually updating these offerings, but this list contains past offerings that we have found to be effective for meeting VISN-wide training needs. Additional trainings can be developed based on needs assessments and in consultation with NCEHC staff.
 4. **Finalize and Execute Training Plan:** NCEHC staff will provide guidance and support as appropriate and, when directly involved in content delivery, will forward required materials. Funding for travel, lodging, and per diem for NCEHC IE team staff must be determined through discussion with NCEHC. NCEHC may be able to cover travel costs for NCEHC staff, but funds availability will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If travel is required, scheduling should be finalized a minimum of three months in advance. EES coordination, training location, course materials, announcements or other communication to workshop participants, and all site logistics will be the responsibility of the VISN planning team.
 5. **Training Feedback and Evaluation:** Feedback and evaluation, whether formal or informal, are essential. The NCEHC recommends use of evaluation tools to solicit feedback on instructional content and delivery, and can assist with development of these materials.

APPENDIX A: Conducting Your Needs Assessment

A training needs assessment is the process of identifying the "gap" between current and preferred performance. An effective assessment will help direct resources to areas of greatest demand. The assessment should address resources needed to fulfill organizational mission, improve productivity, and provide quality products and services. When gaps exist, the assessment explores the causes and reasons for the gaps and methods for closing or eliminating them. A complete needs assessment also considers the consequences for ignoring the gaps. The results of the assessment allow the VISN planning team to identify which IE staff or program areas need training most. Sometimes face-to-face or virtual training is not the best solution, and it is rarely the **only** solution. Some performance gaps can be reduced or eliminated through other management solutions, such as communicating expectations, providing a supportive work environment, and checking job fit. We recommend that the VISN planning team ensure that each **facility** perform the following three steps.

Facility Level Needs Assessment:

- I. **Perform a Gap Analysis:** Identify gaps between current and preferred performance in IE program structures and processes. Draw specific conclusions about performance gaps identified by each data source as well as interpretations about the overall IE program.
 - **Gather data:** The following IE tools should be considered:
 - **Facility Workbook:** IEPOs and IE function coordinators should review completed facility workbooks for IE program performance gaps. Facilities may find it helpful to review the free response questions (1B, 2B, 3B and 4B) for identified ethics quality gaps and improvement strategies.
 - **EL Questions Tool:** IEPOs should, with input from facility IE Council members, review the questions within this tool to identify opportunities for improvement.
 - **IE Function Needs Assessments:** Circulate the EC, PE, and EL needs assessments to facility IE staff. **Appendix B** contains these function-specific needs assessments that are based on function specific tools. If a VISN-wide function-specific training is under consideration, a deeper analysis and identification of strengths and weaknesses of individual IE functions should be conducted as follows:
 - EC Service:** ECWeb reports, Ethics Consultation Service Proficiency Assessment Tool, Selected ECWeb Consult Records, and EC questions of the IntegratedEthics Staff Survey (IESS)
 - PE Function:** PE Storyboards completed in the last 12 months
 - EL Function:** EL actions implemented in the last 12 months
- II. **Prioritize Gaps:**
 - IE Councils should identify top needs and determine their relative importance and urgency as related to overall IE program needs and organizational goals.
 - Consider contributing factors, including why critical systems and processes are lacking as well as possible ways to improve performance.
 - Consider what has already been done to address existing performance gaps.

III. Identify Training vs. Non-training Solutions

- Consider previously completed training for addressing existing performance gaps.
- If training is the best solution, determine desired training and development approaches, i.e., self-directed individual or group training.

APPENDIX B: Function-specific Needs Assessments

I. Ethics Consultation (EC) Needs Assessment

EC Team members should complete the Ethics Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool:

The purpose of this tool is to help consultants assess their proficiency in the skills and knowledge required to provide competent health care ethics consultation. Follow the link to locate this tool:
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ECtools.asp>

What else could we do to assist in your development?

Is there any other feedback you wish to provide to further assist us in helping you to meet your goals for the development of your IE program?

Thanks for providing us with feedback to continue to build this program to meet your needs.

II. Preventive Ethics (PE) Needs Assessment

PE Team members should respond to this set of questions which focuses on the ISSUES Approach:

This first set of questions focus on Identifying the Issue:

1. **How comfortable are you with identifying ethics issues that can be addressed through PE (i.e., ethics quality improvement approaches)?**

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

2. **How comfortable are you with clarifying each issue by listing a preliminary improvement goal/aim statement?**

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

3. **PE is a limited resource. How comfortable are you with prioritizing ethics issues and selecting those most appropriate for PE cycles?**

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

This next set of questions will focus on Studying the Issue.

4. **How comfortable are you with flow diagramming your processes?**

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

5. **How comfortable are you with describing the ethics quality gap?**

Not At All Comfortable

- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

6. How comfortable are you with gathering data about strong or best ethics practices?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

7. How comfortable are you in assessing when you should contact the Ethics Consultation Service to help you describe strong or best ethics practice?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

8. How comfortable are you with gathering measurable data on current practice (i.e., baseline data)?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

9. How comfortable are you with refining your preliminary improvement goal to make it measurable?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

This next set of questions will focus on Selecting the Strategy.

10. How comfortable are you with identifying the major causes of the ethics quality gap?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

11. How comfortable are you with determining possible strategies (i.e., changes you can make in systems or processes) to narrow the gap?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

12. How comfortable are you with selecting a strategy or strategies most likely to address the ethics quality gap?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

13. How comfortable are you identifying strategies other than education or policy to bring about change?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

This next set of questions will focus on undertaking a Plan.

14. How comfortable are you with designing a test to see if your strategy to narrow the ethics quality gap is effective?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

15. How comfortable are you with developing measures to assess whether your strategy worked (i.e., improvement goal achieved)?

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

What else could we do to assist in your development?

Is there any other feedback you wish to provide to further assist us in helping you to meet your goals for the development of your IE program?

Thanks for providing us with feedback to continue to build this program to meet your needs.

III. Ethical Leadership (EL) Needs Assessment

IE Council Members should decide which facility leaders should respond to this set of questions which focuses on the Ethical Leadership Compass:

1. How comfortable are you with DEMONSTRATING THAT ETHICS IS A PRIORITY by:

- a. Talking about ethics
- b. Proving that ethics matters to you
- c. Encouraging discussion of ethical concerns

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

2. How comfortable are you with COMMUNICATING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE by:

- a. Recognizing when expectations need to be clarified
- b. Being explicit, giving examples, explaining the underlying values
- c. Anticipating barriers to meeting your expectations

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

3. How comfortable are you with PRACTICING ETHICAL DECISION MAKING by:

- a. Identifying decisions that raise ethical concerns
- b. Addressing ethical decisions systematically
- c. Explaining your decisions

Not At All Comfortable
 Not Very Comfortable
 Moderately Comfortable
 Very Comfortable
 Don't know

Comments:

4. How comfortable are you with SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL ETHICS PROGRAM by:

- a. Knowing what your ethics program is and what it does
- b. Championing the program
- c. Supporting participation by others

- Not At All Comfortable
- Not Very Comfortable
- Moderately Comfortable
- Very Comfortable
- Don't know

Comments:

What else could we do to assist in your development?

Is there any other feedback you wish to provide to further assist us in helping you to meet your goals for the development of your IE program?

Thanks for providing us with feedback to continue to build this program to meet your needs.

APPENDIX C: Currently Available NCEHC Training Sessions

We are continually updating our offerings, but here is a listing of sessions we have conducted and found effective for meeting learning goals. Additional sessions can be developed based on current needs assessments and in consultation with NCEHC staff.

Overall IE Program Training Sessions

IE State of the State (60 minutes)*

Goal: This training session provides an overview of IntegratedEthics™ across VHA and your VISN based on current data. It also suggests ways that IE program managers and IE councils can assess IE program needs and opportunities.

Learning Objectives

- Describe examples of recent national IE program success
- Understand the overall benefit of IE program for VHA
- Describe background and progression of IE performance measures within the context of IE program improvement
- Reference VISN specific data review of strengths and opportunities
- Describe current VISN IE function-specific opportunities for improvement identified through analysis of data tools
- Describe tools that can assist ELCs assess and improve their IE programs

IEPO/Council Training Sessions

Enhancing the IE Council (90 minutes)*

Goal: This training session provides an overview of the IE Council's role and responsibilities--its goals, function, and structure. It also takes a close look at how the Council operates as a pivotal integrating mechanism to ensure that ethics concerns from every area in the facility are raised and appropriately addressed. Participants will learn about some of the common pitfalls that can obstruct the Council's peak performance, as well as some strategies for success from IE Councils that have been identified as strong performers. Finally, participants will learn about an assessment tool that can help improve overall IE Council functioning.

Learning Objectives

- Describe four barriers to ethical practice in VHA prior to IE implementation
- Describe two levels of IE integration
- Understand IE Council responsibilities
- Name five IE Council agenda items and five follow-up actions
- Name three IE Council challenges and three strategies for success
- Describe the purpose and use of the IE Council Self-Assessment tool

Using the Facility Workbook to Improve Your IE Program (60 minutes)*

Goal: This training session looks at ways to evaluate and continuously improve a facility's IE program using the Facility Workbook. Program managers will be taught how to analyze workbook data; compare a program's current structure, processes, and systems to best practices; identify, review, and prioritize gaps; and select and implement specific actions for improvement.

Learning Objectives

- Describe two approaches to analyze Facility Workbook data
- Compare IE program structures, processes, and systems to best practices
- Identify, review, and prioritize performance gaps
- Select and implement specific actions for IE function and overall IE program improvement

Ethics Consultation Service Training Sessions (60 minutes each)*

Session 1: Clarify the Values Uncertainties or Conflicts Giving Rise to the Ethics Consultation Request

Learning Objectives

- Identify the values in a given ethics consultation request
- Translate these values in a practical and understandable manner
- Discuss and practice tools and techniques that will clarify these values so that the consultation can be focused on resolving or clarifying the identified values uncertainty or conflict

Pre-work: None

Session 2: Entering Consult Data in ECWeb

Learning Objectives

- Understand the correct use of the different fields in ECWeb
- Gain greater familiarity with using ECWeb for generating ethics consultation health record notes

Pre-work: None

Session 3: Ethics Consultation Case Discussions

Learning Objective:

- Discuss local facility case and non-case consultations in order to reinforce elements of the CASES Approach

Pre-work:

- Read EC Primer
- Participants must review 1-2 consultation records they wish to discuss

Session 4: Using IntegratedEthics™ Tools to Improve Ethics Consultation Quality

Learning Objective:

- Understand how the use of qualitative and quantitative data sources (i.e., Facility Workbook, ECWeb reports) can drive quality ethics consultation practices at local facilities

Pre-work:

- ECC must review past and current fiscal year's ECWeb reports, Facility Workbook, and IESS results

Session 5: Understanding the Critical Success Factors to Run and Improve your EC Service

Learning Objective:

- Recognize and understand the essential mechanisms for an Ethics Consultation Service to function effectively

Pre-work:

- ECC must review the EC Primer section on critical success factors and assess their service's past evaluations of critical success factors.

Preventive Ethics Function Training Session (60 minutes)*

Goal: The NCEHC is able to provide hands-on working sessions involving real time review of live storyboards to support the application of quality concepts for improving ethics quality. The intent of these working sessions, which can be provided either virtually or in person, is for each team member to participate fully in the review of active PE cycles via discussion of storyboards currently under development.

Learning Objectives:

- Highlight how the projects meet specific requirements for completion of the ISSUES cycle
- Promote sharing of information throughout the VISN
- Start the development of a VISN PE team

Pre-work:

1. Storyboards (partially or fully completed) must be in MS Word format
2. Storyboards are sent to the PE advisor three days prior to the training
3. If training is virtual – Live Meeting and VANTs line are set up in advance
4. If training is in person – a projector is available, and documents are loaded onto the local server for the meeting
5. Each participant will be expected to present their current PE project
6. Each participant should actively engage in the review and discussion of each project

*** Session length is approximate**

