

Links to Online Materials of the IntegratedEthics Program, Department of Veterans Affairs

Ethical Leadership Primer: Fostering an Ethical Environment and Culture: This 60-page core IntegratedEthics document offers practical suggestions for how leaders can support ethical practices in their organizations. Targeted to VA leaders at the executive and mid-manager levels, it explains the role leaders play in creating and sustaining an ethical culture in health care organizations, critical factors for success, and specific behaviors leaders use to foster an ethical environment and culture.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/Ethical_Leadership_Fostering_an_Ethical_Environment_and_Culture_20070808.pdf)

Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool (ELSA): Designed to be used in conjunction with the Ethical Leadership Primer, the tool challenges leaders to think about their own leadership behaviors, and suggests behaviors and skills they may want to develop. In this way, it helps leaders identify areas where they are successfully modeling behaviors that foster an ethical environment and culture, and highlight opportunities for improvement.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/Ethical_Leadership_Self-Assessment_Tool-fillable_form-20070222.doc

Ethics Consultation Flyer: This flyer serves to inform health care communities, including patients, families, and staff, about the facility Ethics Consultation Service. By posing the question: "I'm just not sure...What is the right thing to do?" the flyer affirms that health care decisions can be difficult, describes how ethics consultation can help people clarify their choices, and provides contact information.

<http://www.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ecc.asp>

IntegratedEthics Definition of Ethics Quality: This one-page article briefly describes how the IntegratedEthics model defines ethics quality in health care and introduces the "IntegratedEthics iceberg" that illustrates how ethical practices cut across three levels of ethics quality.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/2013130_what_is_ethics_qual_art.pdf

National Center for Ethics in Health Care: Founded in 1991, the National Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC) supports clinical ethics, organizational ethics, and research ethics across VHA. Its multidisciplinary staff representing medicine, nursing, philosophy, law, policymaking, and other fields provides analysis and guidance on controversial ethics issues affecting patients, providers, health care managers, and health policymakers. After engaging in a rigorous consensus-building process, the NCEHC developed IntegratedEthics, which has been implemented in all of VA's 140 integrated health care facilities and 21 regional networks since 2008.

www.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics

Triage Tool for Ethics-Related Leadership Decisions: While many leadership decisions relate to ethics, only some present true ethical dilemmas, where there is uncertainty or conflict about values. This tool helps leaders determine what type of ethics-related leadership decision needs to be made and useful resources (including the Ethical Leadership Quality Check) for providing strong ethical justifications for those decisions.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/Ethical_Leadership_Triage_Tool_for_Ethics_Related_Leadership_Decisions_20121130.pdf

Decision Exercise: Triage Tool for Ethics-Related Leadership Decisions: With the help of real-life examples, leaders can practice using the Triage Tool individually or in groups to classify ethical decisions and determine the process, individual, mechanism, or service best suited to address them. An answer key providing rationales for each example is included.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/el_decision_exercise_triage_tool_qa_2013516.pdf

VA's "I CARE" Core Values: The values, Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE), apply across the entire VA organization and play a critical role to support VA's commitment to care and serve Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.

<http://www.va.gov/icare>

Ethics quality

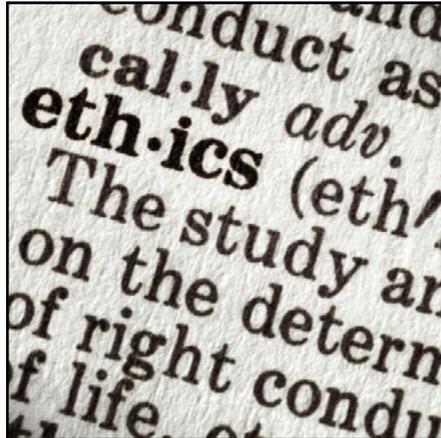
helps build healthy organizations

By Melissa M. Bottrell, MPH, Ph.D.

Chief, Integrated Ethics, National Center for Ethics in Health Care

VA is committed to excellence in health care, and quality is an essential component of that excellence. However, there are different types of quality. Technical quality (for example, a surgery that was performed well) and service quality (a patient who was satisfied with the care received) are important—but not enough. For the achievement of true excellence, ethics quality is also indispensable.

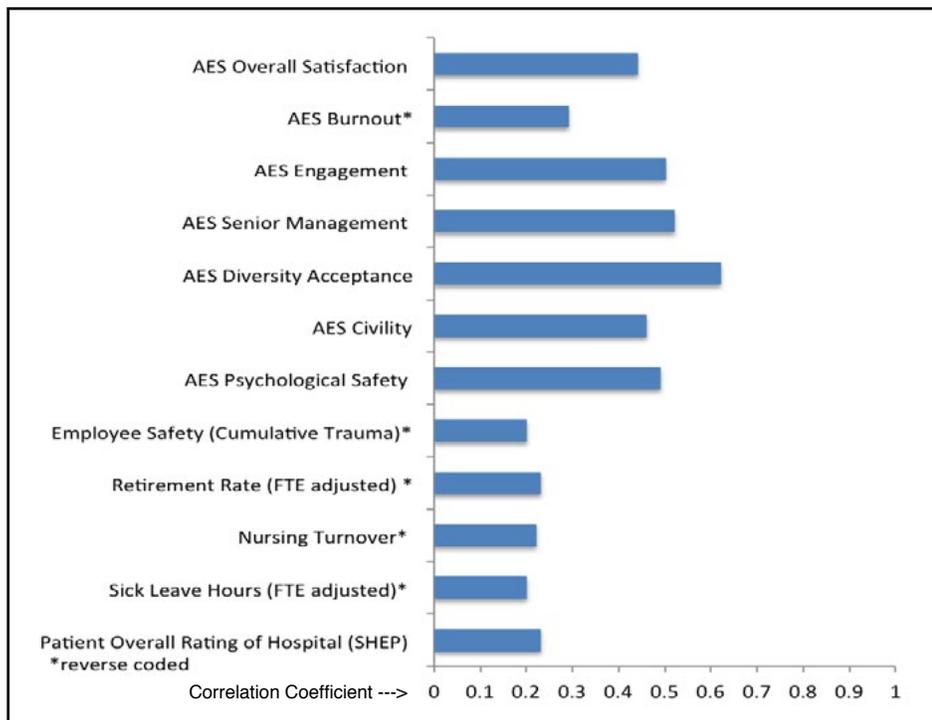
In general terms, ethics quality means that clinical and administrative practices are consistent with accepted ethics standards, norms or expectations for the conduct of a health care organization and its staff. In VA, it means that these practices align with VA's commitment to patient-centered care, which enables our patients



to make voluntary and well-informed health care choices. Ethics quality also means employees find it easier and more encouraging to “do the right thing.”

Ethics quality contributes significantly to the health of any organization, and VA is no exception. Data from the 2012 [Voice of VA Integrated Ethics Staff Survey \(IESS\)](#) (see **Graph 1**) show links between employee perceptions of their organization as ethical and indicators of patient care quality and organizational health. Notably, higher perceptions of the organization's ethical environment are correlated with better patient satisfaction on the Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP) survey, fewer sick leave hours and less nursing turnover. Positive perceptions of the ethical environment are also associated with better scores on VA's All Employee Survey (AES), including higher levels of psychological safety, greater overall satisfaction and lower levels of employee burnout.

Graph 1: Strength of Association (correlation coefficient)* between Organizational Health Factors and Overall Rating of Facility as an Ethical Organization (IESS D1).



*Correlation Coefficient is a measure of the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The bigger the bar above, the bigger the positive relationship between the items listed and survey respondents' overall rating of their organization as ethical.

Specific leadership behaviors, such as whether or not senior managers communicate that ethics is a priority; follow up on ethical concerns; and do not tolerate retaliation for reporting ethics concerns; and whether employees believe they are treated fairly, influence whether staff perceive the organization as ethical (see **Graph 2**).

Importantly, leaders may be highly ethical, but may not be perceived that way by others. Leaders who are “ethically silent,” and who do not publically and regularly demonstrate a commitment to ethics, can leave staff believing that ethics is not as important as other organizational priorities. On ethics, leaders need to lead from the top, just as they do on other VA strategic goals.

To support an organizational commitment to ethics, VHA Integrated Ethics (IE) program staff have, at regular intervals since 2008, reviewed IESS data to identify ethics quality deficits, particularly around

Continued on page 5

Ethics quality

... continued from page 4

ethical leadership practices. Using **IE tools** and local ingenuity, they undertook more than 400 quality improvement activities to foster leadership behaviors supporting an ethical environment and culture in VHA:

- Prioritizing “doing the right thing” over “getting to green” in performance goals;
- Making organizational processes (e.g., hiring committees, leadership decision-making) more equitable by reducing the influence of personal relationships; and
- Ensuring that employees feel safe and encouraged and do not fear retaliation when they bring forward potential ethical concerns

Overall, these projects seek to make it easy for all employees to take actions consistent with **VA I CARE core values**.

Leaders and supervisors throughout VA who wish to assess whether their own behaviors support an ethical environment and culture can use these IE tools:

- An informational **primer and video** explaining ethical leadership concepts

- The **Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool**, which leaders can use to assess and make action plans to improve specific ethical leadership behaviors;
- Tools to spark discussion of how **VA I CARE core values** apply in the workplace and to open the space to bring forward ethical concerns
- Quick (15 minute) activities that can be used to build ethical leadership skills
- A **checklist** to support ethical leadership improvement project design

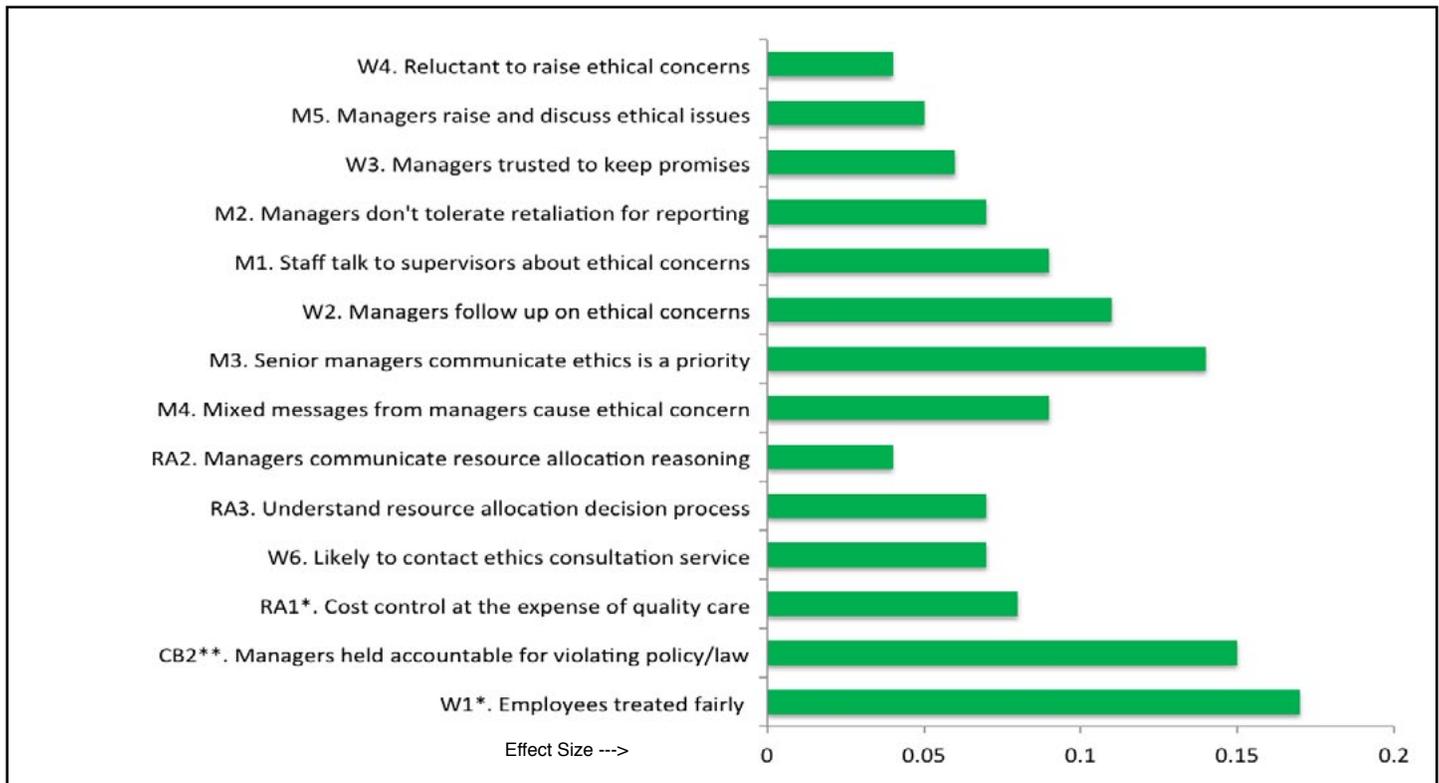
All staff can use the “**Talk about Ethics**” tool, which suggests ways staff can help bridge conversations about ethics.

To achieve ethics quality and build healthy organizations, all VA staff must bring organizational values into their work each day. In turn, leaders must model ethical leadership excellence. By creating a tone of ethical leadership at the top and empowering staff in an ethical culture to consider ethics in everyday decisions, we can achieve this goal.

The letter/number combinations, below relate to information listed in Graph 2:

1. Demonstrate that ethics is a priority
 - Talk about ethics (M3)
 - Prove that ethics matters to you (W2, W3)
 - Encourage discussion of ethical concerns (W4, M1, M2, M5)
2. Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice
 - Recognize when expectations need to be clarified (M4)
 - Be explicit, give examples, explain the underlying values
 - Anticipate barriers to meeting your expectations
3. Practice ethical decision making
 - Identify decisions that raise ethical concerns
 - Address ethical decisions systematically
 - Explain your decisions (RA2, RA3)
4. Support your local ethics program
 - Know what your program is and what it does
 - Champion the program (W6)
 - Support participation by others (W6)

Graph 2: Strength of Influence (effect size)* of Ethical Leadership Practices on Overall Rating of Facility as an Ethical Organization (IESS D1).



*Effect size provides the estimated magnitude of a relationship between a set of items and an outcome.



Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool

About this self-assessment tool

This self-assessment tool is designed to be used in conjunction with the ethical leadership video and primer, *Ethical Leadership: Fostering an Ethical Environment & Culture*. The tool will help you identify areas in which you're successfully modeling behaviors that foster an ethical environment and culture, as well as highlight opportunities for improvement. It's designed for leaders at the senior executive and mid-manager (division/department/service line manager) levels as defined in VA's High Performance Development Model (HPDM). For more information about the competencies for each level, please see the "Competency Definitions" (<http://vaww.va.gov/hpdm/pdf/corecompetencydefinitions.pdf>).

How to use the tool

This tool will challenge you to think about your own leadership behaviors. Each question suggests a behavior or skill you may wish to develop. Each leader's situation is unique—think about your local situation and whether increasing your use of the behavior or skill could improve your leadership practice and thereby your local ethical environment. *There are no right or wrong answers.* For this reason, no mechanism is provided to enable you to calculate an overall score or compare your responses to those of other leaders.

After you complete the tool

Immediately following the self-assessment questions, you'll find an action plan. Use it to identify opportunities to improve your leadership practice and local ethical environment and culture.

Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment

Please check one answer for each of the following items:

I. Demonstrate that ethics is a priority	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
I tell my staff to make ethics a priority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use examples or stories from my facility or my experience to illustrate the importance of ethics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I initiate discussions of ethical concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a typical day, I think about ethical issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I demonstrate that I am sensitive to ethical issues in my everyday work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I object when someone seems to be ignoring, avoiding, or smoothing over an important ethical issue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS
Handout 3

<i>Section I—continued</i>	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
I explicitly acknowledge staff contributions to promoting ethical practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I include specific expectations for ethical practice in staff performance plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hold my staff accountable for meeting high ethical standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In conversations with staff, I invite comments about ethical concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When staff members raise an ethical concern, I thank them for sharing the concern.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When staff members raise an ethical concern, I ask them to say more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I encourage discussion of conflicting values related to organizational decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I create opportunities for staff discussion of ethics topics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

II. Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
I make a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I clearly communicate my expectations for ethical practice to my staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I explain the values that underlie those expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I use examples that illustrate what I mean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I make sure those expectations are realistic and achievable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I make a point to address obstacles that staff might encounter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When staff members receive “mixed messages” that create ethical tensions, I take responsibility for clarifying my expectations for ethical practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I encourage staff to talk to me if they feel pressured to “bend the rules.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS
Handout 3

III. Practice ethical decision making	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
I explicitly consider ethical issues when making management decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use a standardized process to make decisions on management issues with ethical implications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When faced with a tough decision, I look to VHA mission and values statements (or similar documents) and use them to evaluate various options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When faced with a tough decision, I think through the short-term and long-term effects on various individuals and groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When faced with a tough decision, I make sure that I am not unfairly favoring a particular individual or group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I need advice on an ethical issue, I go to a person with ethics expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I need advice on an ethical issue, I refer to published sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When making important decisions, I involve those who will be most affected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When important decisions are made by a group, I ensure that someone is specifically tasked to call attention to ethical considerations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I announce important decisions to staff, I take time to explain the decision-making process and who was involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I announce important decisions to staff, I take the time to explain the rationale for the decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS
Handout 3

IV. Support your local ethics program	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
I talk to staff in my facility about how the ethics program works, including:				
- ethics consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- preventive ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- ethical leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- compliance and business integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- research compliance and assurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- government ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I receive and review updates about local ethics program activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I seek help from the local ethics program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I act to ensure that local ethics activities are adequately funded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I act to ensure that local ethics activities are adequately staffed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I inform my staff about current local ethics program activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I highlight successes in local ethics program activities for staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I encourage my staff to use the local ethics program when they have an ethical concern.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Plan

Once you have completed the self-assessment questions, complete this action plan to identify opportunities for improvement, taking into account your organizational role. To monitor your progress, repeat this exercise yearly to help you assess whether you have achieved your improvement objectives.

Steps:

1. Based on your responses, choose one action in each of the four points of the Ethical Leadership compass (section I, II, III, or IV) to focus on this year.
2. Within this area, identify several concrete steps you will take to demonstrate your ethical leadership and thereby improve your facility’s ethical environment.

Example:

Ethical Leadership Compass III. Practice ethical decision making			
Ethical Leadership Action	Current Frequency	Goal Frequency	Action Steps
I explicitly consider ethical issues when making management decisions.	Almost Never	Frequently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change format for executive decision memorandum (EDM) to include reference to ethics (e.g., just as document references financial considerations, it should reference ethical considerations). • Ask myself “Are there ethical issues in this decision?” for at least three management decisions per week for which an EDM is not used.

Ethical Leadership Compass I. Demonstrate that ethics is a priority			
Ethical Leadership Action	Current Frequency	Goal Frequency	Action Steps

Ethical Leadership Compass II. Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice			
Ethical Leadership Action	Current Frequency	Goal Frequency	Action Steps

Ethical Leadership Compass III. Practice ethical decision making			
Ethical Leadership Action	Current Frequency	Goal Frequency	Action Steps

Ethical Leadership Compass IV. Support your local ethics program			
Ethical Leadership Action	Current Frequency	Goal Frequency	Action Steps

Leadership Behaviors and the Organization's Ethical Environment Activity

The goal of the activity is to identify specific leadership behaviors that can have a positive or negative effect on the organization's ethical environment and culture, and to reinforce the fact that leaders do serve as exemplars for how ethics considerations will be incorporated into the day-to-day operations of their organizations.

Instructions

1. Think of 2 leaders within your organization—1 who models good ethical leadership practices, and 1 who models poor ethical leadership practices. This handout contains excerpts from the 4 compass points. They detail specific good ethical leadership practices emphasized in the IntegratedEthics program.
2. In the first column, place check marks next to those practices that your positive role model *has used* in the course of daily work. In the second column, place checks marks next to the practices that your negative role model *has not used*.
3. Consider which practice you would like to improve upon or develop more fully within yourself, and place a check mark in the third column next to that action behavior/characteristic.
4. Ask the person next to you, "What would you recommend that will help me hold my staff accountable for meeting high ethical standards?" (Or respond to their question with 2 or 3 specific actions.) Record your answers on the third page.
5. After a minute, switch roles, and repeat process with others as time allows.

Excerpts from the *Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool (ELSA)*

Compass Points	Leader that modeled <u>good</u> ethical leadership practices <u>used</u> these actions	Leader that modeled <u>poor</u> ethical leadership practices <u>did not use</u> these actions	I would like more practice in this area
	(Check all that apply)	(Check all that apply)	(Check one)
<i>I. Demonstrate that ethics is a priority</i>			
Use examples or stories from my facility or my experience to illustrate the importance of ethics.			
Hold staff accountable for meeting high ethical standards.			
<i>II. Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice.</i>			
Make a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practice.			
Encourage staff to talk to me if they feel pressured to “bend the rules.”			
<i>III. Practice ethical decision making</i>			
When I need advice on an ethical issue, I go to a person with ethics expertise.			
When making important decisions, involve those who will be most affected.			
<i>IV. Support your local ethics program</i>			
Seek help from the local ethics program.			
Inform staff about current local ethics program activities.			

Suggested Specific Actions to Support Achievement of Desired Leadership Behavior:

-

Person 1:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

-

Person 2:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

-

Person 3:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

-

Person 4:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Integrated Ethics Compass Point 2: Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice

LEADERSHIP EXERCISE

Introduction

The second compass point of ethical leadership is communicating clear expectations for ethical practice. To do this, it's important to:

1. **Make expectations explicit:** Specify under what specific circumstances you should do or not do something; describe the standard as simply as possible.
2. **Give examples:** Present a real-life situation listeners can identify with and imagine themselves being uncertain about the right thing to do.
3. **Explain the underlying values:** Give not just a buzzword but a real, compelling and principled explanation of why you should do this.
4. **Anticipate barriers:** At a minimum, tell people what to do if they have problems. Even better, anticipate the specific problems they might have in trying to follow this directive. Communicate that you understand what the challenges are going to be.

Instructions

1. Break into groups of 4 to 5.
2. Read the memo on the second page of this handout titled “**Safeguarding Removable Media.**”
3. Draft a script for a presentation to your staff that gives explicit expectations, offers specific examples, explains the underlying values, and anticipates/addresses barriers. *Remember: this is a script; you are not rewriting the memo.*

Department of
Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: Somemonth 12, 2007
From: VA Chief Information Officer
Subj: IT Directive 06-06, Safeguarding Removable Media
To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to protecting sensitive information, including personal data of Veterans, dependents, and employees. It is imperative that encryption protection extend to all data formats and media, including USB thumb drives. This memorandum reminds you of the vulnerabilities associated with USB thumb drives and requires you to ensure all employees, contractors, and other information systems users only use VA-approved and –encrypted USB thumb drives with VA information systems.
2. VA Director 6504, Restrictions on Transmission, Transportation and Use of, and Access to VA Data Outside VA Facilities dated June 7, 2006, requires protection for sensitive data residing outside VA facilities on electronic storage media. Paragraph 2q of this Directive states:

Data stored—Encryption. Additional security controls are required to guard VA-protected information stored on computers used outside VA facilities. If an employee uses VA government-furnished equipment or non-VA other equipment in a mobile environment (e.g., laptop or PDA) carried out of a VA office or a PC in an alternative worksite and VA-protected information is stored on the computer, file, or electronic storage media, approved encryption software must be used.

3. Therefore, to maximally protect ALL INFORMATION within VA, personal USB thumb drives may no longer be used within VA facilities. Only VA-owned and -encrypted thumb drives may be used with VA equipment. The IT staff will be altering all VA computers so that unencrypted thumb drives will no longer be compatible with VA computers. You are responsible for ensuring that your staff is aware of and complies with this memorandum. You have 60 days from the date of this memorandum to ensure 100% compliance.

Mr. Data Chief

VA Form 2105
Nov 2013



Definitions of Values

Partially excerpted from: <http://www.ethics.org/resources/definitions-of-values.asp>

Acceptance: Favorable reception or belief in something

Accomplishment: Doing or finishing something successfully

Accountability: Obligation or willingness to accept responsibility

Adaptability: The ability to modify behavior to fit changing situations

Allegiance: Loyalty or the obligation of loyalty

Altruism: Unselfish concern for the welfare of others

Appreciation: Recognizing the quality, value or significance of people and things

Aspiration: A strong or persistent desire for high achievement

Authenticity: The quality or condition of being trustworthy or genuine

Autonomy: The condition or quality of being independent

Benevolence: An inclination to perform kind, charitable acts

Camaraderie: Goodwill and lighthearted rapport between or among friends

Caring: Feeling and exhibiting concern and empathy for others

Charity: Generosity toward others or toward humanity

Citizenship: Exercising the duties rights, and privileges of being a citizen

Clear thinking: Acting intelligently without mental confusion

Collaboration: To work cooperatively especially in a joint intellectual effort

Commitment: Being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action or to another person or persons

Community: Sharing, participation, and fellowship with others

Compassion: Deep awareness of the suffering of others coupled with the wish to relieve it

Competence: The state or quality of being adequately or well qualified

Composure: Maintaining a tranquil or calm state of mind

Concern: Regard for or interest in someone or something

Confidentiality: ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access

Conscientiousness: The trait of being painstaking and careful

Consideration: Process of employing continuous, careful thought and examination

Consistency: Reliability or uniformity of successive results or events

Constancy: Steadfastness in purpose

Cooperation: The willing association and interaction of a group of people to accomplish a goal

Courage: The state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes with confidence and resolution

Courtesy: Civility; consideration for others

Credibility: The quality or power to elicit belief

Decency: Conformity to prevailing standards of propriety or modesty

Dedication: Selfless devotion of energy or time

Democracy: The principles of social equality and respect for the individual within a community

Dependability: The trait of being reliable

Diversity: A point of respect in which things differ; variety

Duty: A moral or legal obligation

Efficiency: The quality of producing an effect or result with a reasonable degree of effort to energy expended

Empathy: Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives.

Equality: The right of different groups of people to receive the same treatment

Equity/Equitable: The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair

Ethics: The way people behave based on how their beliefs about what is right and wrong influence behavior

Excellence: the state of being good to a high degree

Fairness: Consistent with rules, logic, or ethics

Faithfulness: Adhering firmly and devotedly to someone or something that elicits or demands one's fidelity

Fidelity: Faithfulness; loyalty or devotion

Forgiveness: The willingness to stop blaming or being angry with someone

Fortitude: The strength or firmness of mind that enables a person to face danger, pain or despondency with stoic resolve

Generosity: liberality in giving or willingness to give

Genuine: not spurious or counterfeit

Giving: voluntarily transferring knowledge or property without receiving value in return

Goodness: morally right, or admirable because of kind, thoughtful, or honest behavior

Goodwill: friendly attitude in which you wish that good things happen to people

Gratitude: feeling of thankfulness and appreciation

Helpfulness: the property of providing useful assistance or friendliness evidence by a kindly and helpful disposition

- Honesty:** Fairness and straightforwardness of conduct
- Honor:** Principled uprightness of character; personal integrity
- Hope:** The feeling that something desired can be had or will happen
- Humility:** Feeling that you have no special importance that makes you better than others
- Ingenuity:** Inventive skill or imagination
- Initiative:** Ability to begin or to follow through energetically with a plan or task
- Integrity:** Strict adherence to moral values and principles
- Justice:** Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude, distributing goods and treatment fairly and equitably
- Kindness:** The quality or state of being beneficent
- Liberty:** The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself in a manner of one's own choosing.
- Loyalty:** A feeling or attitude of devotion, attachment and affection.
- Mercy:** Forgiveness shown toward someone whom you have the power to punish
- Moderation:** Having neither too little nor too much of anything
- Morals:** Individual beliefs about what is right and wrong
- Nonmaleficence:** doing no intentional harm
- Obedience:** Compliance with that which is required; subjection to rightful restraint or control.
- Openness:** the free expression of one's true feelings and opinions
- Opportunity:** Favorable or advantageous circumstance or combination of circumstances
- Optimism:** A bright, hopeful view and expectation of the best possible outcome
- Patience:** The ability to accept delay, suffering, or annoyance without complaint or anger
- Perseverance:** Steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose
- Promise-keeping:** Keeping your word that that you will certainly do something
- Prudence:** Doing something right because it is the right thing to do
- Purity:** Moral goodness
- Reason:** The ability to think and make good judgments
- Recognition:** An acceptance as true or valid
- Reconciliation:** Enabling two people or groups adjust the way they think about divergent ideas or positions so they can accept both
- Reliability:** Consistent performance upon which you can depend or trust
- Repentance:** Remorse or contrition for past conduct

Resilience: The ability to rebound quickly from misfortune or change

Resourcefulness: The ability to act effectively or imaginatively, especially in difficult situations

Respect: Polite attitude shown toward someone or something that you consider important

Responsibility: That for which someone is responsible or answerable

Sacrifice: To give up something for something else considered more important

Self-control: Control of personal emotions, desires, or actions by one's own will

Self-discipline: Making yourself do things when you should, even if you do not want to do them

Sensitivity: Awareness of the needs and emotions of others

Serenity: Calmness of mind and evenness of temper

Sharing: To allow others to participate in, use, enjoy, or experience jointly or in turns

Sincerity: Genuineness, honesty, and freedom from duplicity

Sobriety: Habitual freedom from inordinate passion or overheated imagination; calmness; coolness; seriousness

Stewardship: The careful conducting, supervising, or managing of something

Supportive: Furnishing support or assistance

Thoughtfulness: The tendency to anticipate needs or wishes

Tolerance: Recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others

Transparency: openness, communication, and accountability in interpersonal and business interactions

Trust: assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something

Trustworthiness: The trait of deserving confidence

Truth-telling: telling the truth as opposed to lying

Understanding: Knowing how something works or a positive, truthful relationship between people

Values: Core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions

Virtue: Doing something right because it is the good thing to do

Wisdom: The ability to make good judgments based on what you have learned from your experience

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Values Cases

Values Case 1

A 63-year-old Veteran with a history of mental health problems requests a second vasectomy reversal. He has had trouble supporting the children from his first two marriages, but his third wife would like to have children.

Values Case 2

A 40-year-old male Veteran is seen in the outpatient clinic for a minor skin problem. During the visit, the Veteran's wife tells the nurse that she is worried because her husband is planning to seduce a friend of the family—a 16-year-old girl. She is concerned about the child and asks that the medical team report her husband to the appropriate authorities.

Instructions

1. Read Values Case 1. Taking no more than a minute, decide as a group whether or not VA should perform the vasectomy reversal.
2. Decide what values should be considered in the decision.
3. Take 7 to 8 minutes to develop, as a group, a few sentences that make an argument for the values-based position of the other position (the one the group did not select). Don't just use labels; use inspirational and compelling language.
4. Read Values Case 2, and repeat the instructions.

Quality Check

To check the quality of your ethical decision-making process, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have all the important facts relevant to the decision?
- Have I involved everyone who should be part of this decision?
- Does this decision reflect organizational, professional, and social values?
- Do the likely benefits of the decision outweigh any potential harms?
- Will this decision keep the problem from recurring or establish a good precedent?
- How would this decision look to someone outside the organization?

Integrated Ethics

TRIAGE TOOL FOR ETHICS-RELATED LEADERSHIP DECISIONS

