IntegratedEthics® Staff Activity

Voicing Your Values: Demonstrating Moral Courage

OVERVIEW

This activity will help staff recognize the importance of moral courage and give them an opportunity to practice it. During this facilitated group discussion, learners will be introduced to the key concepts of moral distress and moral courage and be given an opportunity to reflect on the importance of these concepts for themselves and the organization. Learners will be asked to role-play a scenario that demonstrates moral courage.

Audience: All employees

Facilitation: The training requires a session facilitator

Equipment:
- A meeting room configured for small group discussion
- Slides, provided to the participants as a hand-out or projected from a computer
- Printed handouts for participants
- Optional: Large envelopes or file folders are helpful to pre-package the trio of role play handouts for easier distribution

Time required: The exercise is designed to be completed in 30 or 45 minutes. In a 45-minute session, the role play can be run twice, having learners switch roles.

Learning objectives: At the end of this activity, participants will be able to do all of the following:
- Explain the concept and impact of moral distress on employees and care of Veterans
- Describe moral courage
- Recall phrases and scripts to use when expressing moral courage
- Implement strategies to display moral courage in the workplace

Training series: To create community and build psychological safety, the facilitator may wish to establish a training series in which this training is but one session conducted with the same group of employees. Additional sessions could include “Practicing Integrity and Advocacy Using 3Ws” available from the National Center for Ethics in Health Care (Handouts, Facilitator Guide, Slides).
Handout 1 – Observer Sheet

The 3W approach is used to promote better team communication and help build a culture where all members of the team feel they can raise questions about potential patient safety issues. The approach can also be used to frame and raise questions about ethics.

The 3W stands for:

1. What I see
2. What I am concerned about
3. What I want

When framing a 3W response try to use the following tips:

- Be respectful; ask permission, and use the person’s name
- State facts not motives
- Use team language (i.e., we and us)
- Be empathetic and normalize behavior (e.g., I feel the same, anyone could)
- Frame your concern in terms of values
- Be inquisitive, ask questions, gain perspective
- Invite problem solving, ask them what should be done
As you observe the role play, look for the use of these tips. Record your observations below. Following the role play, be prepared to comment about how well these techniques were or were not used.

**OBSERVATIONS**

<table>
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<th>Tip</th>
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Handout 2 – Medical Resident Role (Negative)

**Role:** You are a medical resident

**Situation:** You are with a group of other medical residents. You just finished seeing a particularly difficult patient case — a Veteran who is likely to die — and you were discussing the patient and his case with your fellow resident while riding in the elevator on your way to lunch. You became very animated discussing the case and his potential imminent death from his difficult medical circumstances. You found it fascinating and wanted to share your insights with your friends. You were careful not to mention the patient’s name so as not to disclose personal information.

**Attitude:** You are very self-confident, an exceptional clinician, and an acknowledged leader. You expect to become chief resident someday. You accept feedback from residents and physicians but you don’t appreciate it when the APN or even the RN correct your technique or practice. You are easily offended.
Role: You are a medical resident

Situation: You are with a group of other medical residents. You just finished seeing a particularly difficult patient case — a Veteran who is likely to die — and you were discussing the patient and his case with your fellow residents while riding in the elevator on your way to lunch. You became very animated discussing the case and his potential imminent death from his difficult medical circumstances. You found it fascinating and wanted to share your insights with your friends. You were careful not to mention the patient’s name so as not to disclose personal information.

Attitude: You are an exceptional clinician and an acknowledged leader. You expect to become chief resident someday. You accept feedback from residents and physicians and welcome suggestions from the nursing staff when they correct your technique or offer insights on a patient and their loved ones.
Handout 4 – Nurse Role

Role: You are a nurse

Situation: On your way to get another cup of coffee, you rode down in the elevator with a group of medical residents on an already crowded elevator. One of them was talking in a very loud and animated voice about a particular patient, the details of his case, even commenting on how long he might live. Although the resident didn’t give the patient’s name, the rest of the patient’s details were all discussed including what ward he was on! You were uncomfortable during the ride and wondered what the other folks on the elevator thought of this conversation.

Action: You decide to say something. Be sure to convey the three essential 3W points below. Also be polite, use team language, frame your concern in terms of values, normalize the behavior, and engage in problem solving.

1. **(What I see)** — I noticed you shared a lot of details about a patient when we were in the elevator together.

2. **(What I am concerned about)** — I was concerned that I was hearing medical details I shouldn’t know about.

3. **(What I want)** — Can I count on you to protect patient privacy and not discuss that kind of medical detail in a public space like an elevator in the future?

When the team is ready to begin the role play, you will begin by speaking to the clinician.