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 events such as National Compliance and Ethics Week, National Hospital Week, and National Healthcare Quality 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 [week or event], 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?