Reinforcing Ethical Practice While Communicating Performance Expectations – Part 2
An Ethical Leadership (EL) Activity

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Activity Goal:
Develop strategies to reinforce ethical practice while communicating performance expectations

Time:
8 - 15 minutes

Activity Format:
- Read script
- Ask questions
- Discuss
- Read take-home script

Leader Note:
Strive to gain participation from everyone in the group. Ask as many probing questions as needed to encourage a comprehensive discussion.

Script:
“Today we are going to continue our discussion on how to reinforce ethical practice while communicating performance expectations. You’ll recall that last time we discussed situations in which we have been asked to meet a goal that we believed to be unrealistic or unattainable, and what our options were. We also discussed ways in which we as leaders can avoid asking our staff to meet goals that are unrealistic or unattainable. Our homework assignment from last week was to come up with real-life examples – positive or negative – that illustrate these concepts.”

Questions/Discussion:
1. What examples did you come up with?
2. Based on this example, what would you have done differently, or in what way will you change your behavior in the future?
   * Leader note: Feel free to ask this question of the entire group to brainstorm solutions.

Take-Home Message Script:
“Thank you all for that thoughtful discussion. Our take-home message here is that ethics is not just about getting the right results; it’s about doing the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons. As we’ve discussed, too much focus on results can get us into trouble by leading staff to conclude that we are willing to tolerate unethical conduct. But now we all have some ethical leadership strategies we can use. I would like to continue this momentum toward improving the ethical environment and culture, and so I ask that each of you take this activity back to your own management meetings. Run this activity with your peers and subordinates, and then ask them to do the same with their own staffs. If any great ideas come from those meetings, please bring them back to share here with the larger group.”

EL Compass Point Link:
Point 2:
Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice
- Recognize when expectations need to be clarified
- Be explicit, give examples, explain the underlying values
- Anticipate barriers to meeting your expectations