IntegratedEthics® Staff Activity

Practicing Integrity and Advocacy Using “3Ws”

Lunch and Learn Skill Development Activity
In an organization with a healthy ethics environment and culture, everyone should take responsibility for recognizing and discussing questions about ethics. To embrace this responsibility is to put I CARE Values into action: holding yourself and others to the highest level of **integrity** in carrying out your duties and **advocating** on behalf of Veterans and other staff to ensure VA delivers high quality, safe, effective and ethical service that meet the needs of our patients and other stakeholders.

1. Review the following case scenarios and choose one or two that appeal to you.
2. Working on your own for **eight minutes**, draft a brief, bulleted script applying the 3W method.
3. Apply *Tips for Using the 3W Approach to Ask Questions About Ethics* to your script.
4. Be prepared to share your script and ideas during group discussion.
5. If you have time, use a second scenario to draft a second script.

**Scenario 1**

After picking up your afternoon coffee, you ride up the elevator with several medical students on a crowded elevator. They are speaking about a patient, discussing details such as how long he may live and the complications he faces. You didn’t hear them give a name, but they identified the patient’s room number and described the patient. You are uncomfortable and you wonder what the other visitors in the elevator think.

What do you do?

**Scenario 2**

You are a clerk in a busy emergency department in a large city. You see all kinds of patients come through the ER. As a Veteran with your own struggles over the years, you feel empathy for many of the patients who visit the unit. Some of the clinical staff members don’t always seem to feel the same. You have heard them make rude comments about some of the patients. Indeed, you have just heard two of them talking in disparaging tones about a homeless Veteran in need of substance use treatment.

What do you do?

**Scenario 3**

Several staff members in your unit have been asked to participate in a selection panel for a contract solicitation. You made copies and collated the packages for the review team. Your supervisor, who also supervises the other staff on the review team, asks for a copy of the material so she can keep apprised of the work all of you are involved with.

What do you do?
Scenario 4
You work in a long-term care unit. One of the Veterans is lively and engaging, despite his illness, and you have bonded over your shared military service. The Veteran knows he is very ill and asks that you “look out for him” and “don’t let those doctors go against my wishes.” You think he wrote his wishes in a living will but you aren’t sure. Is it your place to talk to the shift nurse to be sure one of the clinical staff has asked him about his wishes?
What do you do?

Scenario 5
Everyone is under pressure to clear backlogs and waiting lists. Your supervisor says that all the consults assigned to Social Work services in your unit must be cleared in three days and you have to clear them. After looking at the list and the reasons for many of the consults, you don’t think it will be possible to clear the list in three days – you need to contact many Veterans and make follow up appointments with a number of them to fulfill their requests.
What do you do?
Take several minutes to draft one or two scripts here. Use the handout *Tips for Using the 3W Approach to Ask Questions About Ethics* to prepare your script:

What I see:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What I am concerned about: _____________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What I want: ___________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Refined: _______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What I see: ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What I am concerned about: _____________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What I want: ___________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Tips for using the 3W Approach
to Ask Questions About Ethics

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 your 3W response, keep the following tips in mind:
- Be respectful. Ask permission to talk and use the person’s name.
- State facts, not motives.
- Use team language (i.e., we and us) whenever possible.
- Be empathetic and normalize the behavior (e.g., I feel the same, anyone could).
- Be clear about your concern and frame it in terms of values.
- State your confusion over how to resolve the concern you see.
- Be inquisitive. Ask questions and try to understand their perspective.
- Invite problem solving. Ask them what they think should be done.

Practice this technique in a situation where a doctor is failing to visit a dying patient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCRIPT</th>
<th>TIPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. X, may I speak to you for a minute?</td>
<td>Respectful, use of name, ask permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t see you round on Mr. Y today.</td>
<td>What you see, stated as fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were all just saying how hard it is for us to care for him when there is so little we can do.</td>
<td>Normalize behavior, use team language, empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned that we aren’t being respectful or honoring him properly when we cut short our clinical time with him.</td>
<td>What you are concerned about, use team language, frame using values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would really like the team to spend a similar amount of time with Mr. Y as we do with our other patients.</td>
<td>What you want, use team language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was hoping you might have some suggestions about how to raise the issue with the team and ensure we continue to support Mr. Y with dignity during his last days. What do you think?</td>
<td>Be inquisitive, invite problem solving</td>
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