Institutional Integrity and Organizational Ethics

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Objectives

Upon completion of this session participants will be able to:

- Define ethics, moral agency, and moral integrity
- Describe how both individuals and institutions develop moral agency and integrity and the consequences of honoring or dishonoring integrity
- Identify common ethical challenges in the workplace and strategies for resolving these problems
- Contrast integrity-based and compliance-based organizational ethics programs
Objectives
(time permitting...)

Upon completion of this session participants will be able to:

- Describe the hallmarks and challenges of quality institutional ethics programs
- Distinguish ethics concerns/challenges and related resources from legal, safety/quality, human resources, etc. concerns/challenges
- Develop strategies for raising ethical awareness within institutions and bringing forward ethical challenges
- Utilize processes for resolving clinical and organizational ethical challenges
Starting Assumptions
Glaser’s three realms of ethics

- Societal Realm
- Organizational Realm
- Individual Realm
Clarifying Concepts

- Ethics
- Moral Agency
- Moral Integrity
What is Ethics?
What is Ethics?

- Ethics is the formal study of who we ought to be and how we should make decisions and behave in light of our identity.
Clinical ethics is an interdisciplinary activity to identify, analyze, and resolve ethical problems that arise in the care of particular patients. The major thrust of clinical ethics is to work for outcomes that best serve the interests and welfare of patients and their families [J. Fletcher, The Bioethics Movement and Hospital Ethics Committees, Maryland Law Review 50 (1991):859n, note 1].
Organizational Ethics

- The intentional use of values to guide the decisions of a system.

- Objective: strong “FIT” between the system’s stated mission and decision making at all levels of the system.
Difference between Ethics and Compliance

- The **compliance** strategy, which is predominantly lawyer driven, meets the basic needs for legal compliance.

- The **integrity**-based strategy is characterized by a conception of ethics as a driving force of an enterprise. Lynn Sharpe Paine
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compliance Strategy</th>
<th>Integrity Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td>Conformity with externally imposed standards</td>
<td>Self-governance according to chosen standards</td>
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<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>Prevent criminal misconduct</td>
<td>Enable responsible conduct</td>
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<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Lawyer-driven</td>
<td>Management-driven with aid of lawyers, HR, others</td>
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<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td>Education, reduced discretion, auditing and controls, penalties</td>
<td>Education, leadership, mentoring, accountability, organizational systems and decision processes (&quot;centers of ethical responsibility&quot;) auditing and controls, penalties</td>
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<td><strong>Behavioral Assumptions</strong></td>
<td>Autonomous beings guided by material self-interest</td>
<td>Social beings guided by material self-interest, values, ideals, peers</td>
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What is moral agency?
This requires formation...
We know the right thing to do but it is almost impossible...

- Deficient moral agency
- Ethical Distress
- Ethical Residue
- Disengagement
What is Moral Integrity?

**Integrity:**
1. soundness of and adherence to moral principle and character; uprightness and honesty.
2. the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished.
3. a sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition.

*From Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*
Snicker Test
Why be a person/ministry of Integrity?

“American Baptist Homes of the West will continue to hold the trust of its constituency by keeping its promises with integrity, stability, and intentional ethical behavior in the provision of quality services for older persons”
Effective Ethics Programs
Veterans Association’s Integrated Ethics Program

- respond to ethical questions at the level of actions and decisions through Ethics Consultation;
- address ethics quality gaps at the level of systems and processes by applying a quality improvement approach in Preventive Ethics; and
- foster a strong ethical environment and culture through Ethical Leadership.
Ethics Case versus Ethics Issue

- **Discrete situation at a particular time**
  - A question about what is the best ethics practice
  - Goal to improve ethics quality by responding to an ethics question

- **Ongoing situation involving organizational systems & processes**
  - A systemic gap between current and best ethics practice
  - Goal to improve ethics quality by reducing ethics quality gaps at a systems level
What is Ethics Quality in Health Care?

Decisions and actions (Ethics Consultation)

Systems and processes (Preventive Ethics)

Environment and culture (Ethical Leadership)
Organizational Integrity
Facilitating Variables

- Leadership must value institutional integrity and communicate this clearly; Senior leadership needs to be “on board”
- The institutional mission, vision and values must be known and *alive*!
- Perception that it is “safe” to explore areas of conflict/concern and that it is OK for people to disagree
A methodic process for reasoning about ethical challenges to refute the notion that ethics is merely a matter of opinion.

- Perception that this effort “pays off” in better outcomes for patients, families and staff, in short, it is “worth” the time, energy and money invested.

- The institutional culture must support folks doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do.
A critical mass within the institution must be recognized for their moral agency

Institutional ethics resources must be available and utilized
Constraining Variables

- Leadership’s failure to value institutional integrity
- Ethics is “one more program/initiative”: this year we are doing Baldrige
- Failure to distinguish ethical dimension from legal, compliance; to reduce ethics to compliance
- Belief that ethics is a matter of personal opinion; fear of “ethics police”