Designing Ethical Practices for Quality Services

CARF Employment and Community Services

by

Michael Wirth-Davis

with Contributions of Examples from CARF-Accredited Organizations
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Introduction

We know we are in a new millennium with our social, religious, and family institutions all up for reinvention. Domestic crime rates, corporate and political scandals, public mistrust of once-sacred organizations, general cynicism, media scrutiny, students admitting to lying and cheating, and the list goes on, all expose the fragility of our moral code, a general lack of moral conviction and leadership.

The operations and outcomes of organizations providing human services, the professionals who work in organizations, and the surveyors who survey organizations are in the public eye at all times. Carter McNamara (1998) identified some of the benefits of managing ethics in the workplace. They apply equally to for-profit and nonprofit organizations as well. Ethics programs can help:

• ensure that policies are legal;
• lower fines and avoid criminal acts “of omission”;
• maintain a moral course in times of change;
• cultivate strong teamwork and productivity by aligning employee behaviors with those preferred by the organization;
• manage values associated with quality management, strategic planning, and diversity management; and,
• promote a strong public image.

Ethical issues can be complex and subtle, with no universally agreed-upon resolution. Employees come from different backgrounds; what is considered right by one employee may be considered wrong by another. They want and need concrete courses of action, not just for issues of right versus wrong, but often for “conflicts of right versus right” or for “the least wrong.” Given the different perspectives on ethics and ethical conduct, it is important that organizations seek to develop consensus regarding the definition of “ethical.” The CARF standards related to ethics are part of a strategy to help organizations focus on ethics, values, and behaviors.

We hope that this publication will provide CARF-accredited organizations, as well as organizations interested in becoming accredited, information to help develop a code of ethics that can be useful in decision making. This document also provides a reference list of resources and sample codes in the Appendices.
Defining Ethics

Ethics entail values and principles. They relate to practices and decision making. Ethical behavior is related to individuals and the culture of the organization. McNamara (1998) referred to ethics in the workplace as “values management.” This term involves identifying and prioritizing values in an effort to guide behaviors and establish associated policies and procedures to ensure that those behaviors occur.

Organizations can begin building an ethics program by reviewing the concept of ethics. Ethics have been defined (Rachels, 1998; Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992; Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1998; Mitzen, 1998; American College of Healthcare Executives, 1993) as:

- philosophy concerned with the study of right and good in human behavior;
- philosophy that deals with rules of duty and morality of humans;
- the study of morality, moral principles, or values;
- applied values that are fleshed out, practiced, critiqued, and assessed;
- the application of a person’s values in the development of reasonable standards and procedures for ethical decision making;
- a standard or set of standards that govern what one ought to do when the well-being, rights, and duties to self, others, or institutions are at stake;
- a set of normative rules of conduct, ground rules, or a moral code for living; and,
- having to do with what one should do, all things considered, not what, in fact, any of us will do in a particular instance.
Defining Values

Organizations need an understanding of what defines values, if they are serious about wanting to use them in their decision-making processes. The Josephson Institute of Ethics (1998) tells us that some values, such as the importance people attach to respect, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and loyalty, are ethical in nature because they are concerned with the notion of moral duty, of how we ought to behave. These values reflect attitudes about what is right, fair, or proper rather than what is pleasurable, useful, or desirable. “Since only some values are concerned with ethics, ethics and values are not the same.” Values have been defined (Webster’s, 1995; Mitzen, 1998; Josephson Institute, 1998) as:

• principles, standards, or qualities regarded as worthwhile or desirable;
• strong and enduring core beliefs that motivate attitudes and effect the choices we make; and,
• statements of what is “good” for individuals and for society.

Toffler (1974) stated that some writers think there are common universal values of an absolute nature for human beings. These values are derived from the concepts of survival, health, and dignity of a decent humankind and include:

• standard of living;
• opportunities for children;
• technological advances;
• good health;
• a good job;
• decent housing;
• a happy home life; and,
• better educational facilities.

Our individual values come from such things as:

• family background and childhood experiences;
• religious training;
• education;
• events of conflicts that evoke self-discovery;
• social interaction and socially-driven events;
• employment experiences;
• major life changes;
• experiential living; and,
• personal relationships with “important” individuals.
Our individual values follow us when we go to work and mix with organizational values. Building ethical values into its decision-making system can be the most effective action an organization can take toward a basic moral reference point. The Ethical Leadership Group (1999) stated that “creating a culture in which every employee believes in the organization’s values is critical for success into the next millennium.” Values do change and they affect the way we make decisions. For example, changes in society’s values and beliefs, according to Curtis (1995) “have influenced the passing of federal legislation which, in turn, has further impacted values and beliefs evidenced in this country.” Values were expressed within the Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War Movement, Women’s Liberation movement, gay rights movement, disability rights movement, and the independent living movement. Values influenced legislation, such as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The CARF standards ask organizations to identify and document the ethical values that drive their practices. Shared alignment around organizational values is critical to quality service delivery and can serve as “filters” for ethical dilemmas.

Examples of Values

A complete set of values is nonexistent. Any list is a work in progress. Core values for organizations may include but are not limited to:

- accountability to the public
- achievement
- altruism
- American exceptionalism
- autonomy
- avoiding conflict of interest
- being the best
- choice
- commitment beyond self, shunning private gain in the course of discharging tasks
- commitment beyond the law
- common interest
- common/public good
- community
- compassion
- consumer direction
- consumer focus
- democracy
- discharging one’s responsibilities fairly and impartially
- diversity
- effectiveness
- efficiency
- empathy
- empowerment
- entrepreneurialism
- equal opportunity for all citizens
- equality, the notion that all men and women are created equal, with an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, before the law
- equity
- fairness
- freedom, the idea that a healthy society is one that protects the freedoms of speech, of the press, of assembly, and of worship
- human welfare
- humanitarianism
- inclusion
- individualism
- informality
- innovation
- love
- luck
- neighbors taking care of neighbors
- obedience of the laws
- openness and honesty
- outcomes/results
- patriotism
- practicality
- profit
- progress
- prudent application of resources
- quality
- religion
- respect for life, for the value and dignity of individuals
- responsibility and shared responsibility
- return on investment
- the idea that the rights of the minority are to be protected by the majority
- security
- self-determination
- self-direction
- social advocacy
- social justice
- stewardship
- superior service
- tolerance
- trust
- truthfulness
- and unity.
In addition to a broad spectrum of “universal” values, there also exist values unique to the myriad cultures of today. Don Coyhis (1993) provided a comparison of Indian values and non-Indian values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Indian Values include</th>
<th>Non-Indian Values include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cooperation/group harmony</td>
<td>competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group emphasis</td>
<td>individual emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modesty</td>
<td>self-attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patience/composure</td>
<td>aggressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generosity/sharing</td>
<td>saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-materialistic</td>
<td>materialistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work for current need</td>
<td>work for the sake of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time always with us</td>
<td>use every minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation to present</td>
<td>orientation to future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pragmatic</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect for age</td>
<td>respect for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harmony with nature</td>
<td>conquest over nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual/mystical</td>
<td>skeptical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-verbal communication</td>
<td>verbal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religion as a way of life</td>
<td>religion as a segment of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect criticism</td>
<td>direct criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extended family important</td>
<td>nuclear family important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, DeJong (1998) compared American and non-Anglican values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant American values include</th>
<th>Non-Anglican values include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal control over the environment</td>
<td>fate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time dominates</td>
<td>human interaction dominates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human equality</td>
<td>hierarchy/rank/status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualism/privacy</td>
<td>group well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-help merit</td>
<td>cooperation/reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independence</td>
<td>interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice and informed consent</td>
<td>parental and family consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-sufficiency</td>
<td>birthright, inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competitiveness</td>
<td>group support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future orientation</td>
<td>past orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action/goal/work orientation, “making it”</td>
<td>“being”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informality</td>
<td>formality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directness/openness/honesty</td>
<td>indirectness/ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practicality/efficiency</td>
<td>idealism/theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materialism</td>
<td>spiritualism/detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual is central</td>
<td>family/group/community are central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations can review values like these and others to determine which ones are important to them. The selected values help define an organization, its policies, and its behaviors. Combined with ethical principles, values serve as the core of an ethics code.
Defining Ethical Principles

Statements illustrating how values are applied are referred to as moral or ethical principles. Frequently, ethical principles are legal matters. Most discussions of ethics, (Vaughn & Taylor, 1998; Denhardt, 1993), contain a mix of ideas and principles, such as:

- accountability, promise keeping;
- autonomy, respecting a person’s choices and the right to self-determination without controlling constraints;
- beneficence, promoting the welfare and interests of others;
- compassion;
- compromise and social integration;
- conformity to law;
- courage, to do the right thing even when it is not popular or causes the loss of a contract, etc.;
- democratic responsibility;
- due process;
- enhancement of excellence;
- fairness tempered by charity;
- fidelity or loyalty;
- honesty;
- integrity;
- justice, treating others fairly and the equitable allocation of goods and services;
- non-maleficence, avoiding intentional harm to others;
- optimism, can-do attitude, willingness to tackle difficult issues;
- popular sovereignty;
- protection of individual rights;
- respect for others; and,
- service orientation.

Similar to the list of values, ethical principles begin to shape how an organization practices what it values, how it “walks the talk,” so to speak. They help define value-based ethical practices. Values and ethical principles, though they sound lofty and hard to apply, can direct day-to-day decisions and operations within an organization. They evolve over time. If staff members continue to apply and refine them, ethical principles and values management will become second nature for all decision making by all employees.
Defining Ethics Codes

Many organizations create a code of ethics, code of conduct, a creed, a covenant, or promise statements to identify their practices. According to Carter McNamara (1998), “the value of a code of ethics to an organization is its priority and focus regarding certain ethical values in that workplace.” He further advised that “a code of ethics is an organic instrument that changes with the needs of society and the organization.”

Ethics codes:

• are written documents stating the major philosophical beliefs;
• are principles and values of a profession or an organization;
• offer guidance on correct conduct and provide the means of disciplining transgressors;
• can clarify expectations by spelling out the actions and behaviors that are acceptable and those that are not;
• include specific written policies and a culture that supports them; and,
• “serve to consolidate scattered policies and unspoken rules into one authoritative and comprehensive document.” (Gray, 1996)

David Mason, in a 1993 article, “Put the Power of Ethics to Work in Your Organization,” stated convincingly that:

A profound ethical base benefits an organization in more ways than helping everyone sleep better at night. It firms, tones, orients, and builds, because everyone knows where the goal posts are and what is and is not out of bounds. It is a pragmatic value, worth getting serious about.

As organizations “get serious” about ethics codes, they need to identify which function, or functions, the codes are going to serve. Hussey (1996) identified seven functions of codes of ethics:

1. Guidance – reminds any group that familiar moral principles apply within their work. Codes that are restricted to this role can be called “reminding” codes.

2. Regulation – prescribes some of the “role norms,” the moral responsibilities, and standards of correct behavior and values necessitated by the peculiar demands and licenses of the profession. They can be called “exceptional” codes.

3. Discipline – sets a code of conduct allowing transgressions to be identified and penalties for noncompliance justified, thus becoming an instrument of authority of a governing body.
4. **Protection** – protects the public in general, those who become consumers in particular, and those who employ the professional involved.

5. **Information** – tells consumers, colleagues, employers, and society which standards to expect, thereby promoting confidence and trust.

6. **Proclamation** – proclaims that the group aspires to the status of a profession, with moral respectability and autonomy.

7. **Negotiation** – serves as a tool in negotiations and disputes with professional colleagues, employers, governments, etc., by explaining or justifying a stance or course of action. One aspect of this function is the protection of the professionals concerned.

There are justifiable reasons for creating codes of ethics. However, there are limitations to ethical codes (Mason, 1993 and Hussey, 1996):

- they sometimes substitute words for actions;
- they are difficult or dangerous to enforce;
- the lines between specific rules of behavior and general moral principles, to begin with, are not very clear; and,
- they do not always provide strong guidance to employees about potential ethical dilemmas.

Even in light of these downsides, it can be argued that organizations should add such a code to their other key strategic organizational documents. Indeed, Mason (1993) stated:

> Codes are very dangerous to enforce, but I wouldn’t be without one. They at least give staff the strength to go to a member and say, “Look, here’s the code. There are some things you need to clean up.”

Similarly, Canadian researchers, Kernaghan and Siegel (1995) provided five ways codes can reduce ethical and unethical behavior uncertainty among employees. These ways were:

1. written rules lessen the room for argument as to the content of rules and what penalties must be paid for violating them;
2. codes can promote public trust and confidence in the ethical behavior of employees;
3. codes can reduce unethical practices by discouraging them;
4. codes can sensitize employees to the reality that the ethical and value dimensions of their decisions and recommendations are as important as, and often more important than, the technical, legal, and political dimensions; and,
5. the development of a code of ethics may prompt the reassessment of existing written or unwritten rules so that the rights and participation of employees may be enhanced.

These arguments support the need for organizations to develop a code of ethics. Codes can add value and help an organization respond to accountability issues. CARF standards call for identifying and documenting ethical practices. Specifically, organizations must adhere to codes of ethical conduct related to:

- staff;
- the governance authority;
- business/financial practices;
- marketing activities;
- treatment of persons receiving services;
- treatment of community members, and;
- other issues identified by the organization and/or stakeholders.

Resources on Ethics Codes

The following are resources that organizations can use to shape their own code.

Staff:

- Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Metropolitan Employment and Rehabilitation Service. 1727 Locust Street, St. Louis, MO 63103.
- CRCC Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors. 1835 Rohlwing Road, Suite E, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 (847) 394-2104.
- Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment. The Association for Persons in Supported Employment. A PSE 1627 Monument Avenue, Room 301, Richmond, VA 23220.

• Certification of Disability Management Specialist Commission. 1835 Rohlwing Road, Suite E, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 (847) 394-2106. http://www.cdmcs.com


• Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). 1101 King Street, Suite 700, Alexandria, VA 22314. (800) 666-3863.

• Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers. Public Information, Minnesota Board of Teaching. 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113-4266. (651) 582-8833.


• Code for Nurses with Interpretive Statements. American Nurses’ Association. 2420 Pershing Road, Kansas City, MO 64108.


**Governance Authority:**

Business/financial practices:
• Twelve Steps for Implementing a Code of Business Ethics. Institute of Business Ethics: Code of Ethics. 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5J A. Tel: +44 (0) 171-931-0495.

Marketing activities:
• Code of Ethical Conduct for Marketing. Association for Rehabilitation Centers Members. Hendersonville, NC 28792-6550.
• Business Ethics “100 Best Corporate Citizens.” Mavis Publications. 52 S. 10 Street, #110, Minneapolis, MN 55403-2001.

Treatment of persons receiving services:
• Patients Bill of Rights. Minnesota Hospital Association. Board of Medical Examiners, 2700 University Ave. West, Room 106, St. Paul, MN 55114 (651) 642-0538.
• Code of Patient Concern. Department of Veterans Affairs. VA Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN.

Organizations:
• Association for Healthcare Philanthropy. 1101 King Street, Suite 700, Alexandria, VA 22314. (800) 666-3863.
• HIS Code of Ethics. Habilitative Systems Incorporated. 415 S. Kilpatrick, Chicago, IL 60644. hsi1978@aol.com
• Training Center, Inc. University of Wisconsin-Stout: Continuing Education Center. http://www.cec.uwstout.edu

Treatment of community members:
• A Donor Bill of Rights. 1101 King Street, Suite 700, Alexandria, VA 22314. (800) 666-3863.

Other issues identified by the organization and/or stakeholders:
• Principles for Minnesota Grantmakers. Minnesota Council on Foundations. (612) 338-1989. info@mcf.org
Defining an Ethical Dilemma

If codes are helpful and act as expressions of our actions, then how do we decide what is right or ethical? An ethical dilemma (Mitzen, 1998; Werhane, 1998; Vaughn & Taylor, 1998) includes:

• a clash of values or responsibilities or rights;
• values, customs, mores, or accepted practices that are in conflict or at stake;
• a situation in which an individual must choose between possible decisions, each decision being supported by ethical principles;
• a situation that affects other people and/or other institutions;
• a normative dimension involving right or wrong, good or bad;
• a legality, professional code, or company policy that does not determine how the issue should be resolved; and,
• a right vs. right choice (these can be called dilemma paradigms, such as truth vs. loyalty, individual vs. community, short-term vs. long-term, and justice vs. mercy).

Ethical decisions become more complex as one grows in power, prestige, and rank. They factor in a person’s stage of moral development, his or her perspective of ethical behavior, his or her locus of control, and the organizational environment.

Organizations need to develop and document their procedures for resolving ethical dilemmas. Methods to resolve ethical dilemmas may include but are not limited to:

• use of a group (i.e., an ethics committee);
• use of checklists;
• use of key decision-making steps, (Rollins et al.,1999);
• use of decision rules from moral philosophy; and,
• use of informal decision-making models.
Examples of Decision-Making Approaches

Examples of groups include:

- An ethics committee of the board of directors or an external advisory board for proprietary organizations.
- An ethics committee consisting of staff and advisors.

Examples of checklists include:

- Have you defined the problem correctly?
- How would you define the problem if you were on the other side of the fence?
- How did the situation occur?
- To whom and to what do you give your loyalty?
- What is your intention in making this decision?
- How does this intention compare with the problem results?
- Whom could your decision injure?
- What is the symbolic potential of your action if understood correctly or if misunderstood?

An example of using a series of key decision-making steps is provided from Rollins et al., (1999):

- recognize the dilemma;
- identify the problem and the stakeholders;
- determine a sequence of reasonable, concrete actions;
- anticipate and work out barriers that may arise; and,
- take action(s), document the process, and evaluate the outcome.

Examples of decision principles from moral philosophy include:

**Rights Approach**

- Focus: Certain interests or activities that our behavior must respect, especially those areas that merit protection from others.
- Each person has a fundamental right to be respected and treated as a free and equal rational person capable of making his or her own decisions.
- Each person has the right to think and choose freely and has a fundamental moral right to have these choices respected.
• This approach implies other rights (truth, privacy, free consent, not to be injured, to what was agreed upon, etc.) that must be protected if a person is to have the freedom to direct his or her own life.
• Rule-based thinking, known as the categorical imperative: Follow only the principle that you want everyone else to follow.
• Human dignity refers to the sacredness or value of each person as an end, not simply as a means to the fulfillment of others’ purposes or even majority prescription.
• Asks: What rule should be followed in this case? Does the action respect the moral rights of everyone?
• The principle: An action or policy is morally right only if those persons affected by the decision are not used merely as instruments for advancing some goal, but are fully informed and treated only as they have freely and knowingly consented to be treated.
• Uses: Service provision, human resources practices, etc.
• References: Immanuel Kant.

Fairness/Justice Approach
• Focus: How fairly or unfairly our actions distribute benefits and burdens among the members of a group.
• Fairness requires consistency in the way people are treated. Favoritism and discrimination are unjust and wrong.
• Asks: How fair is an action? Does it treat everyone in the same way?
• The principle: Treat people the same unless there are morally relevant differences between them.
• Uses: Service delivery, human resources practices, etc.
• References: Aristotle.

Utilitarian Approach
• Focus: The consequences that actions or policies have on the well-being (“utility”) of all persons directly or indirectly affected by the action or policy.
• Ends-based thinking. Maxim: Do whatever produces the greatest good.
• Demands a kind of cost/benefit analysis, to identify the various courses of actions available.
• Asks: Who will be affected by each action and what benefits or harms will be derived from each? Choose the action that will produce the greatest benefit and the least harm. What will happen for the greatest number?
• The principle: “Of any two actions, the most ethical one will produce the greatest balance of benefits over harms.”
• Uses: Resource allocations, collaboration agreements, contract negotiations, the staple of public policy debate, and public policy decisions.
• References: Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill.

Virtue Approach
• Focus: Attitudes, dispositions, or character traits that enable us to be and to act in ways that develop our human potential.
• Examples: Honesty, courage, faithfulness, compassion, generosity, trustworthiness, integrity, fairness, self-control, prudence, etc.
• Virtues are like habits: Once acquired, they become characteristic of a person.
• The virtuous person is the ethical person.
• Asks: What kind of person should I be?
• The principle: “What is ethical is what develops moral virtues in ourselves and our communities.”
• Uses: Leadership and followership.
• References: Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics).

Common Good Approach
• Focus: A vision of society as a community whose members are joined in a shared pursuit of values and goals they hold in common.
• The community is made up of individuals whose own good is inextricably bound to the good of the whole.
• Respect and value individual freedoms. Recognize and further shared common goals.
• Kyosei, a Japanese concept meaning living and working together for the common good, enables cooperation and mutual prosperity to coexist with healthy and fair competition.
• Ethics or professional norms and decorum have existed within the professions. Most early codes were concerned with matters of etiquette. Then we moved toward professional/consumer relationships, issues of public policy, access to services, and the allocation of scarce technological or institutional resources. Now the professions are taking their duty to serve the public interest and the common good more seriously than ever before. (Hastings Center, 1987)
• Asks: What kind of society do we want to become and how will we achieve that society?
• The principle: “What is ethical is what advances the common good.”
• Uses: Social policy decisions, social system decisions, environmental issues, public safety, peace among nations, a just legal system, partnerships and collaborations, etc.
• References: Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, John Rawls.

Applied Professional Ethics Approach
• New field invented in the 1970s. The intense social debate in the 1960s concerning issues such as welfare rights, prisoner’s rights, patient’s rights, human rights, and affirmative action led many moral philosophers to grapple with contemporary issues.
• The number of technological developments, particularly related to health care issues, and developments in medical ethics or bioethics led many moral philosophers to explore applied ethical issues.
• Widespread media publicity related to moral scandals and ethical misconduct in public and professional life, beginning especially with Watergate in the early 1970s, aroused interest in professional ethics.
• The principal feature: The deliberate, disciplined attempt to apply principles, concepts, and theories of moral philosophy, or ethics, to real-life challenges faced by professionals.
• Asks: How do we address day-to-day, real-life issues through the application of ethics, principles, concepts, and theories?
• Uses: Social debate, public policy, advocacy, organizational or professional ethics codes, etc.
• References: Reamer, 1998.

Feminist Perspective
• For the first time, women philosophers and psychologists are being heard in a clear and sustained way.
• These new voices suggest that the sort of minimal morality promoted by the traditional canon, “Above all, not knowingly to do harm,” cannot sustain relationships in the public or private arena.
• This new language of ethics is language that rejects judgment based on the letter of the law. The fact that someone manages to stay barely on the right side of the law does not imply the action is ethical. Deception is wrong because it breaks the bonds of relationships. Exploitation is wrong because it sacrifices one person’s for another’s agenda.
• Asks: How can we act in ways that maintain relationships?
• The principle: Ethical behavior is based on an analysis of whether the most vulnerable parties are being protected and affirmed, rather than by judging who has managed to get away with the most outrageous act. The most ethical decision is one that takes care of everyone’s needs.

• Uses: Relationship building, collaborations, partnerships, etc.

• References: Deni Elliot.

Examples of less formal decision-making approaches include:

**Ethics Quiz** (from Lockheed Martin):
• Are my actions legal?
• Am I being fair and honest?
• Will my action stand the test of time?
• How will I feel about myself afterward?
• How will it look in the newspaper?
• Will I sleep soundly tonight?
• What would I tell my child to do?
• If still not sure what to do, ask... and keep asking until you are certain you are doing the right thing.

**Quick Ethics Test** (from Texas Instruments):
• Is it legal? If not, then don’t do it.
• Is it consistent with the company’s stated values?
• If you do it, will you feel bad?
• How would it look in the newspapers?
• Do you think it’s wrong?
• If you’re not sure—ask. Get help from others.
• If you don’t get a clear answer, keep asking until you do.

(http://www.westwords.com/GUFFEY/text_only/ethtx.html)
Building Ethics Awareness in Organizations

**Step One: Define ethics for your organization**

Identify and record preferred values.

- Review your founder’s beliefs.
- Look at your Articles of Incorporation.
- Look at your vision, mission, and values statements.
- Determine which ethical principles your staff members are following.
- Identify the social values of providers of employment and community services.

Earn the commitment of the CEO and senior management.

- Start at the top and gain the endorsement of the organization’s leadership.

Seek buy-in from employees.

- Solicit employee input at all levels into identifying values.
- Train and/or recruit people whose values and ethics are congruent with those of your organization.

**Step Two: Create benchmark practices**

Review ethics codes, principles, and practices from a variety of sources.

- Explore ethics codes from as many sources as are applicable to your organization.
- Identify the common themes in these codes.
- Identify significant differences.
- Identify insights these codes give your organization and incorporate them into your ethics code.

**Step Three: Craft your practices**

Relate your organization’s vision, mission, and values, as well as organizational functions, to ethical practices.

- Solicit and incorporate employee-formulated statements of values.
- Review desired values against current behaviors.
Draft your ethics code.

- Your code should be explicit enough to cover common situations, but broad enough to apply to new situations (Byrne, 1994).
- Those affected by your code should be given ample opportunity to review, respond, and provide input to ensure the code’s relevance and enforceability (Byrne, 1994).
- Develop very detailed implementation and enforcement mechanisms.
- Revisit and revise the code to reflect changes in the organization.

Craft sample practices.

- Develop policies and procedures to align organizational behaviors with preferred values.

Explore decision-making methods by considering:

- use of a decentralized approach whereby all managers are viewed as responsible for ethical decision making;
- creation of an Ethics Task Force or an ethics team for both internal and external issues, which establishes appropriate ethics management systems to foster ethical conduct and to respond to allegations of misconduct;
- hiring an ethics officer;
- the appointment of ombudspersons;
- establishment of an ethics standing committee of the board;
- use of examples of decision principles from moral philosophy; or
- use of key decision-making steps;

Identify sanctions.

- Create a system that rewards ethical behavior and penalizes unethical behavior.

**Step Four: Adopt and continually refine your awareness and practices**

Adopt your ethics code.

- Make sure the code is unique for your organization.

Identify your practices.

- Try identifying practices using the concept of: “We always do this, we never do this.”
Identify your sanctions.

- What happens when employees do follow the code (reinforcement)?
- What happens when employees do not follow the code (corrections, discipline)?

Develop ethical decision-making processes that your employees and board will use.

- Experiment with a variety of methods. Reach consensus on which one(s) all employees and volunteers will use.

Integrate an emphasis on ethics into regular business plans, policies, meetings, and everyday activities.

- Consider conducting an annual self-evaluation, as important as an annual fiscal audit, to re-energize adherence to core values.
- “The more articulated the values are, and the more focus and attention they are given on a daily basis, the more integrated they are into the corporate culture” (Byrne, 1994).

Develop and implement your ethics communication strategy by considering:

- hosting retreats or workshops for your stakeholders;
- incorporating an ethics section into your newsletter;
- using brochures that address a range of ethical issues;
- publishing documents reporting on ethical practices;
- implementing an anonymous phone-in system to report ethical concerns;
- developing a voice-mail system for employees to seek advice from a standing ethics committee; or
- developing an Internet system for employees to seek advice from a standing ethics committee.

Implement an ethics training program for your organization by considering:

- training all personnel about the policies and procedures;
- implementing formal coursework on ethics that includes incorporating an outcomes measure of ethics education;
- customizing ethics training with real-life cases, games, and individual exercises; or
- reviewing case studies of professionals and/or organizations who confronted ethical dilemmas.
Summary

No single ethics policy, practice, procedure, or code will be effective in every organization. Each organization must develop its own processes and procedures for discussing and dealing with ethical issues.

It probably does not matter which conceptual approach to ethics education is used. It is most important that staff are encouraged and trained to think carefully about complex ethical issues.

This publication is not trying to impart correct answers. It is, however, trying to help organizations become more perceptive in handling ethical problems when they arise and become more equipped to reason through the ethical issues they face.

The phrase “to act ethically” should be more than a collection of words.

The policies concerning ethical conduct could be developed using information from such things as state practice acts for the various disciplines/professions involved in the program; the ethical codes of professional associations for the various disciplines and professions involved in the program; the ethical codes of business, marketing, and/or human resource management associations; and the organization’s own mission and core values statements. The information shared with all parties should include how the organization will address allegations of violations of its policies on ethical conduct and how all parties may make allegations known.

The policies on ethical conduct could be shared with personnel via a policy and procedure manual, as part of the initial orientation to the organization and program, through a memorandum specific to ethical conduct, etc.

Ethical conduct should be in evidence throughout the activities of all personnel of the organization and should be seen in their communications with the persons receiving services, families, payers, and the community. The organization’s marketing approach, how the organization involves the persons receiving services and their families in the service provision process and the outcomes of those services, and the organization’s communications with funding sources should demonstrate ongoing ethical conduct.

An organization could use a mechanism such as an ethics committee to investigate and act on allegations of violations of ethical conduct. It could also use the same or a similar mechanism to address both allegations of violations of ethical conduct and allegations of infringements of the rights of the persons receiving services.

Ways of sharing this synopsis with the persons receiving services and, if appropriate, their families, could be to include it in a preadmissions packet, the orientation to the program, a written handbook, etc.

Referral sources and purchasers of services could be informed of the organization’s policies on ethical conduct through brochures, letters, personal contacts, meetings, etc.
Resources

All web site references were verified shortly before publication. However, we know this information may change quickly, and so we apologize for any inconvenience you may experience.

• Association for Volunteer Administration. P.O. Box 3092, Richmond, VA (804) 346-2266. E-mail: ava@freedomnet.com


• The Caux Round Table Principles for Business. Michael Olson. 4626 France Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55410 (612) 924-9234, FAX: (612) 924-0068 http://www.cauxroundtable.org

• Codes of Ethics Online Project Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions. Illinois Institute of Technology. Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions. 102 Stuart Building, Chicago, IL 60616. (312) 567-3017.

• Ethical Leadership Group. Wilmette, IL. http://home.navisoft.com/ethical/components.html

• Ethics and Public Policy Center. 1015 Fifteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC. 20005 (202) 682-1200. http://www.eppc.org (Think tank.)

• Ethics Officer Association. 30 Church St. Suite 331, Belmont, MA 02478 (617) 484-9400. http://www.eoa.org

• Ethics Resource Center. 1747 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 737-2258; FAX: (202) 737-2227. http://www.ethics.org (Mission is to be a leader and a catalyst in fostering ethical practices in individuals and institutions.)

• Hastings Center. 360 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706. (Nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that carries out educational and research programs on ethical issues in medicine, the life sciences, and the professions.)

• Heritage Foundation. 214 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002-4999. (800)546-2843. http://www.heritage.org (Conservative think tank.)

• International Code of Advertising Practice. The International Bureau of Chamber of Commerce. UN Liaison Office, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. (Applies to all advertisements for the promotion of any forms of goods and services: “all advertising should be legal, decent,
honest, and truthful; prepared with a due sense of social responsibility and should conform to the principles of fair competition, as generally accepted in business.”

- Institute for American Values. 1841 Broadway, Suite 211, New York, NY 10023. (212) 246-3942.
- Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University. Box 571212, Washington, DC 20057-1212. (202) 687-8099. kicourse@gunet.georgetown.edu http://www.georgetown.edu/research/kie/
- New Economics Foundation. Cinnamon House. 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH, United Kingdom. 44 (0) 20 7407-7447.
- Robert K. Greenleaf Center. 921 E. 86th St., Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46208. (317) 259-1241. (Think tank.)
- Vasin, Heyen & Co. Los Angeles-based firm that provides “ethics auditing” services.
References

Byrne, Christopher. (1994). Right makes might. Executive Directions. September/October, 39—44.


Curtis, Jody. (1995). These days it takes a global village to raise a child. Foundation News and Commentary, 36 (6), 1.


Appendix A

This appendix presents two samples of what an organization’s Code of Ethics might include in a consolidated document. These are presented only as examples and are not meant to be used as templates.

Example 1

(Organization Name)

Code of Ethics and Values

Mission and vision statement
Principles
Core values
Code of Ethics– Staff members
Code of Ethics– Board of Directors
Code of Ethics– Financial practices
Code of Ethics– Marketing activities

Corporate office located at:

Address
City/State

Phone: /\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
Fax: /\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\/
Organization Name

Mission Statement
... to provide employment, training, rehabilitation, and opportunities for personal growth and achievement for persons with disabilities and other barriers to attain the fullest development of which they are capable.

Vision Statement
... to provide every individual in society who wants to work an opportunity to realize that desire. To that end (Organization Name) will be the premier provider of vocational services, serving both individuals and business through:

- a dedicated workforce in an organization that we can all be proud of;
- the use of world-class quality manufacturing work;
- top-flight janitorial work;
- state-of-the-art habilitation/rehabilitation programs.

Principles
(Organization)’s philosophy is predicated on the belief that every individual has the right to work toward achieving the same quality of life all people need to lead lives of self-fulfillment and meaning.

Achieving quality of life entails:

- exposure to opportunities
- freedom of choice
- participation in community life
- self-directedness

The people of (Organization) further believe that five concepts must be our guideposts to ensure that all we do maximizes the potential of each person receiving services to attain this quality of life.

These five concepts are:

- normalization
- empowerment
- integration
- inclusion
- autonomy
Core Values

(Organization Name) has established Codes of Ethics to guide the actions of staff/board members, treatment of those receiving services, business/financial practices, and marketing.

Each new staff and board member will be required to review and sign the pertinent code, indicating acceptance of it. Any staff member who violates one of the agency’s Codes of Ethics may face corrective action. Board action may be taken with any board member who violates the Code of Ethics.

The core values that serve as roots for our Codes of Ethics are:

• Respect for Each Other
  Staff and board members will exercise thoughtful consideration of the needs of others—staff persons, board members, persons receiving services.

• Conciliation
  Staff and board members act in a spirit of compromise and agreement. Each individual will hear and respect the other person’s point of view and be open to constructive discussion.

• Honesty
  All staff and board members will deal honestly with other staff persons, board members, customers, and those receiving services. The value of honesty cannot be compromised. We must be honest without being hurtful.

• Trust
  Each of us will be non-judgmental on issues. We will be supportive of others and responsive in any time of need.

Code of Ethics—Treatment of persons receiving services

1. The following questions will serve as principles which will guide my actions in dealing with those individuals receiving services from or employed by (Organization Name).

   Do my actions...
   a. promote self-esteem in those we serve/supervise?
   b. demonstrate empathy and a willingness to use insights thus gained in such a way as to improve the situation?
   c. enlist the involvement of those we serve/supervise by increasing the worth of these individuals?

2. Persons receiving services must always be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of disability or other potential deficit areas.
3. The input of persons receiving services into the rehabilitation process is not only important but it is paramount. That input should always be accepted in a respectful manner.

4. Persons receiving services give up no legal rights when they join (Organization Name). Hence, an individual’s legal rights must be respected at all times.

5. An atmosphere must be maintained in which those receiving services may learn and develop.

6. The organization must be ever mindful of the attitudinal, architectural, and communication barriers that may exist in the agency. Where barriers exists, the organization must consider corrective action.

**Code of Ethics—Staff members**

1. I will do my best to see that (Organization Name) meets the needs of the persons receiving services.

2. I will respect the value and dignity of all individuals.

3. I will do my best to create and maintain a climate of loyalty, trust, and mutual respect.

4. I will support a work atmosphere in which the work of each individual is respected as important.

5. I will recognize excellent work done by other staff members and persons receiving services.

6. I will strive to speak to everyone in a friendly, positive, enthusiastic, and courteous way.

7. I will support a work atmosphere that is open and non-secretive while being mindful of the need for confidentiality.

8. I will support the decisions of management. I may state my position, but ultimately staff members must follow management’s final decision.

9. I will be loyal to the agency. I will refrain from doing anything that might bring discredit to the agency.

10. I acknowledge that enthusiasm and a positive attitude always make for a better work place.

11. I will uphold all applicable laws and regulations, going beyond the letter of the law to protect and/or enhance (Organization Name)’s ability to meet its mission.

12. I will be a responsible steward of (Organization Name)’s resources.

13. I will strive for personal and professional growth to improve my effectiveness.
14. I will carefully consider the public perception of my personal and professional actions, and the effect my actions could have on (Organization)’s reputation in my community and elsewhere.

**Code of Ethics—Board of Directors**

1. I will do my best to see that (Organization) is operated in a manner that upholds the agency’s integrity, adhere to its bylaws, and merits the trust and support of the public.

2. I will strive to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations, going beyond the letter of the law to protect and/or enhance (Organization)’s ability to accomplish its mission.

3. I will treat others with respect, doing for and to others as I would have done for and to me in similar circumstances.

4. I will be a responsible steward of (Organization)’s resources.

5. I will take no actions that could benefit me personally at the expense of (Organization), avoiding even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

6. I will carefully consider the public perception of my personal and professional actions, and the effect my actions could have, positively or negatively, on (Organization)’s reputation in my community and elsewhere.

7. I will strive for personal and professional growth to improve my effectiveness as a (Organization) Board member.

8. I will refrain from unwarranted intrusion into the responsibilities of (Organization)’s operational management.

**Code of Ethics—Financial practices**

1. All financial practices of (Organization) shall be handled in accordance with the applicable federal, state, and local laws.

2. All financial matters shall be conducted within the standards of commonly accepted, sound financial management practices.

3. All financial matters that fall within the purview of the agency’s financial management policies shall comply with those policies.

4. All financial matters covered by the agency’s bylaws shall be handled in accordance with those bylaws.
Code of Ethics—Marketing activities
1. Marketing activities are part of (Organization Name)’s accountability to the public.
2. Marketing activities/efforts shall always respect the dignity and privacy rights of those receiving services.
3. Marketing activities will never knowingly mislead or misinform the public or misrepresent (Organization Name).
4. Marketing activities will uphold the integrity of (Organization) so as to merit the continued support and trust of the public.

Code of Ethics—Treatment of community members
1. Community members must always be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Requests for information from community members are responded to in a timely manner.
3. Concerns or complaints from the community are addressed.
4. Input is solicited from the community and is considered in a respectful manner.
Example 2

Training Center, Inc.

Code of Ethics

Scope: To ensure that the staff members of ( ) Center:

1. Shall strive toward excellence, recognize the importance of the pursuit of truth, nurture democratic citizenship, and safeguard the freedom to learn and teach vocational rehabilitation;

2. Shall believe in the worth and dignity of each human being and in vocational rehabilitation opportunities for each person;

3. Shall strive to uphold the responsibilities of the vocational rehabilitation profession, including the following obligations to consumers, parents, caregivers, and the vocational rehabilitation profession:

To Consumers

• Shall provide consumers with professional vocational rehabilitation services in a non-discriminatory manner and in consonance with accepted best practices known to the vocational rehabilitation facility.

• Shall respect the constitutional rights of all consumers.

• Shall take reasonable measures to protect the health, safety, and emotional well-being of consumers.

• Shall not use professional relationships or authority with consumers for personal advantage.

• Shall keep in confidence information about consumers which has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

• Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about consumers or colleagues.

• Shall refrain from subjecting consumers to embarrassment or disparagement.

• Shall not engage in any sexually related behavior with a consumer with or without consent, but shall maintain a professional approach with consumers. Sexually related behavior shall include such behaviors as sexual jokes; sexual remarks; sexual kidding or teasing; sexual innuendo; pressure for dates or sexual favors; inappropriate physical touching, kissing, or grabbing; rape; threats or physical harm; and sexual assault.
To Parents and Caregivers

• Shall make reasonable efforts to communicate to parents/caregivers information which should be revealed in the interest of the consumer.

• Shall endeavor to understand community cultures and diverse home environments of consumers.

• Shall not knowingly distort or misrepresent facts concerning vocational rehabilitation issues.

• Shall distinguish between personal views and the views of the employing vocational rehabilitation agency.

• Shall not interfere in the exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities of others.

• Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain, for the promotion of political candidates, or for partisan political activities.

• Shall not accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment, and shall not offer any of these to obtain special advantage.

To the Vocational Rehabilitation Profession

• Shall exemplify behaviors which maintain the dignity and integrity of the profession.

• Shall accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities.

• Shall keep in confidence information acquired about colleagues in the course of employment, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

• Shall not use coercive means to give special treatment in order to influence professional decisions.

• Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or responsibility only on the basis of professional preparation and qualifications.

• Shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to the staff member’s own qualifications or those of other professionals.

Standards of Conduct

Alcohol/Substance Abuse

Possessing, dispensing, or using a controlled substance during work hours without medical prescription is strictly prohibited. Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance without a medical prescription is strictly prohibited.

Any employee with a problem relating to either alcohol or drug abuse is encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (Administrative Services Manager) for referral to treatment services.
Confidentiality
Employees shall adhere to the confidentiality guidelines as established in the Welfare and Institutions Codes of the State of (__________). All information regarding services to individual consumers is protected under the law. Release of such information requires proper authorization.

Employees shall take special precautions to safeguard consumer confidentiality. Each employee shall protect the confidentiality of consumer information, store confidential information and materials in authorized and locked storage facilities, and release such information only with the proper authorizations.

Courtesy
Employees shall not work in a manner that willfully obstructs or hinders the work of another employee, and they shall work in a manner that is conducive to efficiency and safety.

Insubordination
Insubordination is the refusal of a legitimate, work related order from a supervisor or from management personnel, or the use of obscene or otherwise objectionable language to such personnel in a threatening manner. Insubordination undermines the discipline and authority needed in the workplace. All employees shall avoid insubordinate behavior.

Professionalism
Employees shall maintain a high level of professionalism in their work. Among other things, professionalism requires an employee to adhere to the performance and ethical standards of their profession; work in a courteous and efficient manner; undertake continuing efforts to improve relationships with the public, coworkers, and consumers; maintain a positive attitude toward their work; and, at all times, to represent the agency well in their dealings with consumers and the public.

Relationships with Consumers
Employees shall maintain professional and ethical relations with consumers at all times. Professional and ethical standards are contained in the Welfare and Institutions Codes of the State of (_______) and also can be found in various professional codes such as those for Psychologists and Social Workers. Employees are expected to review and become familiar with these standards.

Employees shall not have personal relationships with consumers. Such relationships may subject employees to conflicts of interest which would interfere with effective services to consumers, and they may subject consumers to unnecessary and potentially damaging conflicts and stress which could interfere with their effective use of agency services.
Policy Governing Staff/Individual Relationships

It is a violation of (organization)'s policy and of professional ethics for staff persons to engage in interpersonal relationships with individuals receiving services through the agency beyond what is necessary and approved by (organization)'s administration for therapeutic service to its individuals. Specifically, "dating" is forbidden between staff persons and the individuals served. Any activities for which a staff person volunteers time and companionship to an individual outside paid time must have (organization)'s administrative approval.

All staff-individual relationships must be formed for professional purposes only. In a professional relationship, staff persons will devote themselves to interests and needs of individuals, rather than to personal interests. Professional relationships are to be based on objectivity and self-awareness which allow staff persons to step outside of personal and emotional needs, and to be sensitive to the needs of the individuals.

It is recognized that relationships and activities with individuals will cause internal personal satisfactions and frustrations for staff persons, but external reactions must be objective, and not based on emotional responses.

Staff persons are encouraged to incorporate empathy, warmth, and genuineness into their style of instruction and communication with individuals, but with the awareness that these qualities are reinforcing to individuals, and must consciously be used in an objective manner which will not interfere with the professional relationship.

Violation of this policy will result in the termination of employment.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Policy Statement

A conflict of interest on the part of a board member or employee exists when a business transaction involving the board member or employee shall benefit those parties to the detriment of (organization name). There is no prohibition under state law against a corporation entering into business transactions with its board members and employees. Such transactions will be avoided except in such cases where avoidance would not be in the best interest of the corporation.

Definition

Employee: Corporate and agency administrative employees including department heads, central services personnel including the department or division head; employees who have regular vendor contact, authority to sign contracts, or as designated by the president.
Responsibility: President of the Board
Requests annual written disclosures of any interest which could lead to a conflict of interest.

Responsibility: Board Members and/or Stipulated Employees
Fills out Declaration of Interest Form. If no conflict or potential conflict of interest exists, write “none” and sign. If an interest in a company currently or with a potential interest in dealing with [organization name], list the following: Name of company, type of interest, title, if applicable.

Responsibility: [Organization name]
Will not enter into a contract with board members or employees unless contract is awarded after a public bidding. When public bidding is inappropriate, a disinterested officer of [organization name] shall survey competitors of the interested board member or employee to determine whether the arrangement is the most beneficial to [organization name]. Support for the findings (including a list of the competitors contacted) shall be entered into the records and be available for review by the board of directors or its designee.

Responsibility: Board Member and/or Stipulated Employees
Shall not participate in decision-making process for transactions of which he has an interest.
Will leave the room when transactions for which he has an interest are discussed and voted on. Absence will be noted in board minutes.
Business will be deferred if a quorum is not present due to the absence of a board member.
The following will serve as a basic guide to types of activities that may cause conflict and are to be fully reported to the corporation.

1. Gifts, Gratuities, and Entertainment
   Acceptance by an individual (including family members) of gifts, excessive or unusual entertainment, or other favors from any outside concern which does, or is seeking to do business with the corporation under circumstances from which it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence the individual in the performance of his duties.

2. Investments– Financial Interests
   a. Holding by an individual, directly or indirectly, of material financial interest in any outside concern from which the corporation buys goods or services (including the service of buying or selling stocks, bonds, or other securities).
   b. Competition with the corporation by an individual, directly or indirectly, in the purchase or sale of property or property rights of interest.
c. Representation of the corporation by an individual (or family members) in any transaction for a material financial interest.

3. Outside Activities

(Organization name) is a tax-exempt organization under both Federal and State law. Donations to the agency are deductible for income tax purposes by contributors. The status of (organization name) is in recognition of the fact that its purposes and objects are in the public interest, with its assets and earnings being irrevocably committed to the furtherance of tax-exempt purposes. It is the responsibility of all employees of (organization name) to insure that the organization’s assets, facilities, earnings, reputation, and good-will are in no way used by any person for private benefit.
Appendix B

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Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment

Developed for APSE by: Dale DiLeo, Rebecca McDonald, and Susan Killam

Reprinted with permission from APSE

Contribution in the community as a valued, interdependent member occurs when human dignity is respected and opportunities are provided for each individual to pursue their unique path of development and fulfillment. While paid human service professionals cannot create inclusive communities, they can positively impact their emergence and growth. For trainers of staff in supported employment, these basic human principles should be considered:

**Individuality**
People receive assistance as unique individuals with varying interest and aptitudes. They should not be grouped together on the basis of label, functioning level, or convenience of support.

**Choice**
There are sufficient options related to individuals’ interests and desires in life in order to exercise control and autonomy over the direction of their lives.

**Respect**
Services are always dignified, age appropriate, and enhancing.

**Participation**
People have the opportunity to actively participate in all pursuits of life.

**Competence**
Individuals are provided opportunities to develop skills of interest and use in their lives by discovering expressing gifts and capacities.

**Social Connectedness**
People have access to diverse individuals in social contexts in order to build friendships, working relationships, and networks of individuals who share interests, settings, or other commonalities.

**Community Settings with Minimal Intrusion**
Services are designed to support persons in their pursuit of a quality life in natural settings in ways which minimize artificiality or restrictiveness.
Employment

At all times, the individual receiving supports is the central driving force in the development of options and decisions. In the design of training specific to integrated employment, professionals have an obligation to reflect the following principles and accomplishments in an effort to promote services consistent with human dignity:

Career Planning

Employment should be an option for any person interested in working, regardless of label or perceived functioning level. Persons are able to personally convey information, or invite family or friends to provide information of their personal interests, skills, and aptitudes, and life goals. These considerations are the basis for choices in employment opportunity, rather than program or agency considerations.

In accessing information, maximum use of personal networks and situational experiences provides information to help guide career support, rather than focusing on limitations which exclude people from possibilities. Individual rights to confidentiality are observed.

Job Development

Approaches for developing employer relations and linking individuals with private and public sector labor needs are respectful and image enhancing. Jobs developed are reflective of personal interests and abilities as well as employer needs. Materials and interactions are professional and businesslike. People are not portrayed in ways which contribute to stereotypes or other misperceptions of individuals with disabilities. At no time is hiring pursued based on charity.

Job Placement

Job placement decisions are made by the individual based on reliable information of job quality, work culture, and employee/employer benefit. Jobs are individually arranged as possible to match well to a person’s interests, skills and aptitudes. While some work experiences can be productive for building an employment history and developing skills, these experiences are thought of as initial career steps and not as career fulfillment. Job placements are not made on the basis of service convenience or availability.

Work Support

Existing supports natural to the work environment are maximized for training and ongoing support. Artificial training or unusual programs to change behavior are minimized. Teaching techniques which may convey poor images, stigma, or devalued status are not used. Best training practices and technology appropriate to the setting and culture are utilized. Appropriate evaluations and outcome measures are provided. Specialized jargon from the disability field is minimized. At all times the business culture is respected and integrated into the support network for the individual to succeed.
Use of accommodations technology or other job modifications needed are explored and developed in consideration of their potential for success and generalization to other life domains.

**Life Support**
Efforts to provide a holistic and integrated life service support are made. Individuals have consistent service and community opportunities which connect to the fabric of work, home, social, and recreational needs. Measures are undertaken to ensure that the individual’s family members and friends are involved in planning efforts.

**Career Advancement**
Persons have the opportunity and support to advance to other employment opportunities. Advancement is based upon the perspective of personal future goals but is not contingent upon restrictive program guidelines concerning employment duration. Feedback on the success of positions within a career is dependent on the individual employee, employers, and the input of family and significant other to the person.

**Staff Training**
Training, both in topic and format, is generated by the needs of service recipients and their trainers and promotes skills and value development which will enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities. To this end, the following training principles are endorsed:

- Training results in better learning outcomes when it is offered proactively rather than a reaction to crises situations.
- The best training is an empowerment of individuals or agencies to become competent to provide their own ongoing training.
- Training is an interactive process which needs to be ongoing to respond to dynamic needs and to ensure that state-of-the-art practices are being conveyed.
- There is respect and encouragement for what can be learned from each other from all training participants.
- There is an effort to build local capacity and leverage existing local resources, knowledge, and expertise.
- No one trainer, technique, or approach has the one right answer. A trainer has an obligation to bring in the diversity of approaches from the field and to state when she/he does not have an answer.
- Trainers keep current on state-of-the-art practices in the field and do not present dated information.
- There is an avoidance of presenting “quick fix” solutions which go beyond the data presented.
• Good adult learning principles are incorporated into training design.
• Trainees are active participants in identifying training outcomes and options based on what is needed to enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities.
• An effort is made to assess the audience’s needs and level of understanding before any training is offered.
• Whenever possible, follow-ups to training are done to see how the information presented is being implemented.
• Trainers need to stay involved in direct services and with the individuals served so their training remains grounded in reality.
• Confidentiality of individual’s personal life experiences are respected and maintained.
• There is a commitment to respond to feedback from the training audience and to consider the evaluative information for future training.
• Training is only presented in the areas in which the trainer is qualified.
• Skill and value development require application and reinforcement.
Trainees are encouraged to participate, reinforced for implementation of new skills, and supported to train others in their organizations and communities.
• Training is structured so that the trainees can apply skills easily and share the informational content in a meaningful way with others.
• The evaluation of training effectiveness is a complex but necessary process that is conducted regularly with trainees.

the associations for persons in supported employment

Supported Employment Professional’s
Statement of Adoption

As a supported employment professional, I, _____________________________ hereby adopt these Ethical Guidelines and agree to honor the state principles herein.

Signature _____________________________ Date ____________
Code of Ethics

Reprinted with permission from ARC/Escambia

ARC/Escambia is an organization charged with improving the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities in Northwest Florida.

The membership of ARC/Escambia supports its Board of Directors and all personnel and adheres to the following Code of Ethics:

• Shall strive for the highest standard of excellence in training, support, advocacy, and service.
• Shall insist on honesty, fairness, and responsible stewardship, and ethical behavior in all business, financial, marketing, and service practices.
• Shall encourage and advocate for the wishes, dreams, and aspirations of persons with developmental disabilities.
• Shall value the trust of people who receive services and their families.
• Shall provide intergenerational activities for members of the family.
• Shall provide programs designed to meet the needs of individuals with an emphasis on the choice for integration, development, teamwork, and leadership.
• Shall respect the privacy of persons we serve and protect the rights of confidentiality.
• Shall provide habilitation services as a public trust, which requires integrity, compassion, and respect for individual difference and choice.
• Shall advocate for services within our community, state, and nation, which provide support to families and individuals.
• Shall encourage and advocate for the protection of the individual and community against unethical and/or inappropriate practices or actions by others individuals or organizations engaged in providing services to persons with developmental disabilities.
• Shall not discriminate because of race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and shall work to eliminate or prevent such discrimination in rendering services.

Adherence to these guidelines will help create a climate conducive to cooperation, innovation, and discovery.
Code of Ethics

Reprinted with permission from Chinook Enterprises

It is the intent of the board of directors that Chinook Enterprises operate within the highest moral, ethical, and business standards for conduct and service in the communities we serve.

It is expected that the staff of Chinook Enterprises will conduct themselves in a professionally competent manner that upholds the highest example for persons receiving services by the organization, other agencies, employers, and the community at large. Persons with disabilities and other service recipients must always be treated with the highest degree of dignity and respect. Services must center on their individualized needs, preferences, and desired outcomes and they must be given continuous opportunities for input into their service program.

The board of directors of Chinook Enterprises is selected to represent diversity in our community and its values and beliefs. The board of directors has the responsibility to set the governing policies for Chinook Enterprises. As such, board members are expected to provide exceptional leadership for the organization by attending meetings, participating in discussions, representing the organization in the community, remaining current on issues of concern to Chinook Enterprises and its mission, and monitor the operations of the organization.

Chinook Enterprises interacts with many different stakeholder groups on a continuous basis. These include funding sources, employers, family members, other service agency staff, and the general community. The quality of this interaction has a direct impact on the quality of our services. It is expected that the board, management, and staff of Chinook Enterprises will treat all stakeholder groups in an open and forthright manner at all times. At every opportunity, Chinook Enterprises staff and board will educate and inform stakeholder groups about community inclusion for persons receiving services.

An organization like Chinook Enterprises can only achieve its mission if it is financially stable and utilizes honest, ethical and professional business practices. To insure that the organization maintains a solid financial base, our financial practices are governed by specific policies covering the way we determine charges for services, and prices for products or contract work. These are based on sound costing information and are competitive in the markets within which we conduct business.

“Developing and maintaining quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities”
Code of Ethics

Reprinted with permission from Habilitative Systems, Inc.

Preamble:
It is the goal of HSI to provide an example for other human service, non-profit organizations, by establishing a high standard of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct. HSI intends to create an environment that fosters ethical conduct, where no employee will ever feel the need to compromise personal integrity to help achieve the mission of the agency.

The Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which the Habilitative Systems, Inc. staff aspire and by which their actions can be judged. The Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, the code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues disputes, nor capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community.

The Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics is relevant to all Habilitative Systems, Inc.’s board of directors, staff, volunteers, and consultants, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the population they serve. While working under the Habilitative Systems, Inc.’s Code of Ethics, the staff, volunteers and consultants must be conscientious, committed, and honest in their work as well as in aspects of their private lives that are related to their respective jobs in the organization.

A copy of the Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics will be given to all staff, volunteers and consultants to read and sign prior to assuming any work duties, work assignments or job responsibilities. This signed acknowledgement will ensure their understanding of Habilitative Systems, Inc.’s principles, philosophy, and values for service delivery, and cultivate their interaction with the organization’s consumers and clients.

Habilitative Systems, Inc. board, staff, volunteers, or consultants, who violate the Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics may be subjected to termination from their role as a board member or role as an employee. Investigations and actions taken in response to alleged violations of the Code of Ethics will be conducted in accordance with the Habilitative Systems, Inc.’s Personnel Policies and Procedures.

By signing the Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics, I, as a board member, employee, volunteer, or consultant of Habilitative Systems, Inc. affirm that all principles, therein, will be upheld to the fullest.
Part 1—Ethics related to Agency Personnel Policies

- I will adhere to the client’s rights as established in the HSI Clients Rights and Grievance Policy and Procedures.

- I will not use my professional relationship with clients/consumers to further my own interests. My primary responsibility is to promote the well being of the clients and consumers.

- I will respect the privacy of clients and consumers and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

- I will not discuss client or consumers’ affairs, program activities, or unusual incidents with any other staff or persons, unless it is within the context of the client or consumer’s treatment/service/care plan goals and objectives.

- I, upon termination or resignation, will maintain client, consumer, colleagues, coworker, and organization confidentiality of any information I obtained while employed with the organization.

- I will respect the rights and views of my colleagues and coworkers and team them with fairness, courtesy, and good faith.

- I will, under no circumstances, engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients or consumers whether such contact is consensual or forced.

- I will not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients or consumers’ relatives or other individuals with whom clients and consumers maintain close personal relationships.

- I will not engage in sexual activities or sexual conduct with former clients or consumers because of the potential for harm to the client or consumer.

- I will not financially exploit clients or consumers by borrowing or stealing money.

- I will not accept goods, gifts, and services or enter into a bartering arrangement with clients or consumers, as payment for professional services.

- I will not solicit a private fee or other form of payment, for providing services to clients or consumers who are entitled to such available services through the organization.

- I will not engage in or condone any form of harassment or discrimination either with coworkers, clients, or consumers.

- I will respect the confidences of my coworkers, clients, and consumers.

- I will not engage in a physical or verbal confrontation with my coworkers, clients, or consumers.
Employment and Community Services

• I will not engage in physical contact with clients or consumers, when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client or consumer as a result of the contact (e.g., cradling or caressing).

• I will not sexually harass clients, consumers, or coworkers. Sexual harassment includes: sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

• I will not use derogatory language in my writing or verbal communication to or about clients or consumers. I will not use profanity of any sort in my conversation with coworkers, clients, or consumers.

• If I have the responsibility for employing and evaluating staff performance, I will do so in a responsible, fair, considerate, and equitable manner.

• I will accurately represent my education, training, experience, and competencies as they relate to my profession.

• I will correct, when possible, misleading or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning my qualifications or services.

Part 2: Other Ethical Principles

• I will maintain a professional attitude, which upholds confidentiality towards clients, consumers, coworkers, and the organization.

• I will not exploit the trust of the public or my coworkers. I will make every effort to avoid relationships that could impair my professional judgment.

• I will assume the full burden of setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

• I will make every effort to understand culture and its functions in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

• I will seek the knowledge base of clients or consumers’ cultures and demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients and consumers and the differences among people and cultural groups.

• I will obtain education through training and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

• If serving as a supervisor, I will make certain that the qualifications of persons I supervise are honestly represented.

• I will not provide clinical services to individuals with whom I have had a prior intimate relationship.
• I will maintain confidentiality when storing or disposing of client and consumer case records, within the guidelines of Habilitative Systems, Inc.’s records storage and retention policy.

• I will provide services and represent myself as competent, only within the boundaries of my education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

• I will evidence a genuine interest in all clients and consumers receiving services, and do hereby dedicate myself to their best interests and enabling them to help themselves.

• I will not permit fellow coworkers to present themselves as competent or perform services beyond their training and/or level of experience.

• I will not advise on problems outside the bounds of my competence.

• When I assume another colleague/coworker’s position or someone assumes my position, I will act with consideration for the interest, character, and reputation of the other professional.

• If I see the client or consumer of a coworker during a temporary absence or emergency, I will serve that client with the same consideration afforded any client or consumer.

• I will not assume professional responsibility for the clients or consumers of coworkers without appropriate consultation or assignment by the program supervisor or division director.

• I will extend respect and cooperation to colleagues and coworkers of all professions, both within Habilitative Systems, Inc. and external to the agency.

• I will seek assistance for any problem that impairs my job performance.

• I will act in accordance with and abide by the HSI Personnel Policies, Procedures and related program services Standards of Operations.

• I have total commitment to provide the highest quality of services to those who seek my assistance with Habilitative Systems, Inc.

• I will continually assess my personal strengths, limitations, biases, and effectiveness.

• I will strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of my job functions.

• I will act in accordance with the integrity of HSI’s mission, purpose, and values.

• I understand that the Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics is not ranked whereby one ethical statement is more important than any other one. The above are considered equally important.
• I understand that violation of Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics may be grounds for termination.
• If I know a coworker has violated ethical standards, I will bring this to my coworker’s attention and report the activity to my supervisor.
• I have been given a copy of the Habilitative Systems, Inc. Code of Ethics and a copy will be maintained in my personnel file.

Employees who do not have a written, individual employment contract are employed “at the will” of the organization and are subject to termination at any time, for any reason, with or without cause of notice. At the same time, such employees may terminate their employment at any time for any reason.

Name/Title/Date
(Board member, Employee’s, Volunteer’s or Consultant’s Signature)

Witnessed by: (Name and Title) Date

Rev/ 1/2000

*Adapted from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, Non-Profit Services Code of Ethics, CARF and COA Standards.
M E R S pledges to set the standard for professional conduct by acting with integrity. We know that acting with integrity builds credibility, both within the organization and throughout the communities within which we operate. A reputation for integrity is a significant corporate asset. The Board of Directors and the executive staff are committed to making M E R S the most valued company in our field. We will accomplish this by saying what we mean, doing what we say, and making a positive difference in the lives of the people we serve.

M E R S aims to set the standard for ethical conduct by subscribing to the established Codes of Ethics for social workers, certified rehabilitation counselors, certified public accountants, and other relevant professions. Beyond this, M E R S endorses five basic principles:

**Honesty**
To be truthful in all our endeavors, to be honest and forthright with one another and with our consumers, referral sources, and community partners.

**Respect**
To treat one another with dignity and fairness, appreciating the diversity of our workforce and the uniqueness of each employee.

**Trust**
To build confidence through teamwork and open, candid communication at all levels of the organization.

**Responsibility**
To speak up without fear of retribution and report concerns in the workplace, including violations of laws, regulations, ethical standards, and company policies, and seek clarification and guidance when in doubt.

**Citizenship**
To obey the laws of the land, work to make our communities more productive, and act with pride and confidence as a representative of M E R S.

We promise to apply the standard of integrity to all we do as related to: our staff, board of directors, financial practices, marketing activities, consumer services, referral/funding source interests, and other stakeholders’ issues.
The following examples provide a framework within which MERS applies the foregoing standard:

**Treat in an Ethical Manner Those to Whom MERS has an Obligation.** We are committed to the ethical treatment of those to whom we have an obligation.

For our employees we are committed to honesty, just management, and fairness, providing a safe and healthy environment, opportunity for career growth, and respecting the dignity due everyone.

For our customers we are committed to produce reliable products and consumer-driven services, delivered in a timely manner, at a fair price, and with expected outcomes.

For the communities in which we live and work, we are committed to acting as concerned and responsible neighbors as we seek ways to share MERS mission with others, reflecting all aspects of good citizenship.

For our funding sources and governing authorities we are committed to pursuing financial stability, sound growth, and to exercising prudence in the use of our assets and resources.

**Obey the Law.** We will conduct our business in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Compliance with the law does not comprise our entire ethical responsibility. Rather, it is a minimum, absolutely essential condition for performance of our duties.

**Promote a Positive Work Environment.** All employees want and deserve a workplace where they feel respected, satisfied, and appreciated. Harassment or discrimination of any kind and especially involving race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, and veteran or marital status is unacceptable in our workplace environment.

Providing an environment that supports the honesty, integrity, respect, trust, responsibility, and citizenship of every employee permits us the opportunity to achieve excellence in our workplace. While everyone who works for MERS must contribute to the creation and maintenance of such an environment, our executive and management personnel assume responsibility for fostering a context for work that will bring out the best in all of us.

**Work Safely: Protect Yourself and Your Fellow Employees.** We are committed to providing a drug-free, safe, and healthy work environment. Each of us is responsible for compliance with environmental, health, and safety laws and regulations. Observe posted warnings and regulations. Report immediately to the appropriate management staff person any accident or injury sustained on the job, or any environmental or safety concern you may have.
Keep Accurate and Complete Records. We must maintain accurate and complete records. Transactions between MERS and outside individuals and organizations must be promptly and accurately entered in our books in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and principles. Entries into the case record must be made in a timely manner and reflect the desires and preferences of the persons receiving services, the services provided in response, and the actual outcomes achieved. Financial records and case record information must be treated with strict confidentiality. No one should rationalize or even consider misrepresenting facts, falsifying records, or compromising confidentiality. It is illegal, will not be tolerated, and will result in disciplinary action.

Steer Clear of Conflicts of Interest. Playing favorites or having conflicts of interest— in practice or in appearance— runs counter to the fair treatment which we are all entitled. Avoid any relationship, influence, or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair, your ability to make objective and fair decisions when performing your job. When in doubt, share the facts of the situation with your supervisor.

Mechanism to Address Violations of the Standard

Any allegation of violation of MERS standards for integrity will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by the appropriate executive staff member or governing authority in accordance with policies set forth in the Personnel Practices Code. In these situations where a potential breach of an established professional Code of Ethics may have occurred, the allegation will be reported to the appropriate board for review.
Code of Ethics

Reprinted with permission from Polk Vocational Services

Preamble: We, the board, management, and staff of Polk Vocational Services, in order to provide high quality rehabilitation, personal development, and meaningful employment services to our consumers and stakeholders, do ordain and establish this code of ethics for the organization and its personnel.

Part I—Responsibility to Consumers

Article 1. In accepting a consumer for services at Polk Vocational Services, the organization’s personnel pledge themselves to protect and promote the interests and informed choices of consumers by making it possible to develop their ultimate potential.

Article 2. With full knowledge that Polk Vocational Services exists for the purpose of providing services to our consumers, the organization’s personnel should strive to provide the highest level of quality services prescribed for our consumers.

Article 3. A consumer should not exit the training program before he/she is ready for placement, but when ready, every effort should be made to place him/her in suitable employment or other appropriate referral.

Article 4. Polk Vocational Services personnel should strive to set a proper example for its consumers in the areas of personal development, proper social skills, and good work habits.

Part II—Responsibility to the Public

Article 5. Polk Vocational Services personnel should strive to maintain a good rapport with all stakeholders and cooperating agencies in the community.

Article 6. The Board of Directors should be representative of a good cross section of the community to be able to inform every segment of the community of the quality services Polk Vocational Services provides.

Article 7. Interested individuals and groups should be encouraged to visit and tour the facility to acquaint themselves with the services provided.

Article 8. Periodic publicity through local news media should be practiced.

Article 9. Polk Vocational Services personnel should promote the aims and purposes of the organization through active participation in civic, governmental, and social affairs.
Part III—Responsibility to Organizational Personnel

Article 10. Polk Vocational Services personnel should have a wide variety of background experiences and training. The individuals should be willing to impart these experiences and training to their professional counterparts and the consumers receiving services.

Article 11. Visitation experiences with other like organizations should be encouraged to facilitate better cooperation and understanding through shared experiences.

Article 12. Unethical competition and practices should never be allowed to exist among consumers, like organizations, and local businesses since such practices would have a devastating effect on the organization’s mission.

Part IV—Responsibility of the Board of Directors and Administration

Article 13. The members of the board of directors and the administrator will conduct themselves in an ethical manner by consistently following the precepts of the organization’s constitution and by-laws and following a policy that clearly addresses conflicts of interest.

Article 14. The board will annually approve the budget, review the corrective action plan for accessibility, review the organization’s outcome measurement report, review the independent financial report, review the organization’s insurance coverage, and assure that the organization is utilizing current technology in order to maintain competitiveness and to ensure efficiency.

Article 15. The board and administrator will continually review the mission of the organization and make modifications as appropriate and will continue to develop strategic planning efforts to ensure that the organization receives appropriate leadership.

Article 16. The board should maintain its “open door” policy for all staff members, consumers, and other stakeholders in order to receive input on a continuing basis.

Article 17. In order to promote full accessibility, the administrator and board will adopt an accessibility plan which annually evaluates barriers to consumers and others in the community: Architectural, Employment, Transportation, Communication, Attitudinal, and any others that limit access.

Part V—Responsibility for Business and Financial Practices

Article 18. The organization’s business and financial practices will be conducted in accordance with solid and recognized ethical business practices, all funds accruing to the organization will be accounted for, and regular financial reports will be developed, maintained, and reviewed by the administrator and the board on a regular basis.

Article 19. All funds kept for individuals receiving services will be strictly accounted for to ensure the integrity of the system.
Article 20. All policies and procedures that guide the financial and business practices will be in writing, reviewed on a regular basis, and adhered to on a consistent basis.

Article 21. The administrator will develop and submit to the board of directors a monthly report which details the month’s business and financial activities.

Part VI—Responsibility for Marketing Activities

Article 22. The administrator will ensure that all products and services will be marketed in a manner which does not diminish nor disrespect the persons receiving services. The staff and board will use person first language when referring to persons receiving services in both written and oral discourse, and efforts to solicit business will not depict persons receiving services in ways that are designed to elicit sympathy.

Article 23. In order to ensure that our customers receive quality products and services, the organization will develop and maintain a systematic quality assurance program. Staff will have specific quality assurance responsibilities identified in their job descriptions and individual performance in these areas will be assessed, with appropriate feedback, on an annual basis.

Conclusion

The name, Polk Vocational Services, should become a name that connotes utmost competence, dedication, quality, and high integrity as it pertains to the services provided to customers, consumers and stakeholders. Nothing should stand between the initiation of that service and the conclusion of its objective.

Reviewed/Revised

________________________________________
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________________________________________
Executive Director

________________________________________
Date Implemented
RESNA Standards of Practice for Assistive Technology Providers

Reprinted with permission from The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America

These Standards of Practice set forth fundamental concepts and rules considered essential to promote the highest ethical standards among individuals who evaluate, assess the need for, recommend, or provide assistive technology. In the discharge of their professional obligations assistive technology practitioners and suppliers shall observe the following principles and rules:

1. Individuals shall keep paramount the welfare of those receiving services professionally.
2. Individuals shall engage in only those services that are within the scope of their competence, considering the level of education and experience and training, and shall recognize the limitations imposed by the extent of their personal skills and knowledge in any professional area.
3. In making determinations as to what areas of practice are within their competency, assistive technology practitioners and suppliers shall observe all applicable licensure laws, consider the qualifications for certification or other credentials offered by recognized authorities in the primary professions which comprise the field of assistive technology, and abide by all relevant standards of practice and ethical principals, including RESNA’s Code of Ethics.
4. Individuals shall truthfully, fully, and accurately represent their credentials, competency, education, training, and experience in both the field of assistive technology and the primary profession in which they are members. To the extent practical, individuals shall disclose their primary profession in all forms of communication, including advertising, that refers to their credential in assistive technology.
5. Individuals shall, at a minimum, inform consumers or their advocates of any employment affiliations, financial, or professional interests that may be perceived to bias recommendations, and in some cases, decline to provide services or supplies where the conflict of interest is such that is may fairly be concluded that such affiliation or interest is likely to impair professional judgments.
6. Individuals shall use every resource reasonably available to ensure that the identified needs of consumers are met, including referral to other practitioners or sources which may provide the needed service or supply within the scope of their competence.
7. Individuals shall cooperate with members of other professions, where appropriate, in delivering services to consumers, and shall actively participate in the team process when the consumer’s needs require such an approach.
8. Individuals shall offer an appropriate range of assistive technology services which include assessment, evaluation, recommendations, training, adjustments at delivery, and follow-up and modifications after delivery.

9. Individuals shall verify the consumer’s needs by using direct assessment or evaluation procedures with the consumer.

10. Individuals shall assure that the consumer fully participates, and is fully informed about all reasonable options available, regardless of finances, in the development of recommendations for intervention strategies.

11. Individuals shall consider future and emerging needs when developing intervention strategies and fully inform the consumer of those needs.

12. Individuals shall avoid providing and implementing technology which expose the consumer to unreasonable risk, and shall advise the consumer as fully as possible of all known risks. Where adjustments, instruction for use, or necessary modifications are likely to be required to avoid or minimize such risks, individuals shall make sure that such information or service is provided.

13. Individuals shall fully inform consumers or their advocates about all relevant aspects, including the financial implications, of all final recommendations for the provision of technology, and shall not guaranty the results of any service or technology. Individuals may, however, make reasonable statements about prognosis.

14. Individuals shall maintain adequate records of the technology evaluation, assessment, recommendations, services, or products provided and preserve confidentiality of those records, unless required by law, or unless the protection of the welfare of the person or the community requires otherwise.

15. Individuals shall endeavor, through ongoing professional development, including continuing education, to remain current on all aspects of assistive technology relevant to their practice including accessibility, funding, legal or public issues, recommended practices, and emerging technologies.

16. Individuals shall endeavor to institute procedures, on an ongoing basis, to evaluate, promote, and enhance the quality of service delivered to all consumers.

17. Individuals shall be truthful and accurate in all public statements concerning assistive technology, assistive technology practitioners and suppliers, services, and products dispensed.

18. Individuals shall not invidiously discriminate in the provision of services or supplies on the basis of disability, race, national origin, religion, creed, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

19. Individuals shall not charge for services not rendered, nor misrepresent in any fashion services delivered or products dispensed for reimbursement or any other purpose.
20. Individuals shall not engage in fraud, dishonesty, or misrepresentation of any kind, or any form of conduct that adversely reflects on the field of assistive technology, or the individual’s fitness to serve consumers professionally.

21. Individuals whose professional services are adversely affected by substance abuse or other health-related conditions shall seek professional advice, and where appropriate, withdraw from the affected area of practice.

**Code of Ethics**

RESNA is an interdisciplinary association for the advancement of rehabilitation and assistive technology. It adheres to and promotes the highest standards of ethical conduct. Its members:

- Hold paramount the welfare of persons receiving services professionally.
- Practice only in their area(s) of competence and maintain high standards.
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information.
- Engage in no conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest or that adversely reflects on the association and, more broadly, on professional practice.
- Seek deserved and reasonable remuneration for services.
- Inform and educate the public on rehabilitation/assistive technology and its applications.
- Issue public statements in an objective and truthful manner.
- Comply with the laws and policies that guide professional practice.
A Code of Ethics

Reprinted with permission from Stepping Stones

Introduction

This document outlines A Code of Ethics for various operations or departments of Stepping Stones. The management team generated it, with assistance from the Board of Directors, the consumers, and staff. We welcome your comments and suggestions as we update this document each year. Our goal is to provide a safe, interesting and challenging environment for all that learn, work, and volunteer at Stepping Stones.

1. Policy for Staff

Stepping Stones seeks to promote professional excellence and encourages open and honest communication among all employees to create an atmosphere conducive to personal growth and career development.

The Personnel Policies provide a comprehensive overview of staff rights and responsibilities and other ethical responsibilities for staff to adhere to regarding the people we serve. A few highlights are provided here.

We pledge the following:

- To encourage employee development by providing a comprehensive agency wide training program.
- To evaluate employees on a fair and consistent basis in a timely manner.
- To show respect and empathy for employees.
- To regularly solicit and respect the opinions of all staff.
- To ensure fair, unbiased hiring and promotion procedures.
- To honor the privacy of all employees.
- To set a high standard for professionalism for all staff.

Our employees will:

- Strive to meet performance standards at the highest level.
- Refuse to engage in or tolerate any fraud, misuse, abuse or waste of Stepping Stones’ resources.
- Encourage growth and self-improvement in themselves and their coworkers.
- Exhibit respect for coworkers and all those they come into contact with.
- Have the courage to face situations squarely and offer a minority opinion when necessary.
• Examine all alternatives with the understanding that the easiest action is not always in the best interest of Stepping Stones.
• Comply with all legal requirements concerning substance abuse.
• Comply with all other laws and regulations affecting the organization and their personal obligations.
• Discuss any questions concerning interpretations or compliance with the code of ethics with their supervisor.
• Encourage the reporting of breaches of the code and protect those who report.

2. Policy for the Board of Directors and Other Volunteers

Volunteers who serve on Stepping Stones’ Board of Directors and other volunteers are crucial to our success. In order to assist volunteers to serve effectively and to obtain satisfaction from their services paid staff will:
• Support volunteers so they can perform to the highest level of their contribution and personal satisfaction.
• Treat all volunteers with fairness, equity, and respect.
• Provide opportunities for their views and interests to be expressed.
• Involve volunteers at appropriate levels and phases of the decision-making process.
• Assist in the development and understanding of the roles of volunteers and employees.
• Set clear standards of performance for volunteers.
• Recognize their contributions.

Responsibilities of Volunteers
• To review the Code of Ethics of Stepping Stones and ensure that they adhere to the spirit of the Code when making policy or otherwise managing the affairs of Stepping Stones.
• Do not knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of Stepping Stones in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on themselves, or their family members.
• If there is an issue for consideration or decision that raises a potential conflict of interest for any member of the board or volunteer, the member shall disclose the potential conflict of interest and refrain from discussing or voting.
3. Policy for our small businesses, Boatworks and CleanSweep

We will strive to provide excellent boat cleaning and detailing and grounds maintenance and janitorial services to our business customers while providing a superior training opportunity for our trainees.

We are an equal opportunity employer, providing training for eligible persons referred by the Dept. of Rehabilitation.

We pledge the following:

- To provide customers with top quality work.
- To be competitive in our pricing.
- To solicit feedback on our services from customers twice a year.
- To share the feedback with vocational staff and consumers.
- To respond promptly to customer complaints.
- To give fair estimates and attempt to stick to them.
- To be accountable for damage done in the course of the work.
- To charge for our services— all staff, families, and board members must pay for crew services (We do provide a discounted rate for staff and clients).
- To never accept kick backs or special deals from any of our vendors or customers.
- To respect the confidentiality of our consumers in all business dealings.
- Staff will not engage in outside employment in a similar business that would compete with Boatworks or CleanSweep.

4. Policy for Marketing and Public Relations

We will honestly represent Stepping Stones in all advertising, agency or program brochures, press releases, or other publicity. We will not exaggerate or embellish the facts for the purpose of getting publicity or landing a large business contract or grant.

5. Policy for treatment of persons receiving services

The Consumer Handbook provides an overview of Stepping Stones policies and procedures for all programs offered. Included is a section of client rights and responsibilities, which details the treatment of persons receiving services. Every consumer is given a handbook by his/her program manager who explains the contents during the orientation period. See the 1999 edition of the Handbook.
6. Policy for fiscal operations and fund development

We are accountable to our business customers, state and local funders, and all donors to manage the finances of Stepping Stones in the best accounting practices and highest ethical standards.

We pledge the following:

- To make full and fair disclosures of all relevant information to donors and funders who have a right to know how their dollars are spent.
- Spend donations wisely, efficiently and objectively.
- To respect the contracts of all foundations regarding restricted funds.
- To strive to maintain a balanced budget and live within our means.
- To account for our financial status in monthly reports to staff and board.
- To maintain internal fiscal controls that keep us honest.