



ETHICS

Trainer Guide

Hotline Operator Training

Continuing Education

ETHICS

Agenda

I. Introduction

- A. Housekeeping/Agenda/Competencies
- B. Icebreaker - Why address ethics?

II. Defining Ethics

- A. Defining your own values
- B. What are ethics?

III. Guidelines for Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

- A. Defining ethical dilemmas
- B. Steps for ethical problem solving

IV. Exercising your Ethical Principles

- A. Small group exercise – Case scenarios
- B. Large group discussion – Putting your values/beliefs into practice

V. Conclusion/Evaluation

ETHICS

SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

TIME: 25 Minutes (9:00 – 9:25)

DHS Council On Accreditation Competency Addressed

❖ G7.1.03 (c)

Objectives: Participants will

- Become familiar with the trainer and the training group members.
- Receive an overview of the training agenda and know which practice competencies will be addressed in this module.
- Be introduced to the importance of exploring ethics within the professional setting.

Materials

- Participant manuals
- Whiteboard or flipchart stands and markers

A. Housekeeping

As needed. Some suggestions for thorough attention to this area include:

- Sign-in Sheets. Sign-in sheets must be completed. Direct participants to print names and information legibly to ensure proper information is available to enter into database.
- Smoking Areas. Training rooms are non-smoking environments. Direct smokers in the group to approved smoking locations.
- Training Center Facilities. Direct participants to the location of bathrooms, phones, message boards, and other important facility sites.
- Pagers/Cell Phones/Office Work. Turn pagers to vibrate. Turn cell phones to vibrate or off during training. Do not bring office work to training. Telephone messages will be posted at a designated place in the facility.

- Evaluations. We ask every participant to evaluate the training and the trainer at the conclusion of the training. The evaluation form has sections for comments about this training and suggestions for future trainings.

B. Introductions

As needed. Suggestions for this area include:

- Welcome the participants to the training.
- Introduce yourself and provide information about your education, experience, and background.
- Allow group members to introduce themselves if unknown to each other.

C. Review materials → IMPORTANT, Don't skip this step!

Spend a few minutes checking to see that participants have all of the materials you will be covering

D. Review agenda

Review the agenda for the training. Refer participants to **page 1 of the participant manuals.** There is a powerpoint presentation to accompany this training. Trainers may choose to either show the presentation using a projector or make overhead transparencies of the slides.

E. Large Group Listing – Why are you here today?

Purpose

To have group members to identify reasons it is important to attend training in ethics and issues they would like addressed during the training.

Methodology

Write the following questions on a whiteboard (or have an overhead prepared.) They are also on page 2 of the PM.

What kinds of “ethical dilemmas” have you faced in your professional life (that you are willing to share?)

Have you been in a situation at work where you were “uncomfortable”?

Have you ever witnessed unfair or unethical behavior of a colleague toward the public you serve?

Record the group’s answers on flip chart paper or directly on the overhead.

Discussion

Direct the group to **page 2 of the participant training manual** and ask that they note the following points in the spaces provided.

The study of ethics is important for several reasons.

- To improve our ability to make ethical decisions and, thus, improve the quality of services provided
- To protect ourselves and our agencies from liability, and
- To protect our clients.

F. Case Scenario – Large Group Discussion

Purpose

To get group members thinking about how our own values are realized in the work setting.

Methodology

Ask the entire group to read the scenario titled “Susan” on page 3 of the participant manual. Allow several minutes for the participants to read and consider the scenario. Ask for volunteers to answer the question, “What should Susan do?”

Processing

There will be a variety of responses about what Susan should do. There are several points that can be discussed:

- It will likely create conflict, stress, and tension in the workplace if Susan reports the activity of the coworkers to the supervisor.
- Susan can communicate her approach to her work to her coworkers and try to change their behavior over time.
- The supervisor has a responsibility to know what is going on in the office and, hopefully, attempts to ensure that contacts are routinely made.
- There is a chain of command that Susan can follow within the organization if she attempts to change the behaviors of her coworkers.
- Ultimately, Susan must adhere to what she believes is right.

Conflicts of values are at the heart of ethical problems. Generally, the situation does not “feel” right, causes us to stop and think. The consideration of ethics is subjective in nature.

One of the problems in resolving ethical dilemmas is that we cannot foresee all of the risks or the full extent of the risks of each decision. In ethical decision-making, there is not always a right or wrong.

Resolving ethical problems requires us to consider a menu of options and choose the most agreeable or least unfavorable among the choices.

SECTION II – DEFINING ETHICS

TIME: 30 Minutes (9:25 – 9:55)

Objectives: Participants will

- Establish a common vocabulary for training

Materials

- Participant manuals
- Whiteboard or flipchart stands and markers

A. What are your personal values? – Individual Exercise

Purpose

To establish a common vocabulary for training.

Methodology

Have the participants answer the questions on page 4 of their participant manuals – Your Thoughts on Ethics. Responses will not be collected.

Processing

Go over the group members' responses to the questions. The trainer may choose to share his or her answers to model self-disclosure.

Jot down the participants' responses and begin to note common responses.

Summarize the exercise with the following points:

- Ethics have to do with what we value, our ideals, those things/ideas/etc. that we hold dear.
- Although your values are unique, there are likely some values that most of us here share.
- Generally, a common thread appears within the values identified by a group of professionals. The values of individuals of a “like mind” are going to be drawn together.

One reason to study ethics is to improve the quality of the services we provide.

There are times when adhering to policy results in ethical dilemmas. Acting within the limits set by the law may not always result in the most “ethical” decision. Ethical behavior means much more than adhering to the law or to organizational policy.

B. Defining Ethics

Have the participants turn to **page 5 in their manuals, What Are Ethics**. Cover the definitions of ethics. Ask participants if there are any other definitions of ethics of which they are aware.

A code of ethics is a way of professional self-regulation. It is the **standard** to which professionals of a particular discipline should aspire or must adhere.

Most codes of ethics begin by defining a set of **core values** to which the profession adheres. Examples of core values for child welfare work are:

Safety of children
Permanency for children
Well-being of children

The Division of Children and Family Services of Arkansas has not developed a specific code of ethics for child welfare professionals. There is a Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; however, operators are not sworn law enforcement officials. No specific "code" covers the work of Hotline Operators.

In the absence of such a professional code, what can operators turn to for guidance?

The business world has written and discussed work ethics for years. These business ethics apply directly to the work of the Hotline Operator. Ask the group,
"Who's responsible for acting ethically?"

You are! It isn't the "company." It isn't only managers. It is every person. Ultimately, each of us is responsible for our own actions, including being ethical.

Consider the "3R's" of ethical behavior. Instruct participants to write the information into their **participant manuals on page 6** in the spaces provided.

The first "R" of business ethics is RESPECT. It is an attitude that must be applied to people, organizational resources and your environment. Respect includes behavior such as:

- ❖ Treating everyone (customers, co-workers, vendors, etc.) with dignity and courtesy.
- ❖ Using company supplies, equipment, time, and money appropriately, efficiently, and for business use only.

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- ❖ Protecting and improving your work environment, and abiding by laws, rules and regulations that exist to protect our world and our way of life.

The second "R" of business ethics is RESPONSIBILITY. Employees have a responsibility to customers, co-workers, the organization and themselves. Responsibility includes such behaviors as:

- ❖ Providing timely, high-quality goods and services.
- ❖ Working collaboratively and carrying your share of the load.
- ❖ Meeting all performance expectations and adding value.

The third "R" of business ethics is RESULTS. Essential in attaining results is an understanding that the way results are attained - the "means" - are every bit as important if not more important than the ultimate goals - the "ends."

- ❖ Using the phrase "The ends justify the means" is an excuse that is too often used to explain an emotional response, or action that was not well planned or carefully considered.
- ❖ Obviously, you are expected to get results for your organization and for your customers. However, you are also expected to get those results legally and morally, by being ethical. If you lose sight of the distinction, you jeopardize your job, your business and your career.

By considering Respect, Responsibility and Results before taking action you will avoid the following common rationalizations for not doing what's right:

- ❖ Everyone else does it.
- ❖ They'll never miss it.
- ❖ Nobody will care.
- ❖ The boss does it.

- ❖ No one will know.
- ❖ I don't have time to do it right.
- ❖ That's close enough.
- ❖ Some rules were meant to be broken.
- ❖ It's not my job.

<http://ethics.georgesmay.com/>

SECTION III – GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Time: 15 minutes (9:55 – 10:10)

Objectives: Participants will

- Know the steps for ethical problem solving

Materials

- Participant manuals
- Whiteboard or flipchart stands and markers

A. Defining Ethical Dilemma

Begin this section by defining ethical dilemma.

An ethical dilemma occurs when a professional has to choose between apparently opposing duties and/or values.

B. Steps for Ethical Problem Solving

Have participants turn to **page 7 of the participant manual – Guidelines for making ethical decisions.**

Go over each of the steps and explain the information presented.

Adapted from: Congress, E.P. (1996). Social Work Values and Ethics, Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

E - Examine personal, professional, client, agency, societal values

Examine values

T - Think about the applicable ethical standards, laws and legal precedents that apply

Think about standards

H - Hypothesize different decisions, their outcomes and the impact on relevant systems

Hypothesize

I - Identify who will benefit and who will be harmed by these specific decisions keeping in mind the professional values and mission

Identify

C -Consult

Explain that next they will be asked to apply these steps to various case scenarios presented.

SECTION V – EXAMINING ETHICS

Time: 45 minutes (10:10 – 10:55)

Objectives: Participants will

- Have an opportunity to apply ethical problem solving steps to various case examples

Materials

- Participant manuals
- Whiteboard or flipchart stands and markers

A. Small Group Exercise - Case Scenarios

Purpose

To provide practice in applying the steps to ethical problem solving to case situations and to illustrate to participants the advantages of consulting with others around ethical issues with which they are faced.

Methodology

Have participants turn to **page 8 in their participant manuals – Case Scenarios**. Ask the participants to work in small groups. Trainer may need to assign each group one or two scenarios rather than all groups work on all scenarios.

Ask the participants to

- read the scenario
- discuss the situation as a group
- use the information presented page 7 of the participant manual to develop a recommendation for a plan of action

Each group will elect a spokesperson from one of the groups to present the key points from their discussion.

Processing

Professionals must recognize the value of consulting with colleagues on ethical questions they encounter in practice. In the absence of a formalized “Ethics board” or “committee” within an organization, professionals must rely on one another to assist in resolving ethical dilemmas with which you are faced. It is recommended that professionals use the steps provided (or some other system of examining ethical dilemmas) to assist in defining the ethical values at stake within a certain situation and the most desirable course of action to resolve the situation.

1. Patty is one of the best employees at the Hotline. She is reliable, conscientious, and strives to do her best. She has been employed at the hotline for a number of years. Because of her skill, Patty has become known as the one who can handle “difficult people”.

Last week, Patty took a call where she was cursed and put down. She didn’t respond well and became rude and offensive with the caller. She immediately came to you to report this incident. She was very upset and asked to be allowed to go home. Nothing like this has ever happened with Patty.

After this incident happened, the supervisor talked to Patty’s co-workers. Her co-workers begin to relate that there has been a number of changes in Patty’s behavior over the last several weeks. Her co-workers express concerns that she is “not right,” “acting strange,” and “heading for a meltdown.”

What should co-workers do? Is there anything that co-workers could have done sooner?

What should supervisor do? What role does supervisor have in keeping “in touch” with what is going on with employees?

Discussion:

Are we our brothers' keepers? Do co-workers have responsibility to each other? Do co-workers have responsibility to public if they are concerned about impairment?

2. You are having dinner with a number of friends. One of your friends is talking about her new baby sitter. You immediately know the name, you have knowledge of the baby sitter. The baby sitter in question is a woman with a number of reports of alleged abuse. You want to warn your friend. Do you?

Discussion:

Legally, can the operator warn the friend? What things could the operator do to express concern about the choice?

3. While dining at a local restaurant over the weekend you notice a co-worker having dinner with someone of the opposite sex. The co-worker and dinner guest are laughing and lean in to talk with their heads close over the table. You aren't sure, but you think you saw them hold hands. The situation bothers you because you know the co-worker has been having problems in her marriage; however, you are not sure what you saw. You don't think the co-worker saw you at the restaurant. What would you do?

Discussion: What business is it of yours? The nature of an ethical dilemma is that there is not always a “right” answer. We cannot foresee all of the consequences of choosing to act or choosing not to act.

4. On your off day, you and a co-worker whom you like, respect, and have been fairly good friends with go out for lunch and shopping. At the end of the day, she shows you an item that you don't recall her purchasing. It

isn't an expensive item, you estimate it was under \$5. Something bothers you about it, because you distinctly remember her saying that she was going to put it back. You do not remember her going to the cashier. You aren't 100% sure, but you are almost certain she didn't buy the item. What do you do?

Discussion: You despise thievery. It is a personal deal-breaker for you. You aren't sure if she shoplifted or not, but you have no desire to be friends with, or more importantly, work with someone who steals. If you decide to say nothing, what will likely result? If you decide to say something, what will happen?

5. A co-worker, Claire, is having a really tough time in her personal life. It is common knowledge that her husband left her and has filed for divorce. It is a messy, ugly split. There are two children and the kids are still with your co-worker, but the estranged husband is doing everything he can to get full custody of the children. Another co-worker (who has never liked Claire) tells you that he heard that the husband found out that Claire was having a homosexual affair with a woman who the couple was friends with. You have no idea whether this is true or not. What do you do?

Discussion: If you ask anyone else at the Hotline about this rumor, then you are potentially spreading malicious gossip. If you don't ask, you may never know the truth. You are strongly opposed to homosexual relationships on the basis of your beliefs. What do you do?

6. One of the operators on your shift is constantly broke. She regularly asks people to loan her a couple of dollars or cover her lunch. She does not reliably pay these loans back. It has been a running "joke" but it is getting tiresome and people are beginning to grumble. She is a pretty good co-worker other than this. You think it is time to stop the withdrawals. Times are tough. How do you handle this?

Discussion: How do you address problems with co-workers behaviors that impact you? There are "right" ways and "wrong" ways. What are some of those ways?

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7. Why is it that Sally seems to be able to do exactly as she pleases and not get into trouble for it? She can come in late, take a long lunch, leave early and it doesn't seem to be an issue with the supervisor. There aren't any repercussions for any of her behavior. You and another co-worker believe that Sally gets special treatment. Is there something "going on" between her and one of the supervisors? Even if there is, it isn't fair that the rules don't seem to apply to her.

Discussion: Do you know what has been arranged between Sally and supervisor? Has she called in or made arrangements to leave early? How often does this happen? How often is too often for "special consideration"? Is it frequent enough that co-workers are justified in concerns? How would operators address this with the supervisor?

Has the supervisor objectively examined his treatment of this operator? Is there "special treatment"? If this has been brought up or spoken about, what is supervisor's reaction?

B. Optional Large Group Discussion – Time Permitting

Purpose

To provide the participants an opportunity to discuss ethical dilemmas they may have concerns about at this time, to provide practice in applying the steps in ethical problem solving and to allow the participants an opportunity to make a plan for resolving future ethical dilemmas.

Methodology

Provide the group with clean sheets of paper. Ask the group to identify ethical dilemmas they may have encountered or may be facing at this time. The participants may choose to write the situation down on the paper and hand in anonymously or if someone feels comfortable, he or she may discuss the situation with the entire group.

The small groups should apply the steps for ethical problem solving and come up with an action plan with recommendation.

Processing

As the small groups present recommendations for the various situations, ask the groups to identify the key values or principles which are relevant to the situation, prioritize the values according to professional judgment, and generate a list of alternatives with a plan for implementing one of those alternatives.

SECTION VI – CONCLUSION

Time: 5 minutes

A. Concluding Discussion

Spend a few minutes and ask the following question again,

“What barriers exist for me in my efforts to maintain ethical behavior or practice?”

Allow time for the participants to write down their barriers in the participant manual in the space provided on page 11.

Conclude the training with an invitation to the participants to be aware of the obstacles routinely encountered and encourage the trainees to formulate a plan for confronting the problem.

B. Evaluations