Breaking Good...
How to Make Ethics a Strategic Priority

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Objectives

- Identify and confront ethical challenges in a complex environment
- Align personal, professional, and corporate values with the lived values of the organization.
- Create an organizational culture that honors and rewards ethical choices
- Maximize the strategic value of ethics in corporate culture
You may not be interested in strategy, but strategy is interested in you.

Leon Trotsky
Russian Revolutionary

Strategy: The process of anticipating and responding to opportunities, threats and uncertainties in order to achieve the organization’s mission.

Ethics: A strategy for anticipating and responding to opportunities, threats and uncertainties in order to achieve the best possible outcome.
Ethics is too often approached as a means of preventing unethical people from doing the wrong thing. The better approach is always to use ethics to help ethical people do the right thing.

Systems Thinking and Ethical Sensitivity
The ability to simultaneously recognize events, patterns of behavior, systems and mental models

We tend to focus on finding solutions at the obvious levels of rules, physical structure, work processes, information flows, reward systems, and control mechanisms.

Intangible factors such as deep-seated attitudes and beliefs are harder to work with but greatly increase your leverage for change.
Shared Values

Individual Values

Espoused Organizational Values

Lived Organizational Values

Organizational Ethics

A set of formal and informal principles and values that guide the behavior, decisions, and actions taken by members of an organization as well as the organizational structures, systems, practices, policies and procedures developed to ensure ethical operation.

Traditional Scope

- Conflict of interest
- Fiduciary oversight of general financial and economic issues
- Legal and regulatory compliance including policy driven issues such as confidentiality, privacy and consent procedures.
- Focus is long term and institutional

Ethical Dimensions

- Nonmaleficence / Beneficence
- Role Fidelity (advocacy / trust)
- Respect / Autonomy / Dignity
- Justice
- Solidarity
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Sustainability
- Utility
Clinical Ethics

A form of applied ethics that assists healthcare providers in recognizing, analyzing and resolving ethical dilemmas in patient care.

Goals of clinical ethics include:
- Maximizing benefit and minimizing harm to patients, families, healthcare professionals, and institutions
- Facilitating resolution of conflict
- Informing institutional efforts at policy development, quality improvement, and appropriate utilization of resources
- Assisting individuals in handling current and future ethical problems.


Traditional Scope

- Limited to clinical decision-making and policy interpretations in individual cases involving patient care (bedside)
- Focus is short term, reactive and on the patient/provider interaction
Crossover Issues

• Issues involving the influence of organizational context on individual behavior (organizational culture)
• Issues arising due to multiple, complex and conflicting responsibilities


ACHE – Top Issues 2012

• Financial challenges
• Patient safety and quality
• Healthcare reform implementation
• Governmental mandates
• Care for the uninsured
• Patient satisfaction
• Physician-hospital relations
• Technology
• Population health management
• Personnel shortages
• Creating an accountable care organization
Ethical Conflicts

A study by Gaudine, LaFort, Lamb and Thorne (2011) found the following themes when asking physicians and nurses about ethical conflicts they experience in their organizations.

- Lack of respect for professionals
- Insufficient or scarce resources with impact on work life and patient care
- Disagreement with organizational policies
- Lack of administrative response
- Lack of transparency or openness

The survey titled Disruptive Physician Behavior Contributes to Nursing Shortage consisted of 2562 participants and was made up of 389 physicians, 104 senior level executives and 1,615 nurses. Thirty seven percent of the survey participants indicated that nurses were leaving their hospitals as a result of disruptive behavior. (Rosenstein, Russell & Lauve, 2002).

Moral distress has been identified as a key component of job satisfaction, performance, longevity and burnout.

In a large study of nurses and social workers, ethical issues had a stronger impact on participants wanting to leave their positions than inadequate staffing or high workloads (Urich, et al, 2007).

In a study of ICU physicians and nurses, 45% of the RNs had left or considered leaving a position because of moral distress (Hamric & Blackhall, 2007).

And there’s more...
AHA Strategic Issues Forecast
November 2010

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<td>Cost management, labor efficiency, meaningful metrics</td>
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<td>Bending the Cost Curve</td>
<td>Optimize setting, lower costs in setting, patient-centered cost effective end of life care, create value</td>
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<td>Care Coordination</td>
<td>Rehospitalizations, end of life care, engaged consumers</td>
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Current & Emerging Issues

- Allocation of scarce resources
- Uninsured and underinsured patients
- Complex chronic illness
- Medically non-beneficial treatment
- Patients without proxies
- Disaster planning
- Emerging technologies
Competing Roles of the Organization

- Caregiver
- Employer
- Citizen
- Manager


**Caregiver**

- Stakeholders are patients and families
- Ethical Principle: Provide care with compassion
- Fidelity means ensuring that clinicians are supported in their role fidelity by the organization – respect, competence, professional ethics, compliance, and promise-keeping.
Questions to Ask

- Have we shown the patient basic respect for his or her human dignity and autonomy?
- Have we supported competent practice?
- Have we supported ethical professional practice including EBP?
- Have we adhered to the law, the community standard of care, and our own P&Ps and stated values?
- Have we allowed the clinicians to keep reasonable promises?

Employer

- Stakeholders are employees
- Ethical Principle: Treat employees with respect (Winkler, EC and Gruen, RL, 2005)
- Fidelity means acting with fairness, empowering employees and allowing meaningful participation
Questions to Ask

- Have we included and respected the expertise and informed judgment of the clinicians and other employees?
- Have we protected employees from discrimination, retribution or other harm?
- Have we been transparent regarding our decisions?

Manager

- Stakeholders include patients, investors, insurers and the public
- Ethical Principle: Spend resources reasonably
  - (Winkler, GC and Gruen, RL, 2005)
- Fidelity includes maximizing quality, equity, efficiency and sustainability (distributive justice)
Questions to Ask

- Have our actions maximized quality?
- Have our actions maximized efficiency?
- Have our actions been fair and equitable?
- Are our actions sustainable over time?

Citizen

- Stakeholder is the community
- Ethical Principle: Act in a public spirit
- Fidelity means acting for the common good and community benefit. This includes following the law, optimizing the health of the community, providing advocacy on issues of public health
Questions to Ask

- Have our actions benefitted the community as a whole?
- Have our actions considered community values?
- Have we followed the law?
- Have we acted to optimize the health of the community?
- Have we advocated for a larger issue of public health?

Who are the Keepers of Ethics?

Who is not afraid to say “Wait a minute? Who consistently asks the hard questions? Who is not afraid to take the unpopular view? Who is more concerned with the whys than the hows?
**Unique Skill Set**

- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Values clarification
- Facilitate difficult choices
- A communication and problem-solving interface between stakeholders
- Ethical sensitivity and insight
- Ethical dialogue and decision-making

**Meeting the Challenge**

- Moral sensitivity to the presence and appreciation of the power of conflicting loyalties at all levels of the organization
- Culture of openness, mutual trust and respect
- Truthful and transparent organizational/clinical decision-making
- Organizational systems and support for dialogue and problem-solving
- Moral courage

“Life’s challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they’re supposed to help you discover who you are.”

Bernice Johnson Reagon, historian
1. Create a set of values and mission based questions that force the ethical dimension into policy formation, systems design, problem solving and decision-making.

2. Cultivate people with moral sensitivity in all organizational situations who know what question(s) to ask.

3. Reward the people that ask them.

“You’ve got to think about big things while you’re doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.”

Alvin Toffler, futurist

References


