Ethical Values: Organizational Structure and Culture

by

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A JUST ORGANIZATION

• JUSTICE in general: The rightness of social relationships (of all sorts).

• JUSTICE about Ethics and Ethical Conduct, for Military Medical Personal:
  – Dual Roles
  – Values/Ideals often in Conflict
  – Within an Hierarchical Organization
JUSTICE about Ethics and Ethical Conduct: Two Implications

1. AFFIRMING THE ROLE OF DECISION-MAKERS TO MAKE COMPLEX ETHICAL JUDGMENTS IN UNIQUE SITUATIONS

2. PROVIDING COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT, AS WELL AS NEEDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES.
WHY FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE?

1. THE ORGANIZATION’S COMMITMENT TO – AND CONSCIENTIOUS PURSUIT OF – ITS VALUES AND IDEALS.

why we should focus on organizational culture

2. THE NATION’S COMMITMENT TO AND CONSCIENTIOUS PURSUIT OF ITS VALUES AND IDEALS.
THE ORGANIZATION’S INFLUENCE ON MEMBERS’ JUDGMENT AND CONDUCT

Four Components of Ethical Conduct:

• Awareness
• Judgment
• Motivation
• Implementation
ETHICAL AWARENESS

• Either foster rich awareness of the ways the organization’s professed values and ideals can be furthered, or are at risk.

• Or leave decision-makers to their own native lights.
ETHICAL AWARENESS

• Organizational structures and processes produce heightened awareness of some things, lessened awareness of others.

• So we must test our organization’s structures and processes to see what they are producing.
ETHICAL JUDGMENT

• Sound ethical judgment: as complex as the situation demands.

• The Ethical Questions of military medical personnel will often be too complex to be managed by simple rules.
• Careful Ethical Reflection and Judgment by decision-makers on the scene will be necessary and should be commended, not discouraged.
ETHICAL JUDGMENT

• Educate and practice military medical decision-makers to become experienced, habitual practitioners of careful Ethical Judgment.
MOTIVATION

- System-wide emphasis on positive Motivations, i.e. the organization’s positive values and ideals, *not* on coercion/fear as a motivator.
- System-wide understanding that it is precisely these positive values and ideals that, when they conflict, make careful Ethical Judgments necessary.
MOTIVATION

• A just organization will views lapses in Ethical Judgment or conduct, *first of all*, as organizational matters, systems issues, to be reflected on and corrected first of all from an organizational-systems perspective.

• Additional data is needed to justify treating such lapses as markers of personal ethical failure to be punished.
IMPLEMENTATION

Two kinds of barriers to implementing sound Ethical Judgments in conduct:

1. Psychological barriers, especially fear and hopelessness;

2. Practical barriers needing practical assistance to overcome.
IMPLEMENTATION

AIMING AHEAD:

1. Identify likely barriers and hindrances.
2. Develop a repertoire of interventions to assist decision-makers implement their Ethical Judgments.
3. Develop Communication systems for during, after, and before complex ethical situations arise.
IMPLEMENTATION

A EXAMPLE TO CLOSE WITH:

THE PORTERS’ STORY
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Some References (1):


• “Confronting Trade-Offs In Health Care: Harvard Pilgrim Health Care’s Organizational Ethics Program: Ethical analysis can provide practical decision support for health care Organizations,” by James E. Sabin and David Cochran, in Health Affairs 26, no. 4 (2007): 1129–1134.
Some References (2):


• Ethics AdviceLine for Journalists: See www.ethicsadviselineforjournalists.org