

Instructions for the Ethical Leadership Coordinator

Your Role and Responsibilities

The aim of ethical leadership is to foster an ethical environment and culture. As a senior leader in your facility and the chair of the IntegratedEthics Council, you're responsible for the overall success of IntegratedEthics in your facility and for ensuring that the council fulfills its responsibilities (described above).

As coordinator of the ethical leadership function, your immediate charge is to provide education on ethical leadership to leaders throughout the organization. They should understand their role and responsibilities in creating and sustaining an ethical environment at your facility. You'll act as a role model for them and, through the use of the IntegratedEthics tools, help them learn to foster an ethical environment and culture.

Broadly, your responsibilities require you to:

1. Demonstrate expertise in the IntegratedEthics model

This Ethical Leadership Toolkit contains everything you need to ensure that you're up to speed: an overview of IntegratedEthics; descriptions of your role and responsibilities as coordinator of the ethical leadership function as well as a description of the responsibilities of the IntegratedEthics Council; the IntegratedEthics timeline to help you organize tasks and activities; the ethical leadership video course; and self-assessment tools to help individual leaders understand how their actions affect the organization's ethical environment and ethics practices and to identify opportunities for improvement. The toolkit also provides communications materials and information about online learning modules on ethics in health care.

2. Lead your facility's IntegratedEthics program

You are the leader and champion of the IntegratedEthics program in your facility. Your role is to visibly support the IntegratedEthics Program Officer and IntegratedEthics Council in developing the program and to champion the goals of IntegratedEthics with all employees. You also have responsibility for creating understanding of and support for ethical leadership concepts among leaders in your facility. You'll be directing their efforts to improve ethical decision-making practices. In support of this effort, you'll ensure that IntegratedEthics assessment tools (facility workbook, staff survey, leadership self-assessment tool) are used at your facility. And you'll establish both a personal plan and a facility plan to respond to the results of these assessments.

3. Ensure integration

The IntegratedEthics Council is the principal means by which to integrate the various ethics activities within your facility. As chair of the council, you'll be responsible for its success. In addition, you'll act as a liaison with leaders outside the council to help them understand the activities and outcomes of the IntegratedEthics program, recognize its value, and support it. You're also responsible for ensuring communication between the IntegratedEthics Council and other leadership committees. As appropriate, you (or your designee) may also act as the representative for ethics on key facility governance committees.

4. Monitor performance

As the individual with overall responsibility for the success of IntegratedEthics in your facility, it's your job to ensure that your facility achieves the program's implementation goals and completes assessment tools—you'll report performance monitors to VISN leadership. You're also responsible for monitoring whether action is taken on findings from the facility workbook and staff survey and whether appropriate progress is made toward implementing IntegratedEthics effectively.

5. Network externally

Along with the IntegratedEthics Program Officer, you'll share information about your function's activities, best practices, and lessons learned through a series of national teleconferences and other forums.

On the following pages, you'll find a timeline and brief descriptions of the specific tasks associated with your responsibilities and those of the program officer and coordinators of the other core functions of IntegratedEthics. All of these tasks should be completed during the initial implementation phase; thereafter, many of the activities will need to be repeated periodically and/or maintained.

Timeline

Ethical Leadership Coordinator	Mo 1	Mo 2	Mo 3	Mo 4	Mo 5	Mo 6	Mo 7	Mo 8	Mo 9	Mo 10	Mo 11	Mo 12
Educate Yourself												
Read EL toolkit and review primer (M 1)												
Complete EL video course (M 2)												
Engage with the VISN IE community (M 1)												
Develop IE Council (M 2 & 3)												
Engage with the National IE Community												
Register with the national IntegratedEthics website (M 1)												
Participate in IE teleconferences (M 3 thru 12)												
Understand Your Current Ethics Program												
Support completion of IE Facility Workbook (M 2 & 3)												
Prioritize results of IE Facility Workbook (M 4)												
Initiate ethical leadership QI from the workbook (M 4 & 5)												
Organize the EL Function												
Identify leaders (M 2 & 3)												
Generate buy in from leaders (M 2 & 3)												
Establish monitoring of ongoing EL functions (M 7 thru 12)												
Educate Leaders												
Distribute IE communications materials (M 3 & 4)												
Arrange to show EL video course (M 3 thru 5)												
Distribute EL primer (M 3 thru 5)												
Support the Staff Survey												
Support administration of IE Staff Survey (M 5)												
Prioritize results of IE Staff Survey (M 6 thru 12)												
Initiate ethical leadership QI from the IE Staff Survey (M 9 thru 12)												
Build Capacity in Systematic Ethical Decision Making												
Analyze ethical decision-making practices (M 7 & 8)												
Enhance facility decision-making practices (M 9 thru 12)												

Description of Tasks

Educate Yourself

Read EL toolkit and review primer. Reading the introduction to IntegratedEthics (Tab 1) and IntegratedEthics communications materials (Tab 4) is an important step to ensure that you understand the broad concepts and aims of IntegratedEthics. You'll also want to review the ethical leadership primer, *Ethical Leadership: Fostering an Ethical Environment & Culture*, which lays out specific behaviors leaders should use to foster an organizational environment and culture that is conducive to ethical practice. You'll return to this document frequently as you implement and refine the ethical leadership function in your facility.

Complete EL video course. Once you've reviewed the ethical leadership primer, you'll benefit from the ethical leadership video course. As part of this course, you should complete the leadership self-assessment tool and establish a personal action plan based on the results.

Engage with the VISN IE community. Integration is essential at both the facility and VISN level. Through the VISN IntegratedEthics Point of Contact, you and the IntegratedEthics Program Officer will connect with other ethics programs in your VISN in order to share your experiences and ideas about program implementation. You'll also report to your VISN about achievement of IntegratedEthics performance monitors.

Develop the IE Council. Leadership support is essential to the development of an effective IntegratedEthics Council. With the IntegratedEthics Program Officer serving as your administrative officer, you'll chair the council and lead its activities. Together, you'll identify individuals to serve on the council and work to establish effective communication mechanisms and relationships between the IntegratedEthics program and other programs, offices, and leaders throughout the facility.

Engage with the National IE Community

Register with the national IntegratedEthics website. The IntegratedEthics website (vaww.ethics.va.gov/IntegratedEthics) is designed to support continuous learning among VA's IntegratedEthics community. The site contains all the materials in the IntegratedEthics toolkits (including the video courses), links to online learning modules, and many other resources and tools. It will be updated regularly.

Participate in IE teleconferences. These conference calls provide a forum for facilities to solve problems and share solutions in implementing IntegratedEthics. Ethics Center staff will moderate the teleconferences and focus on the needs of the attendees. The content of the calls may include discussing common problems, sharing best practices, or a question-and-answer session with a content expert. You should ensure that appropriate staff at your facility is participating in these calls.

Understand Your Current Ethics Program

Support completion of the IE Facility Workbook. The IntegratedEthics Facility Workbook is intended to help identify gaps in your facility's current ethics program. The IntegratedEthics Program Officer and IntegratedEthics Council are responsible

for completion of the workbook. As the chair of the council, you'll provide assistance and encouragement to ensure the workbook is completed, in particular by providing information needed for the ethical leadership portion of the tool.

Prioritize results of IE Facility Workbook. The IntegratedEthics Program Officer and IntegratedEthics Council will compile information about the gaps in ethics quality that were identified through the workbook. Your responsibility is to help them to prioritize the developmental needs at your facility and guide them in producing and implementing an appropriate corrective action plan.

Initiate ethical leadership QI from the workbook. As the function coordinator, you'll critically review the results from the ethical leadership section of the workbook and plan next steps to enhance ethical leadership in your facility.

Organize the EL Function

Identify leaders. As coordinator of the ethical leadership function, you'll model the IntegratedEthics program for the leaders throughout your facility—that is, employees at the senior executive, and mid-manager levels. As a first step, identify leaders in these categories.

Generate buy in from leaders. To accomplish this, you should communicate directly with the leaders you've identified, preferably at a face-to-face meeting. You should express support for the IntegratedEthics initiative, emphasize the importance of ethical leadership in fostering an ethical environment and organizational culture, explain the role you'll play in coordinating the ethical leadership function, and ask leaders to support the program overall and to complete the ethical leadership video course and self-assessment tool.

Establish monitoring of ongoing EL functions. Through the IntegratedEthics Council, you will develop program goals, establish monitoring mechanisms, and obtain regular updates about council activities and IntegratedEthics functions. You should offer assistance and mid-course corrections to the program as needed.

Educate Leaders

Distribute IE communications materials. You should ensure that all the leaders you've identified receive and read the introduction to IntegratedEthics and the IntegratedEthics communications materials contained in your toolkit to familiarize themselves with the concepts and aims of IntegratedEthics.

Arrange to show EL video course. You may want to delegate the task of ethical leadership education to the IntegratedEthics Program Officer or the IntegratedEthics Council. You should be sure to actively support the education efforts by encouraging leaders in your facility to attend showings of the ethical leadership video. Consider devoting a segment of a scheduled leadership retreat or a regularly scheduled leadership meeting—such as the “director's weekly meeting”—to the video. Or you might schedule several showings for smaller groups to stimulate lively discussion. After showing the video, you or your delegate should distribute the Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool. (See the training checklist for details.) You'll need to keep track of who completed the course and when; follow facility procedures to ensure that participants receive education credits for completing the course.

Distribute EL primer. After they complete the video course, leaders should review the leadership primer, *Ethical Leadership: Fostering an Ethical Environment & Culture*. This document expands on the material covered in the video course and provides additional information and tools for leaders.

Support the Staff Survey

Support administration of IE Staff Survey. The IntegratedEthics Council is responsible for planning and monitoring the administration of the survey. Your responsibility is to assist them in identifying needed resources and encouraging staff members to complete the survey.

Prioritize results of IE Staff Survey. The IntegratedEthics Council will compile information about the gaps in ethics quality that were identified through the IntegratedEthics Staff Survey. Your responsibility is to help the council—and especially the Preventive Ethics Coordinator—prioritize the issues and concerns identified through the survey process and target quality improvement initiatives to address them.

Initiate ethical leadership QI from the IE Staff Survey. Critically review the results from the IntegratedEthics Staff Survey and identify which, if any, results may require action relating to ethical leadership. Develop an appropriate action plan.

Build Capacity in Systematic Ethical Decision Making

Analyze ethical decision-making practices. To improve leadership decision making at your facility, you must first understand how it is occurring now. Begin by analyzing local decision-making practices to identify whether leadership decisions typically reflect the six key attributes of ethical decision making, such as being values-based. (For more information about the attributes of ethical decision making, see the leadership primer.) You'll want to look at formal processes—for example, whether the attributes are regularly considered and documented in local executive decision memoranda (EDMs) and whether your executive leadership council systematically identifies ethical issues relevant to management decisions or regularly seeks input from the ethics consultation service. You'll also want to examine informal processes, such as whether the environment is conducive to staff bringing up ethical issues during management discussions and whether someone is designated to identify and call attention to potential ethical problems.

Enhance facility decision-making practices. Once you've gained a thorough understanding of local leadership decision-making practices you should propose changes to reflect the six attributes of ethical decision making. Whether decisions are made by an individual leader, an informal leadership team, or a formal leadership board, they should be made in a systematic fashion and should reflect the key ethical attributes. You may find the sample models for ethical decision making included in this toolkit (Tab 6) helpful. Changing the behavior of individuals and groups takes time and practice. Achieve small successes early and continue to build on these over time to reach your final goal of reflecting all six attributes of ethical decision making in your local processes.

IntegratedEthics Council—Instructions for Council Members

Your Role and Responsibilities

The aim of an IntegratedEthics program is to improve ethics quality by integrating three core functions: ethics consultation, preventive ethics, and ethical leadership. The IntegratedEthics Council is the body chiefly responsible for achieving this goal. The council is chaired by the Ethical Leadership Coordinator, who is ultimately responsible for the success of the program. The responsibilities of the council are to:

- coordinate the ethics consultation, preventive ethics, and ethical leadership functions
- ensure communication with relevant programs across the organization
- oversee the ethics consultation and preventive ethics functions
- develop and update policy pertaining to the IntegratedEthics program
- coordinate staff education regarding IntegratedEthics and ethics
- evaluate your facility's IntegratedEthics structures and processes
- evaluate ethics knowledge, practices, and culture in your facility
- improve specific ethics practices at your facility
- continuously improve your facility's IntegratedEthics program
- ensure that the facility meets accreditation standards for ethics
- ensure that the facility meets requirements of VHA policy related to ethics in health care

Broadly, your responsibilities are to:

1. Demonstrate expertise in the IntegratedEthics model

Members of the council act as representatives of the IntegratedEthics program across the facility and particularly in their home departments or services. You should be raising the visibility of the IntegratedEthics program and supporting the goals of the program to ensure its success. This role requires that you understand the activities of the council and each of the core functions of IntegratedEthics, serve as a spokesperson for the program in your department or service, encourage staff to participate in training activities, answer questions about the program and its functions, and participate in program activities as appropriate based on your skills and expertise.

2. Lead or participate in council activities

A tenet of excellence in health care is an ongoing commitment to quality improvement. All council members should participate in efforts to improve the quality of the IntegratedEthics program through use of the IntegratedEthics assessment tools and regular quality monitoring of program activities. You'll lead or participate in one or more council activities, which may include participating on a preventive ethics team, leading an education forum about IntegratedEthics for staff or other leaders, updating ethics-related policies, supporting efforts for accreditation readiness, or other activities as needed.

3. Ensure integration

The council is the key mechanism for integrating the ethics activities undertaken by departments, programs, services, and offices across your facility. Council members should represent diverse areas throughout the organization from which ethics issues arise, including clinical care services, research, and business administration. Council members are responsible for helping to identify ethics issues across the facility that might benefit from the work of the council, such as ethics quality gaps that might be appropriate for the preventive ethics team.

4. Monitor performance

The council is responsible for overseeing the activities of the IntegratedEthics program and acting to support its implementation. The council should ensure that the facility achieves the program's implementation goals, completes assessment tools and reports performance monitors to VISN leadership. The council is also responsible for developing plans and taking action on the findings from the IntegratedEthics Facility Workbook and Staff Survey. The council should establish mechanisms to monitor progress toward implementing these plans and the overall IntegratedEthics program effectively.

5. Network externally

All council members are invited to share their program's activities, best practices, and lessons learned. The National Center for Ethics in Health Care will provide forums where this can occur. Check our website, www.ethics.va.gov/IntegratedEthics, for more information.

Description of Tasks

Get Started

Get to know the IntegratedEthics Program. Reading the introduction to IntegratedEthics and the IntegratedEthics communications materials is an important first step to ensure that you understand the broad concepts and aims of IntegratedEthics. You'll also want to become familiar with the material in the three primers, *Ethics Consultation: Responding to Ethics Questions in Health Care*; *Preventive Ethics: Addressing Ethics Quality Gaps on a Systems Level*; and *Ethical Leadership: Fostering an Ethical Environment & Culture*. You'll return to these documents frequently as you support the launch of IntegratedEthics at your facility. Three IntegratedEthics video courses are also available to you. These courses walk you through important aspects of each of the functions. You may also want to complete one or more of the IntegratedEthics online learning modules to develop your understanding of the IntegratedEthics concept and its application.

Engage with the National IE Community

Register with the national IntegratedEthics website. Council members may wish to register with the IntegratedEthics website (vaww.ethics.va.gov/IntegratedEthics), which is designed to support continuous learning among VA's IntegratedEthics community. The site contains all the materials in the IntegratedEthics toolkits (including the video courses), links to online learning modules, and many other resources and tools. It will be updated regularly.

Understand Your Current Ethics Program

Participate in completion of the IE Facility Workbook. The IntegratedEthics Council is responsible for ensuring completion of the facility workbook. You should contribute your knowledge of facility structure and processes to help the council develop its plan for completing the workbook. You should also participate as needed to identify and implement appropriate responses to workbook findings.

Support administration of the IE Staff Survey. The IntegratedEthics Council is responsible for planning and monitoring the administration of the IntegratedEthics Staff Survey. You should support the council in administering the survey by encouraging staff in your department to participate. The council is also responsible for analyzing survey results and developing a plan to respond to any issues and concerns identified. Your first step is to help publicize the results of the survey, which is essential to demonstrate to staff members that their participation was both important and appreciated. It can also help to further demonstrate the importance of IntegratedEthics and generate greater awareness of your IntegratedEthics program. You will then work with your staff to implement activities developed by the council to respond to the survey results.

Participate in Assigned Council Duties

Coordinate staff education regarding IntegratedEthics and ethics. The council is responsible for taking a systematic approach to ensuring that staff throughout the facility are familiar with IntegratedEthics and knowledgeable about ethics in health care. The council, or a designated subcommittee, should apply a quality improvement approach to ensure that educational efforts are effective in meeting clearly defined

organizational needs. The IntegratedEthics primers, video courses, and online learning modules can serve as basic resources for staff education. Efforts to educate staff in ethics consultation and preventive ethics can be delegated to those functions. Ethics education should also be regularly incorporated into ongoing educational activities, such as grand rounds, case conferences, inservices, and annual meetings.

Update policy related to ethics in health care. In addition to developing policy for your IntegratedEthics program, the council is responsible for ensuring that facility policies relating to ethics in health care—such as informed consent for treatments and procedures, advance directives, or end-of-life care—meet the requirements of VA national policy in the relevant areas. The council or a designated subcommittee should also work with the preventive ethics team to identify and address local policy requirements—or lack of policy—that give rise to systemic ethics quality issues.

Ensure that the facility meets accreditation standards for ethics. The council is responsible for developing specific action plans to ensure that the facility meets accreditation standards around ethics and is ready to meet those standards on an ongoing basis. As of 2006, the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations includes 24 standards explicitly pertaining to ethics, patient rights, and organizational responsibilities (RI.1–RI.3.1). It is the council's responsibility to see that the facility meets these standards and those of other relevant accrediting bodies.