



Doing the Right Thing...

In the newsletter, we are highlighting the Code of Conduct and the seven elements of education. In the last newsletter, we asked for your nominations of the people you witnessed living up to our ethical commitments. Thank you for your responses.

Given the number of articles written about ethics, I ask, is doing the right thing common sense? Is ethics faith-based, intrinsic, learned or all of those? To prepare this article, I used the key words “doing the right thing” with one of my favorite websites, www.google.com. I received 52,700,000 hits (resource pages) on that topic in 0.05 seconds.

One of the websites I visited was, www.goodcharacter.com which is directed toward helping teachers educate the young about ethics. I was surprised at one lesson plan for kids in its similarity to what we communicate right here to our grown-ups at OPRS.

One lesson told kids that some decisions they make aren't terribly important. For example, a person might decide to have chocolate ice cream instead of vanilla. But other decisions may involve a choice between right and wrong, and sometimes it's not easy to know what to do. The article told kids that whenever a person is not sure about the right thing to do, they should stop, think, and ask themselves these questions:

What does my conscience – that “little voice” in my head – say about it?

OPRS: What does my conscience say?

- Could it hurt anyone, including me?
- Is it fair?

- Would it violate the Golden Rule? (How would I feel if somebody did it to me?)

Have I ever been told that it's wrong?

OPRS: Might it break a law, policy or practice?

- Deep down, how do I feel about it?

How will I feel about myself later if I do it?

OPRS: Would it make me feel uncomfortable if this issue appeared in the newspaper or on TV?

- What would others I respect say about it?
- Would my friends/family disapprove of this issue?

If you still can't decide, talk it over with someone you trust and respect.

OPRS: Talk to your supervisor, call the hotline, or call the Ethics & Compliance Officer.

Now for a tender story with no known author that involves a doctor and an older man:

It was a busy morning, about 8:30 a.m., when an elderly gentleman in his 80s arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry, as he had an appointment at 9:00 a.m. I saw him looking at his watch, and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound. While taking care of him, I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment to get to, as he was

in such a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I inquired as to her health; he told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease. As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him, 'You still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?' He smiled as he patted my hand and said, 'she doesn't know me, but I still know who she is.'

Although this story reminds me of the tenderness of relationships and commitment, it also reminds me of what all of us know down-deep about integrity. Doing the right thing is always the right thing, when everybody is looking or when nobody is. Because at the end of the day, even when “nobody” is looking, all of us know that one person ALWAYS is, the person in the mirror. The integrity of what we see when we look into that face is what speaks the most about us and what we believe. Here's to your face, and your heart!



Dana Ullom-Vucelich
 Ethics & Compliance Officer,
 Vice President, Human Resources

Regulatory Compliance

Statement: I maintain high standards of business and professional ethics and integrity. When I provide services or conduct business, I will follow all appropriate laws, regulations and policies.



Flo Wycoff
Accounts Receivable Coordinator
Corporate

“**Flo Wycoff** assumed responsibility for Medicare billing in 2007. She has achieved an ‘expert status’ in billing Medicare and accomplished this by translating her extensive knowledge of OPRS and the Matrix billing system to the billing regulations under Medicare. She tirelessly learned the rules and has been tenacious in her follow up to ensure accurate billing. She communicates with the MDS nurses to ensure the correct information is sent to Medicare. With Flo’s efforts we have been successful in our most recent Medicare billing audit.” *Submitted by: Joyce Miller Evans, VP, Information Systems*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- If I am concerned that a situation might be against the law, have I talked with my supervisor or another appropriate person?
- If a co-worker has reported a suspected violation, am I continuing to treat that person fairly and with full support?
- Do I understand and follow all the laws, regulations and policies that affect my area of responsibility?
- Do I complete paperwork promptly and accurately?
- Do I take all reasonable steps to protect customer privacy?

People

Statement: Employees are our most valuable assets. I treat my coworkers with respect and fairness. In doing my job, I take responsibility for meeting or exceeding expectations.

“**Chris Noble** has a presence that exudes warmth and energy like a ray of sunshine. She shows the meaning of ‘Faith in Action’ by caring for others with grace and compassion. She is admired for making this world a better place, one soul at a time.” *Submitted by: Corrine Bauer, Volunteer Coordinator, Faith in Action, Lake County*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do I always treat my co-workers with the same respect that I would like to receive?
- Do I avoid saying anything that might make a co-worker feel powerless or unsafe?
- If I supervise other employees, do I give them regular and consistent feedback to help them do their jobs better?
- Am I fair and objective?
- Do I listen to my co-workers and consider their points of view?
- Do I act similarly towards co-workers of differing race, color, religion, disability, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual preference and/or age?



Chris Noble, RN
Home Care Nurse, Cleveland
Senior Independence

Paperwork

Statement: I am committed to fair, accurate and complete billing and documentation in accordance with all federal and state laws.



Miranda Farrand
Business Office Clerk,
Westminster-Thurber Community

“**Miranda Farrand’s** commitment to detail is commendable. She asks for clarification regarding billing and coding of insurance. She takes time to be a problem-solver when working with our residents.” *Submitted by: Joel Wrobbel, Marketing Director, Westminster-Thurber Community*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Before I bill for a service, do I have documentation that the service was provided?
- Have I been careful to reimburse only prescribed and provided services?
- Did I complete my progress notes or update the resident or client chart completely and accurately?
- Am I conscientious about bringing any wrong-doing or perceived bad choices forward even if I think it will get me or a co-worker in trouble?
- Am I always honest when someone asks me about the care that I provided?

Property & Privacy

Statement: I am committed to protecting OPRS property and information against loss, theft, destruction or misuse. I am also committed to protecting our customers' privacy.



Tim Enderle
Maintenance Director
Westminster-Thurber Community

“**Tim Enderle** is concerned about the safety of all who work, live and visit. He makes sure the parking lot is clean and safe and that the landscaping brings beauty to nourish the spirit. Tim is committed to being sure we are good stewards of what is entrusted to our care.” *Submitted by: Joel Wrobbel, Marketing Director, Westminster-Thurber Community*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do I refrain from talking about an OPRS resident or client outside of work?
- If I believe my situation is unsafe, have I reported it to my supervisor?
- Do I use the company's resources for professional resources only?
- Do I put equipment away properly when I am finished with it?
- Have I refrained from making personal calls and doing personal business while at work?
- Have I followed HIPAA requirements before sending records to another health care provider?
- Do I keep my location looking clean and beautiful?

Conflicts of Interest

Statement: I will act in good faith in all aspects of my work. I will avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts between my private interests and my work duties.

“**Diana Kiss** clearly treasures the residents, misses them when they are gone, and loves them while they are in her care. She is always willing to accept new assignments and will do all she can to deliver and exceed expectations.” *Submitted by: Stan Kappers, Executive Director, Mount Pleasant*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do I avoid providing services that duplicate the services that OPRS offers?
- Do I know, understand and support the gifts and gratuities policy?
- Do I base my decisions on what is best for OPRS and the people we serve rather than on what is best for me?
- Do I refuse a gift that a vendor's representative paid for?
- Before entering into any transaction as an OPRS employee, do I stop to think about how the transaction will look to others?
- Do I know and understand the laws about resident and client rights?
- Do I refrain from looking for information or talking about clients or residents whose direct care or information I don't need to know about?
- Do I politely refuse tips and gifts from residents, clients or their family members?



Diana Kiss
Nursing Assistant
Mount Pleasant

Quality of Care

Statement: I am committed to providing high quality care and services. My first responsibility is to OPRS customers.



Carmella Pinesett
Adult Day Coordinator
Senior Independence

“**Carmella Pinesett** has worked hard to better herself personally and professionally as evidenced in her prior roles of STNA, program assistant and now the Site Coordinator for the new Cleveland Area Adult Day Center. She always wants to learn and researches questions when necessary, and absorbs information and puts it into practice. If called about issues, most often she is ‘already on it.’”

Submitted by: Tina Witt, Senior Independence Adult Day Manager

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do I always treat customers with respect and dignity?
- Do I take the time to find out the needs and preferences of each customer I work with?
- Are my professional licenses and credentials up-to-date?
- Do I know and understand the laws about resident and client rights?
- Am I careful not to let my personal feelings, beliefs or circumstances interfere with resident and client care?
- Am I careful not to discuss or leave resident and client files, reports or other information in areas where the public could see it?

Integrity
Honesty
Compliance

Dedication
Compassion
Respect

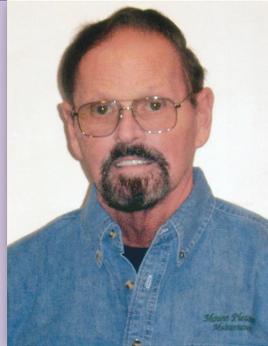
Competency
Honorable
Ethical

Culture
Inspirational
Moral

Health & Safety

Statement: I am committed to maintaining a work place that protects the health and safety of our customers and employees.

“**Dick Alexander** is very concerned with the upkeep and maintenance of property, always taking time to focus on residents’ requests for salt on icy spots, and porch light replacements as quickly as possible. We can all count on him . . . staff and residents alike; he keeps us safe.” *Submitted by Stan Kappers, Executive Director, Mount Pleasant*



Dick Alexander
Maintenance Worker II
Mount Pleasant

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do I follow all required safety procedures, such as double-checking before administering medication?
- Am I familiar with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations that apply to my job?
- Do I always put disposable materials used in care in the proper receptacles and not in the nearest trash can?
- If someone slips and falls, do I report the accident to a supervisor?
- Am I up-to-date on my safety training?
- If I see a situation or condition that could lead to someone getting hurt, do I act promptly by correcting it and/or reporting it to a supervisor?
- Do I come to work free of drugs and alcohol?



What Does THAT Mean?

quality

the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something

standards

a level of quality or attainment; an idea or thing used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluation

care

the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something; serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk



The Ethics and Compliance Hotline

Where to Call

Confidential Hotline
877-780-9366
24 hours a day / 7 days a week

Dana Ullom-Vucelich
Ethics & Compliance Officer
800-686-7800 x151

The Word
“Wisdom is knowing
what to do next;
virtue is doing it.”
– David Star Jordan



This newsletter is published for the dedicated employees of the OPRS communities, Foundation, and Senior Independence. The aim is to educate and communicate what we believe so that each employee may thrive and be successful.