Objectives

- To define ethics and its relevance to your municipality/organization
- To examine the characteristics of ethical behavior
- To explore the ethical decision making process
- To examine the use of power and influence
- To examine how personal values and ethics co-exist with municipal/organizational ethics

What is the definition of ethics?
Ethics

• Also known as moral philosophy—addresses questions about morality—that is, concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime.

• A person of integrity and high standards.
  • Codes of conduct

Ethics

• Ethics is the influence of a moral person who moves others to do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons.
  • Trustworthiness
  • Respect
  • Responsibility
  • Fairness
  • Caring
  • Exemplary conduct
  • Impartial and fair
  • Responsive to organization/client/employer needs
  • Strive for professional competence
  • Enforce all lawful rules and policies
  • Protect confidential information

What is ethical and unethical behavior?
Ethical Behavior

**Ethical behavior** is characterized by honesty, fairness and equity in interpersonal, professional and academic relationships and in research and scholarly activities.

**Ethical behavior** respects the dignity, diversity and rights of individuals and groups of people.

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Values, Morals, and Ethics

- Values are “things that have an intrinsic worth in usefulness or importance to the possessor,” or “principles, standards, or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable.”
- Morals are “motivations based on ideas of right and wrong.”
- Ethics are “rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or group.”

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Ethical Behavior

**Six Pillars of Character**
- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship
Unethical Behavior

• **Causes**
  - Financial instability
  - Poor character
  - Resistance to change (not embracing new training)
  - Fatigue (taking shortcuts; path of least resistance)
  - Sexual conflicts of interest
  - Conflicts of interest caused by moonlighting

• **Consequences**
  - Being snubbed by colleagues and superiors
  - Passed over for promotion
  - Termination
  - Civil and criminal liability

Unethical Behavior

• You call in sick to your supervisor because it’s a beautiful day and you decide to go to the beach, or shopping, or…

• You place your dirty cup in the lunchroom sink. With a guilty glance around the room, you find no one watching and quickly leave the lunchroom.

• Your company sponsors events, activities, or lunches and you sign up to attend and fail to show. Conversely, you fail to sign up and show up anyway. You make the behavior worse when you say that you took the appropriate action so someone else must have screwed up.

• You tell potential customers that you are the vice president in charge of something. When they seek out the company VP at a trade show, you tell your boss that the customers must have made a mistake.

Questions to Ponder

• In what contexts do you let people know your values and what you stand for?

• Have you ever paid a price for taking an ethical stand on an issue?

• What is our ethical responsibility toward future generations?
Questions to Ponder

• Are there times when “the end justifies the means”?
• Have scandals influenced your opinions of others at work, in school, in public or in your church?
• Have you experienced situations where you had an ethical conflict with a coworker or friend? How did it work out? Why?

Ethical Decision Making Process

The Ethical Decision Making Process

- Step 1 - Obtain the Facts
- Step 2 - Define the Ethical Issues
- Step 3 - Ensure Legality
- Step 4 - Promote Fairness
- Step 5 - Check your Intuition
The Ethical Test

- Is it legal?
- Does it comply with our rules and regulations?
- Is it consistent with our organizational values?
- Will I be guilt-free and comfortable if I do it?
- Does it match our stated commitments?
- Would I do it to my family and friends?
- Would I feel okay if someone did it to me?
- Would the most ethical personal I know do it?

This “test” is outlined in the “Ethics 4 Everyone” video and supplemental material.

Ethics Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is it in compliance with...</th>
<th>Is it fair to those involved...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal and State Civil Law</td>
<td>To my family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Policy</td>
<td>To my friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of the Game</td>
<td>To my co-workers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Rules</td>
<td>To my community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Rules</td>
<td>To those less fortunate than me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To others (clients)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To society?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethics in the Organization
Ethics in the Organization

“Values provide a common language for aligning leadership and its people”

Amuso and Giblin, 1997

Ethics in the Organization

“Ethical choices are made by individuals.”

M. Euel Wade, Jr.
Senior Vice President
Southern Company Services, Inc.

Ethics: Bigger Than Compliance

**Compliance** is about doing what you have to do.

**Ethics** is about doing what you should do.

ETHICS IS ABOUT DOING WHAT IS RIGHT!!!
Ethical Behavior: Creating a Framework of Compliance in the Workplace

- Code of Conduct (written standards)
- Training on ethics issues
- Presence of a helpline for reporting
- Employee evaluations based on ethical conduct
- Discipline for violations
- Resources for employees with ethical questions

Source: 2008 Ethics Resource Center Study

Ethical Behavior and Relationships

- Being ethical is an effective interpersonal skill. If you develop close relationships with people you are more likely to be ethical in your dealings with them.

- The stronger the relationship between people, the more likely they will behave ethically toward each other. It is essential to build close relationships with work associates.

Employees Report Unethical Behavior

- Direct Supervisor (47%)
- Higher Management (24%)
- Other Responsible Person (11%)
- Someone Outside the Organization (7%)
- Hotline (7%)
- Other (5%)

* Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100 percent - 2008 Ethics Resource Center Study
Ethical Climate Awareness Activity

• Take 5 minutes and come up with a pictorial image of how you see the ethical climate of where you work each day. Do not use any words at all – just images to represent the morality level where you work.
• Think about your culture and what principles define it. Then, translate that definition or description into a visual image.

Ethics and the Law

The Georgia State Constitution

All government originates with the people, is founded upon their will only and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.

Public officers are the trustees and servants of the people and are at all times amenable to them.
Current Laws And Policies that Outline Ethical Behavior for Public Servants and Employees

- The Georgia Constitution
- **The Georgia Code**
  - See Title 45 Chapter 10
- Your Local Government’s Ethics Policy

Principles of Public Service Ethics

1. Public Interest
2. Objective Judgment
3. Accountability
4. Democratic Leadership
5. Respectability

Public Interest

Public servants should treat their office as a public trust, only using the power and resources of public office to advance public interests and not to attain personal benefit or pursue any other private interest incompatible with the public good.
Objective Judgment
Public servants should employ independent objective judgment in performing their duties deciding all matters on the merits, free from avoidable conflicts of interest and both real and apparent improper influence.

Accountability
Public servants should assure that government is conducted openly, efficiently, equitably and honorably in a manner that permits the citizenry to make informed judgments and hold government officials accountable.

Leadership
Public servants should honor and respect the principles and spirit of representative democracy and set a positive example of good citizenship by scrupulously observing the letter and spirit of laws and rules.
Respectability

Public servants should safeguard public confidence in the integrity of government by being honest, fair, caring, and respectful and by avoiding conduct creating the appearance of impropriety or which is otherwise unbecoming a public official.

Ethics and power

Power Defined

Power is the potential to influence behavior.

In Leadership, power has two elements:

1. **Human Capital**
   - an individual’s abilities and competencies

2. **Social Capital**
   - a person’s social connections within and outside the organization

-David Whetten and Kim Cameron, Developing Management Skills
Two Types of Power

Personal
- Personal
- Expertise
- Attraction
- Effort
- Legitimacy

Position (Institutional)
- Centrality
- Flexibility
- Visibility
- Relevance

The Necessity of Power

Negative Aspects
- Power Hungry
- Abusive
- Personal Gain
- Inflated sense of self

Positive Aspects
- Ability to gain cooperation from others
- Ability to get things accomplished in positive ways

Transforming Power into Influence

- Retribution
- Reciprocity
- Reason
Retribution

• Based on a personal threat from formal authority.

• Coercion – explicit threat to impose sanctions

• Intimidation – implied threat (indirect)

-David Whetten and Kim Cameron, Developing Management Skills

Reciprocity

• Satisfying both parties

• Bargaining – straightforward where each party gains something from the exchange

• Ingratiation – subtle and involves using friendliness and favors to incur social obligations

-David Whetten and Kim Cameron, Developing Management Skills

Reason

• Based on the manager’s persuasive ability

• Facts and needs supporting the case (direct)

• Appeals to the other person’s personal values or goals (indirect)

-David Whetten and Kim Cameron, Developing Management Skills
Case Study #1

• How would you respond if someone higher in local government asked for favorable treatment regarding infractions either for themselves or others?

• How would you respond if you were asked for unusually harsh treatment for someone with a code infraction?

Case Study #2

• Are there situations that rise between code officers and managers? State common examples and recommendations.

• Are there situations where officers are managers of others or perhaps the manager is someone higher up in the local government which may have an influence on decisions?
Case Study #3

• Sometimes, it appears there are some jurisdictions where there are “internal goals of issuing a certain number of citations, needed or not”. Is this ethical?

Case Study #4

• A local government leader asks for special treatment for his friend. Is this an infraction? How should it be handled?

Case Study #5

• A code officer has a child in girl scouts and the troop has signs out in violation of the code ordinance. How should this be handled?

• Give other examples when a personal situation has ethical considerations for the code enforcer involved.
Summary

• There is high demand for ethics today.
• Ethics is comprised of character, actions, goals, honesty, power, and values.
• Ethics has many dimensions.
• To be ethical, you need to pay attention to who you are, what you do, what goals you seek, your honesty, the way you use power, and your values.