

Social Issues in Management and Business Ethics: Exercises and Activities

Exercise/Activity Title:

Core Values Group

Exercise/Activity Explanation (150 words or less):

Ethical issues at work occur daily. Form small groups of 3-5 people and have them sign the confidentiality agreement. Then for one hour, once a week, the small group meets to discuss how they responded to a situation related to one of the organization's core values (e.g., how were you challenged to be truthful this past month?). Each person speaks uninterrupted for 5-10 minutes, while others actively listen. No questions are raised, just listen. After all participants have spoken, the remaining time can be used to address trends or share new understandings.

Assignment is on the following page.

Optional – Contact Information:

If interested in additional information, please contact Professor Denis Collins, School of Business, Edgewood College, Madison, WI; dcollins@edgewood.edu

Core Values Group – Reflections and Monologues,
Denis Collins, Edgewood College, dcollins@edgewood.edu

- Create Core Values Groups of 3-5 people. Do not put an employee and his/her boss in the same core values group because it'll restrict them from being fully open.

Typical 60-Minute Meeting

- Welcome Everyone
- Read short reading or poem (rotate the monthly responsibility)
- 3-5 Minute Silent Meditation
- Pass around "Circle Intentions," each intention read by a different person
- Allocate each person 5 minutes to share a core values story
- When a person desires to speak, pick up "Talking Stick (or Object)" and person remains speaker until putting the stick down. A person can "pass" and not speak if so desired.
- Closing Ritual: Each person stands up in a close circle, hold hands, and one by one say: "Name of person next to you, I put my hand in your hand, so that you know you are not alone."

Core Values Story Sharing Guidance for Groups with 3-5 people

- 1) Share a story about a work situation that moved or challenged your heart in terms of one or more of the organization's core values (i.e., honesty, respect).
- 2) If appropriate, link the story to a childhood story that shaped your values system.
- 3) Prompts for providing story details include, but are not limited to:
 - a. What was the situation context?
 - b. What were the challenges you had to take into consideration?
 - c. What were your options?
 - d. Why did you choose to embody or not embody the value?
 - e. What were the results?
 - f. Would you do anything differently the next time?
 - g. How has this enriched your moral development?

Circle Intentions for Monologues

1. Accept that what happens in the circle stays in the circle.
2. Speak from personal experience and from the heart.
3. Honor each person's time for sharing his or her own experiences without interruption.
4. Respect all co-workers and only mention a co-worker's name in a praiseworthy manner.
5. Respect the verbal space of others by minimizing nonverbal encouragement.
6. Respect the experiences of others without trying to fix or give advice.
7. Especially for those who talk easily, notice what it's like to be present with the need to speak without actually speaking.
8. Speak when comfortable. Let it be okay to remain silent.
9. When a different perspective is offered, receive the difference as a gift.
10. When agitated or distracted, take a moment to breathe and pay attention to the body.
11. When uncomfortable with, aggravated by, or opposed to another's talk, pay attention and explore your feelings and reactions. Consider the possibility of turning those feelings to wonder at the diversity present.
12. Be gentle with yourself. Whatever the experience, let it be okay. Remember, this is all a practice.
13. Trust that each person will get what she or he needs by this process.