

## The ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS PAGE

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Music: "Peg of My Heart" furnished by [Heart and Soul Music](#) "Providing Quality Music for Nursing Homes"

### ETHICS: Ideas to Instill Ethics and Values in Your Employees

Does it pay the company to have strong ethics programs for your facility and employees? There are studies that indicate that companies who are willing to put into place, strong ethics programs, ethics committees and ethics officers, shows that you care deeply about your customers, employees and can increase your revenue by 500 percent. So it obviously pays to have these strong programs in place.

Ethics programs are not one-day seminars or in-services! It is an ongoing process that begins from the moment a new employee is interviewed, through new orientation and training and is incorporated into your daily work life and personal life.

It can include but certainly not limited to ongoing training, mentoring programs for new employees, community volunteer programs, to posted strong work ethic statements. Sunrise Corporation posts their work ethic statement outside every elevator. It is not only a reminder to employees but also to the outside community who visit the facility. Genesis Corporation posts their Ethics Motto in a beautifully displayed poster in a glass case that is prominently displayed in their main center hallways.

**Two" principles" of care giving that we should make clear to our employees and make sure they understand are:**

**Autonomy: To allow for the residents right to choose. To encourage and permit the resident to make informed choices.**

**Beneficence: To do what is in the resident's best interest. To do good. To prevent harm. To remove harm.**

Here are some ideas to incorporate into your ethics program that may help your organization get message across;

- ° Ongoing Training and In-services. Nothing is more valuable than training and education.
  - ° Workshops and Role Playing. It is very impacting to all who participate when provided with an actual situation and asking the group to come to an ethical decision. This can be very inspiring and thought provoking.
  - ° Provide ethic resources. Make sure your break rooms are stocked with valuable information about ethics.
  - ° Annual Ethics Awareness Day. If you do not have one, begin one.
  - ° Respect others spiritual beliefs, don't impose other beliefs which is disrespectful and violates fundamental democratic values concerning religious freedom. Have cultural diversity days. Educate everyone about different beliefs and cultures.
  - ° Praise conduct that exemplifies the core ethical values, especially when the conduct was not easy.
  - ° Ethics calendars for employees
  - ° Screen Savers with 12 building blocks of trust and ethics questions.
  - ° Code of Conduct and Ethics posted on your company web site.
  - ° Email reminders of code of Ethics and Conduct.
  - ° Post table tents with ethics posted on the cafeteria tables.
  - ° Send out bulletins of ethic related issues.
  - ° Wear Character count pins.
  - ° Seasonal Ethics Bulletins, for example at Christmas, you send a policy about accepting gifts from vendors.
  - ° Ethics and Character counts posters.
  - ° Opinion surveys of your employees, customers and stockholders.
  - ° Recruit and retain top quality people.
  - ° Focus groups to gauge responses to Ethics Initiatives.
- "You may not be able to measure the impact of Ethics training but you can read how employees view ethics initiatives."
- ° Build employee character during hiring, training and promotion activities.
  - ° Fostering a more satisfying and productive working environment.
  - ° Encourage mentoring-Think of your employees, especially your younger ones, as people whose personal and work values will be influenced by what you expect of them and how you treat them.
  - ° Wallet Size Cards that every employee carries that states Ethical and

Value Questions on the back of the card. Some questions could be:

- Is the action legal?
- Does it comply with your values?
- If you do it, will you feel bad?
- How will it look in the newspaper?
- If you know it's wrong, don't do it!
- If you're not sure, ask.
- Keep asking until you get an answer.

A 2003 survey conducted, indicated that most long-term care facilities do not have ethics committees. It is required of all hospitals but not nursing homes. Typically a nursing home may use the resources of your local county ethics committee. In the state of NJ the program is called the NJ Seed Project.

The NJ Seed project goals are to:

- \*Strengthen and expand existing regional and long-term care ethics committees by providing ethics

### ABOUT SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer's Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer's support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners**  
<http://www.nccdp.org>.

[Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#) offers resources for health care professionals in many areas of dementia care, care plans, Snoezelen products, dementia activity calendars, adult day care calendars, sensory calendars, reminisce videos for dementia, activity books, and dates to remember, party supplies, resources and links.

education and case consultation skills for all participating facilities.

\*To act as an educational resource for established ethics committees

\*To create new regional long-term care ethics committees in NJ.

To enhance and utilize regional ethics committees case consultation skills by addressing ethical issues at the bedside.

\*To provide ongoing education and bedside support to regional ethics committees to facilitate growth and continuity.

To develop and strengthen policy and consultation functions of all regional long term care ethics committee in NJ

To conduct long-term care research.

To find a list of NJ Regional Ethics Committees, please go to

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/ombudethics.shtml> or call

NJ office of the Ombudsman NJ Ethics Consortium 609 588 3607.

I had the pleasure of attending the December training by the NJ Seed Project and The NJ office of the Ombudsman. I found it to be extremely interesting and professional, packed with tons of information. I strongly encourage the NJ facilities to become actively involved in your regional committees. One of the speakers was Deborah Whisnand. If you are looking for a dynamic and thought provoking Ethics Speaker, we would highly recommend her you can contact her through [dwhisnand@tmh.tmc.edu](mailto:dwhisnand@tmh.tmc.edu)

Whether we are talking about Ethical Decisions as it relates to medical issues or employee misconduct, Ethical Committees serve a vital role in every facility. A recent survey that was conducted reported that 44% of employees do not report misconduct because:

1. Employees believe that no corrective action would be taken.

2. Employees were fearful that reports would not be confidential.

These are two very compelling reasons why ethics committees need to be implemented and education and training ongoing.

There are still facilities that are unclear of what to do with guardianship, DNR and DNH when faced with serious life threatening issues. There are some facilities whose policies are not to have DNR and DNH in their facilities. You might have a confused resident who is still able to make decisions about health care. Or, two family members with conflicting opinions about inserting a feeding tube. Ethics committees make sense! If, for no other reason, than the many difficult medical issues that every facility at one point will have to address. But remember, if you are going to begin an Ethics Committee, make sure you have people who will have different opinions and not necessarily agree with each member.

It is a myth that employees are ethical, so we don't need attention to business ethics. "Ethics programs cultivate strong teamwork and productivity. A critical component in the work place is openness, integrity and community which in turn, employees react with motivation and performance." We can't be afraid to say, "your paid to smile, have a good attitude, to be ethical, to follow our moral code and report bad behavior!"

#### **Ethics Resources:**

Forming a Moral Community: A Resource for Healthcare Ethics Committees available through The Bioethics Consultation Group  
510 486 0626 We strongly recommend this publication.  
ISBN: 1-882674-00-6

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/ombudethics.shtml> NJ Ethics Committee  
State Initiatives in End of Life Care Publication 816.221.1100 x 237

<http://eldercareethicsassociates.com> Elder Care Ethics Associates

<http://www.eoa.org> Ethics Officer Association  
<http://www.iit.edu/departments/csep/publicwww/codes/health/html>  
Code of Ethics for Healthcare

<http://www.ethics.org>

<http://www.charactercounts.org>

<http://www.qualityfirstnursinghomes.com/pledge.html>  
Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care Code of Conduct

<http://www.aahpm.org> American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.  
<http://www.dyingwell.org> Dying Well

<http://www.midbio.org> Midwest Bioethics Center

NJ Protection and Advocacy, Inc. 1800 922 7233

Guardianship Services of NJ 1609 292 0055

The NJ Seed Project 856.234.7233

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