

Am I Making the Right Decision?

The Role of Ethics in Volunteer Engagement

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cvacert.org



The Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration

Our Vision

A world where competent, passionate leaders effectively engage volunteers.

Our Mission

To advance excellence in volunteer administration by delivering professional certification and advocating ethical practice.

We administer the CVA credential and are a community of 1100 CVAs across the globe.



The Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration

Seven (7) Unique Competencies:

- ▶ Plan for Strategic Volunteer Engagement
- ▶ Advocate for Volunteer Involvement
- ▶ Attract and Onboard a Volunteer Workforce
- ▶ Prepare Volunteers for their Role
- ▶ Document Volunteer Involvement
- ▶ Manage Volunteer Performance and Impact
- ▶ Acknowledge, Celebrate, and Sustain Volunteer Involvement

These Seven Categories are further broken down into 67 unique tasks



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Case Study - Lynn

Lynn is the Director of Volunteer Services at a hospital. At the height of the pandemic, she was asked by senior management to organize a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for volunteers based on her government's current phasing criteria. Vaccination supply was not guaranteed.

While determining which volunteers met the current age and medical criteria, Lynn was approached by the Vice President of Development. He instructed her to invite one of the hospital's largest donors, Mrs. Smith, to be vaccinated. When Lynn responded that the clinic was for current volunteers, the VP said that Mrs. Smith has dedicated lots of time to causes on behalf of the hospital before and that the hospital can't afford to disappoint her. Lynn knew that Mrs. Smith didn't meet the current age requirement for vaccination and wasn't sure of her medical background.

What do you think Lynn should have done?



Historical Context

- Volunteer Administration = an evolving profession since the 1960s.
- First “Statement of Professional Ethics” developed by Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) in the 1970s.
- Major revision and update in the late 90s, based on Josephson Institute of Ethics.
- Ethics material transferred to the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA) in 2006.
- Updated in 2016 by CVA task force to ensure relevancy and usefulness to the field.
- Commitment to professional ethics required for the CVA credential.



Historical Context

Morals - personal identification of right and wrong

Beliefs - an idea held to be true

Values - guide decision-making and prioritization

Policies - a standard or code for decision making

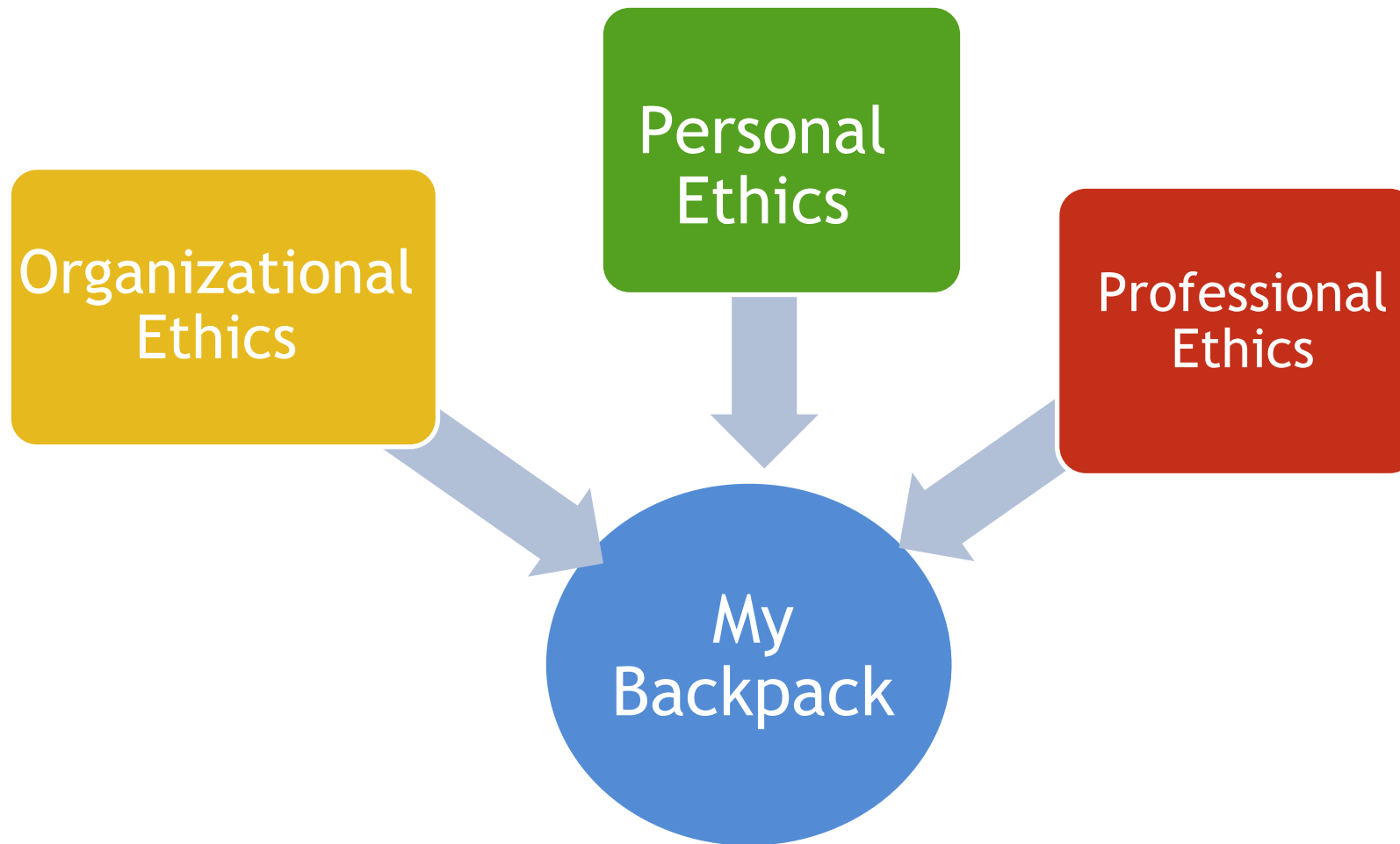
Culture - an organization's goals, values, and beliefs



Each of us carries
an ethics backpack...



What's in my ethics backpack?



Core Values for Volunteer Engagement Professionals



Professional Values and Principles

CITIZENSHIP: The Administrator of Volunteers understands that volunteerism is a foundation of *civil societies* and guides the organization and its stakeholders toward active community participation.

- Philosophy of Volunteerism
- Social Responsibility
- Philanthropy



Professional Values and Principles

RESPECT: The Administrator of Volunteers acknowledges the inherent value, skills and abilities of all individuals and affirms the mutual benefit gained by the volunteer and the organization.

- Dignity
- Inclusivity
- Privacy



Professional Values and Principles

ACCOUNTABILITY: The Administrator of Volunteers demonstrates responsibility to the organization, its stakeholders and the profession of volunteer administration.

- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement
- Professionalism



Professional Values and Principles

FAIRNESS: The Administrator of Volunteers commits to individual and collective efforts that build and support a fair and just organizational culture.

- Impartiality
- Equity
- Justice



Professional Values and Principles

TRUST: The Administrator of Volunteers maintains loyal and trusting relationships with all stakeholders and is dedicated to providing a safe environment based on established standards of practice.

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Commitment



Yucky Situation or Ethical Dilemma?



Is this situation very unusual?

Is there a conflict between values or beliefs?

Are multiple stakeholders involved?

Policy says “do this”, but I’m not sure that is “right”?

Is there a downside to making the “correct” choice?



Ethical Decision Making Process

GATHER INFORMATION



IDENTIFY THE CONFLICT



EXPLORE OPTIONS



DECIDE AND TEST



ACT



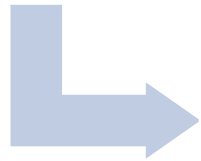
Decision Making Steps

1. **Gather information:** *what led to this situation? who's involved? what else do I need to know?*
2. **Identify the dilemma:** *which two or more values or principles are at the heart of this dilemma? where is the main tension?*
3. **Explore various options & consequences:** *what if I did this? what if I didn't do that? who will be affected?*
4. **Make a decision and test it:** *seek the path of least harm*
5. **Act --** *with confidence, courage, professionalism*

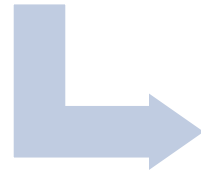


CLICK TEST (Testing your decision)

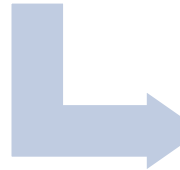
Consequence



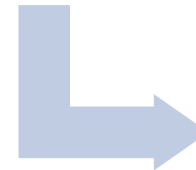
Legal



Image



Culture



K_{not}



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Decision Making Worksheet

www.CVAcert.org



Ethical Decision Making Worksheet

Use this worksheet to record your thoughts. Select the action(s) which have the greatest positive consequences and the fewest negative consequences.

Stakeholders who will be affected by my decision:

Core values that are in conflict:

Possible Action/Response	Positive Consequences (include stakeholder most affected)	Negative Consequences (include stakeholder most affected)

Case Study - Lynn

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What do you think Lynn should have done?



Step 1 - Gather Info

- Who is ultimately responsible for distribution of vaccines at the hospital?
- Are there clear guidelines for distribution?
- Has the VP discussed this request with anyone else?
- What happens if you prioritize someone based on something other than the established criteria?
- Stakeholders: hospital, CEO/board of directors, volunteers, community, Lynn



Step 2 - Identify the Conflict

- Core Values at heart of the dilemma are:
- Fairness (equity and justice)
- Trust (integrity)
- Possibly: Accountability (professionalism)
- The main conflict is Lynn being asked to give preferential treatment to someone based on their financial contributions, not their eligibility, and in doing so, inconsistently apply the rules.



Step 3 - Possible Actions and Outcomes

- Lynn invites Mrs. Smith to the vaccination clinic. (She gives a large donation afterwards)
- Lynn invites Mrs. Smith to the vaccination clinic. (She tells others and the word spreads)
- Lynn asks Mrs. Smith if she meets the current criteria and when she says yes, she includes her.
- Lynn declines to invite Mrs. Smith as she does not meet the criteria for the clinic. (She makes the VP angry or faces consequences)
- Lynn declines to invite Mrs. Smith but the VP invites her anyway.



Step 4 - Decide and test
Use CLICK

Step 5 – Act with confidence,
courage and professionalism



Moral Courage

“Moral courage is the quality of mind and spirit that enables one to face up to ethical dilemmas and moral wrongdoings firmly and confidently, without flinching or retreating.”

*Rushworth Kidder
Institute for Global Ethics*



“Exercising” Ethics



- Post the CCVA Values & Principles near your desk
- Discuss ethics at staff & volunteer orientations
- Use scenarios as a discussion starter. Practice the decision-making process.
- Devote time at staff or board meetings to focus on each ethical principle
- Find colleagues to serve as your “sounding board”



Resources



Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration
www.CVAcert.org

Independent Sector (search “Ethics & Accountability” in
Resources section)
www.independentsector.org

Josephson Institute of Ethics www.josephsoninstitute.org

*“Complete Guide to Ethics Management: An Ethics Toolkit for
Managers”* by Carter McNamara (free 20 page booklet)



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