Ethics, or personal values, is a critical issue in today’s workplace. If employers and employees don’t consistently follow high standards of conduct, companies cannot prosper. The recent headlines show the consequences of unethical workplace behavior. In this module, employees will:

- Define ethics
- Understand the importance of a good work ethic
- Learn the six pillars of character
- Discover how and why to apply these pillars in the workplace

**Instructional Plan**

Administer the Workplace Ethics pre-test to all participants. Score these and file them for use at the end of the module.

Ask learners for a definition of “ethics.” Write their responses on the board or flipchart. Now ask for a definition of “values.” Write these on the board as well. Tell learners that these terms are really not the same. Ethics is concerned with how a moral person should behave. Values are the inner judgments that determine how a person actually behaves. Most values have nothing to do with ethics.

Show participants Overhead #1: Ethical Behavior in the Workplace. This is the definition that will be used throughout this module.

*Workplace Ethics: “To conform to accepted and especially professional standards of conduct.”*

Ethics is putting principles into action. Consistency between what we say we value and what our actions say we value is a matter of integrity. In other words, you have to walk the talk.

Ethics is also about self-restraint. What do we mean by that? Show participants Overhead #2/Worksheet #1: Self Restraint. Go over each bullet. These may elicit quite a bit of discussion and/or questions.

Now tell learners that they will be covering the six pillars of character. Ask learners to give you some examples that might be pillars of character. Write responses on the board or flip chart. Now show participants Overhead #3/Worksheet #2: The Six Pillars of Character. Compare this list with the list the participants made.
The six pillars are:

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

Show learners Overhead #4/Worksheet #3: Trustworthiness. Ask learners to list why someone would want to be trustworthy on the job. Write these on the board or flip chart. Possible answers might be: When your boss trusts you, s/he gives you greater leeway. S/he doesn’t feel like s/he has to watch us all the time. People believe in you. People will hold you in higher esteem.

Tell learners that trustworthiness has four dimensions. The first is honesty. Ask learners to define honesty. Write definitions on the board or flip chart. Say: Honesty involves both what you say (or don’t say) and how you act. Honesty in communications is telling the truth as best you know it and being truthful, genuine, and frank. Honesty in conduct means playing by the rules, without stealing, cheating, or fraud.

Have learners complete Worksheet #4: Trustworthiness. They may complete this individually or in pairs. Elicit discussion from participants on their choices or on what they didn’t choose and why.

Show learners Overhead #5/Worksheet #5: Integrity. Go over the bullets:

- Is undivided and complete
- Acts according to beliefs
- Consistent
- What you see is what you get
- Knows who s/he is and what s/he values

Ask: What do we call someone without integrity? (A hypocrite or two-faced)

Have learners complete Worksheet #6: Integrity. Learners may complete this individually or in pairs. When they have completed the assignment, have them discuss what solutions they chose or did not choose and why.

Refer learners to Overhead #6/Worksheet #7: Reliability (Promise Keeping). Go over the bullets:

- Avoiding bad-faith excuses
- Avoid unclear commitments
- Avoid unwise commitments
- Accepting responsibility
Ask learners for examples of what it means to accept responsibility, avoid bad-faith excuses, avoid unwise commitments, and avoid unclear commitments. Now ask learners what it means to be reliable on the job. Write their answers on the board or flip chart. Possible answers might be: being at work on time, doing what you say you’ll do, coming back from breaks/lunch on time, being at work—ready to work—every day.

Have learners complete Worksheet #8: Reliability in pairs. When they have completed the assignment, have them discuss what solutions they chose or didn’t choose and why.

Now ask learners to define and give examples of loyalty. Some possible answers might be: allegiance to country, devotion to a spouse, etc. Refer learners to Overhead #7/Worksheet #9: Loyalty. Review the bullets with the class:

- Responsibility to promote the interests of certain people, organizations, or affiliations
- Requires you to keep some information confidential
- Requires you to avoid conflicting interests

Ask: When would it be OK to share confidential information? (*When confidential information breaks the law or threatens others, it is our responsibility to "blow the whistle."*)

Direct learners to Worksheet #10: Loyalty. They may work individually or in pairs. When they have completed the assignment, have them discuss their responses.

Ask: What does respect mean to you? Put responses on board or flip chart. Direct learners to Overhead #8/Worksheet #11: Respect. Go over bullets with class:

- Prohibits violence, humiliation, manipulation, exploitation
- Reflects civility, courtesy, decency
- Recognizes dignity and the right to make informed decisions
- Reflects tolerance and acceptance

Ask learners for examples of behaviors in the workplace that reflect respect. Discuss these in light of the bulleted behaviors on Overhead #8/Worksheet #11: Respect. If time allows, direct learners to Worksheet #12: Respect Role-Playing Activity. Assign or have participants choose parts (Group Leader, Female Line Worker/Two Years, Female Line Worker/Float, Male Line Worker/Five Years, Male Line Worker/Ten Years, Male Line Worker/Fifteen Years, Male Line Worker/Nineteen Years, and Observers. You will be using an excerpt from

Give learners time to prepare to do the role play. After they have completed it, debrief the group. What happened? How did a lack of respect hurt the employees? The company?

Now ask learners what **responsibility** means to them. Write responses on the board or flip chart. Compare learners’ responses with the behaviors/characteristics listed in Overhead #9/Worksheet #13: Responsibility. Now ask learners how each bullet relates to on-the-job behavior. Give examples to get learners started if necessary.

- Being in charge of your choices and your life
- **Choosing to be on time at work even after a late night**
- Being accountable for what you do and who you are
- **Owning up to mistakes in production when it is your fault that caused them**
- Doing your best, being diligent, reliable, careful, prepared, and informed
- **Knowing when your staff meeting is going to be held and reading the information your boss gave you**
- Finishing what you start
- **Taking a few extra minutes on shift to complete a shipment that has to go out first thing in the morning**
- Looking for better ways to do your work better
- **Figuring out that changing the layout of your work area just a little will increase production**
- Exercising self-restraint
- **Not going out on Monday night and getting blasted because you know you have to work the next day**

Direct learners to **Overhead #10/Worksheet #14: Fairness/Caring/Citizenship**. Go over each pillar. **Fairness** involves issues of equality, impartiality, openness, and due process. It implies following a balanced standard of justice without letting one’s feelings interfere. A fair person gets all the information and looks at all sides before making a decision. A fair person makes decisions without favoritism or prejudice. A fair person corrects mistakes promptly and voluntarily.

The fifth pillar is **caring**. Tell learners that caring is at the heart of ethics and ethical decision-making. Ethics is ultimately about good relations with other people. Caring is being concerned about the welfare of others. Ask: How would you show caring in the workplace? Discuss the answers from the participants.

The last pillar is **citizenship**. Citizenship includes the attitudes and things we do that define how we should behave as part of a larger community. The
community can be the town, county, or country in which you live. It can also be the business community in which you work. A good citizen does more than his/her “fair” share to make the community work. Ask: What are some ways an employee can show good citizenship at work? Discuss the participants’ answers.

Ask learners: What reasons do people give for not acting ethically? Write their responses on the board or flip chart. Refer learners to Overhead #11/Worksheet #15: Why People Don’t Act Ethically. Go over each bullet. As you do, ask learners for examples they have experienced or know of that demonstrate these rationalizations. Some suggestions are on the Instructor’s Note Page for you to use if the learners have difficulty in coming up with ideas.

Closure

Have a volunteer briefly review the key points of the module (i.e. the six pillars, etc.). Answer any questions and have other learners fill in any missing information.

Administer Ethics Post-test.
PRE/POST TESTS FOR WORKPLACE ETHICS

(Please circle which test you are taking)

1. What is ethical behavior?

2. What does honesty in conduct mean?

3. An action isn’t proper just because it’s allowed or you can get away with it. Not doing what you have the power to do is called: (Circle the best answer)
   a) Being careful
   b) Being a good citizen
   c) Being fair
   d) Having self-restraint

4. People who act according to their beliefs are said to have:

Give an example of each of the following ethics in the workplace (try to give examples of each as an employee)

5. Trustworthiness

6. Respect

7. Responsibility

8. Citizenship

9. Caring

10. Fairness
Workplace Ethics

Pre/Post Test Answers

1. Acting in a manner of doing what is right, good and fair. Conforming to acceptable professional standards, etc.
2. d) Having self-restraint
3. Honesty in conduct means playing by the rules, without stealing, cheating, or fraud.
4. Integrity
5. Trustworthiness: Arrive at the job site on time, be honest, reliable and ethical in all business dealings, and refuse to steal, misuse or abuse company time, property or equipment.
6. Respect: Treat co-workers, supervisors, vendors and customers with courtesy, honor and respect, accept instruction and modify behavior when necessary, etc.
7. Responsibility: Take pride in your work, follow instructions, be loyal in your attendance and on time, etc.
8. Citizenship: Be a role model and mentor to new employees, have a positive work attitude, follow company policies and procedures.
9. Caring: Being concerned about the welfare of others. Good relations with other people.
10. Fairness: Make decisions based on a win-win result, be open-minded, share your ideas, knowledge and skill, etc.
Ethical Behavior in the Workplace

Workplace Ethics: To conform to accepted and especially professional standards of conduct.
Self-Restraint

• **Not** doing what you have the power to do

  *An action isn’t proper just because it’s allowed or you can get away with it.*

• **Not** doing what you have the right to do

  *There is a world of difference between what you have the right to do and what is right to do.*

• **Not** doing what you want to do

  *An ethical person sometimes decides to do more than is required and less than is allowed.*
The Six Pillars of Character

- TRUSTWORTHINESS
- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- FAIRNESS
- CARING
- CITIZENSHIP
Overhead #4/Worksheet #3: Four Dimensions of Trustworthiness

Four Dimensions of Trustworthiness

▶ HONESTY

▶ INTEGRITY

▶ RELIABILITY (PROMISE-KEEPING)

▶ LOYALTY
Worksheet #4: Trustworthiness on the Job

**Trustworthiness on the Job**

Read the following scenario and then decide which answer is most appropriate and why. Be prepared to discuss your choice in the group.

During his break, Marvin was playing basketball in the parking lot. During the pick-up game, which went way beyond his break time, he slipped and twisted his ankle. He was limping back in the shipping department after break. His employer saw him limping and, thinking Marvin had slipped on the job, told him to fill out an incident report. His boss offered to take care of Marvin's medical expenses and give him time off from work, even though Marvin was still capable of performing his work duties. What should Marvin do?

A. Keep quiet and take the time off with medical benefits. The company can afford it. Who's going to rat him out?

Possible result of this choice:

B. Quit his job because he doesn't want to be dishonest and if he tells the truth he might be fired.

Possible result of this choice:

C. Tell his boss he was playing basketball when he should have been working and twisted his ankle then. Apologize and pay for his own medical care. Tell his boss he can still work.

Possible result of this choice:

D. Marvin should just blow off work the next day.

Possible result of this choice:
INTEGRITY

People with integrity:

- Are undivided and complete—they act according to their beliefs
- Are consistent—what you see is what you get
- Know who they are and what they value

*What do we call someone without integrity?*
Worksheet #6: Integrity at Work

Integrity at Work

Read the following scenario and then decide which answer is most appropriate and why. Be prepared to discuss your choice in the group.

Wanda recently began work at the D&D Company. She has been talking to you during breaks and lunch, and seems very friendly. She gushes over her other co-workers when she is around them, talking about how much she loves working at the company. Lately, however, Wanda has been gossiping and bad-mouthing these same co-workers when they are not around. She's also revealed some personal information about several co-workers and asked you some very personal questions. What should you do?

A. Ignore the gossip, questions, and comments. After all, it's not bothering you and you get to hear a lot of dirt!
   Possible result of this decision:

B. Start gossiping about her to other people. What goes around....
   Possible result of this decision:

C. Tell the boss what a jerk Wanda is.
   Possible result of this decision:

D. Politely tell Wanda you are uncomfortable with gossip and personal issues that have no place at work. Distance yourself from her if she continues.
   Possible result of this decision:
Overhead #6/Worksheet #7: Reliability

Reliability
(Promise Keeping)

- Avoid bad-faith excuses
- Avoid unclear commitments
- Avoid unwise commitments

Reliability means accepting the responsibility to make every reasonable effort to fulfill a commitment.
Worksheet #8: Reliability at Work

Reliability at Work

Read the following scenario and then decide which answer is most appropriate and why. Be prepared to discuss your choice in the group.

Fred knows his employer is going to ask him to do a boring—but necessary—job. Fred should:

A. Avoid the boss as long as possible by hanging out in the lunch room, taking a lot of cigarette breaks, or hiding in the employee locker room.

Possible results of this decision:

B. Clutter up his work area, look frazzled, and loudly complain about how overworked he is.

Possible results of this decision:

C. Sigh, roll his eyes, and accept the job, but then conveniently “forget” to do it.

Possible results of this decision:

D. Accept the task cheerfully. Tell your boss how much he likes his job and that he’d really like to head up the new safety project.

Possible results of this decision:
Overhead #7/Worksheet #9: Loyalty

What is Loyalty?

- Responsibility to promote the interests of certain people, organizations, or affiliations

- Requires us to keep some information confidential

- Requires us to avoid conflicting interests

*When would it be OK to share confidential information?*
Worksheet #10: Loyalty at Work

Loyalty at Work

Read the following scenarios and then decide which answers are most appropriate and why. Be prepared to discuss your choice in the group.

Zack and Donetta are clerks at D&D Groceries. A customer asks them where she can find TipTop paper towels. "Hey, man, you don't want to get those here," Zack remarked. "They are like way too expensive, like everything else here." "Yeah," Donetta chimed in. "You ought to go to QuickSave. Their stuff is totally cheaper. You'll need some bags, though. Here, take these with you." Donetta reached under the counter and gave the customer a stack of paper bags.

Obviously, Zack and Donetta have a loyalty problem. How will this affect D&D Groceries? How will it affect them? How should they have responded?

Amanda works as a records clerk at a local mental health facility. As such, she has access to patient records. Friday night Amanda was out with her friends at a local bar. "Wait 'til you hear this!" she excitedly told them. She then breathlessly related the juiciest details of several patients, including their names. The group howled with laughter.

Confidentiality is a critical aspect of loyalty. What might be the consequences of Amanda's actions?

Paul is the director of a non-profit agency. The agency just received a large federal grant to set up a satellite location. The agency needs to purchase furniture and other accessories for the new location. Paul's old college buddy owns an office furniture store. He and Paul recently sat down over lunch to discuss the project. Although Paul's friend was going to charge over twice what other office suppliers would charge, Paul agreed to purchase everything from him. To "sweeten the pot," Paul's friend is going to give Paul an entertainment center for his home.

What are the possible consequences of Paul's actions? How would this be considered unethical and a conflict of interest? How has Paul shown a lack of loyalty?
Worksheet #10: Loyalty at Work (Page 2)

You work at a large retailer. You’ve recently been promoted to a well-paying job in personnel. Your responsibility is to log each store’s time clock records into a spreadsheet. After working in this position for a few months, you begin to notice that it appears that minors are working too late at night, working during school hours, and working too many hours per day. You know this is in violation of child-labor laws and state regulations. What should you do?

What are the possible consequences of this action?
RESPECT

- Prohibits violence, humiliation, manipulation, exploitation

- Reflects civility, courtesy, decency

- Recognizes dignity and the right to make informed choices

- Reflects tolerance and acceptance
Worksheet #12: Respect Role Play: Men & Women

Men & Women

The Situation

The company

Your company builds truck trailers. Shop employees work in teams of four to six people, including a group leader. Work assignments are always changing. A person may do a one-person job today, but work with someone else on a two-person job tomorrow.

In the past, only men worked on the shop floor. Two years ago, this changed. Now five teams have women on them. But many of the men still don't think women can do this work.

The problem

A woman joined one team two years ago. Many of the men on the team teased her and played practical jokes on her. She talked to the group leader and to the human resources manager about this. The problems stopped for a while.

But soon the situation got worse. Some of the men still don't accept the woman. They talk only to each other and ignore her. They won't let her do certain jobs. They show by their words and actions that they don't want to be her work partner.

The team's production is down, and its error rate is up. The group leader calls a meeting to get the team members to work out their differences.
Responsibility

- Being in charge of your choices and your life

- Being accountable for what you do and who you are

- Doing your best, being diligent, reliable, careful, prepared, and informed

- Finishing what you start

- Looking for ways to do your work better

- Exercising self-restraint
Overhead #10/Worksheet #14: Fairness/Caring/Citizenship

The Final Three Pillars

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship
Why People Don’t Act Ethically

- If it’s necessary, it’s ethical
- If it’s legal and permissible, it’s proper
- It’s just part of the job
- It’s all for a good cause
- I was just doing it for you
- I’m just fighting fire with fire
- It doesn’t hurt anyone
- Everyone’s doing it
- It’s OK if I don’t gain personally
- I deserve it
- I can still be objective
Discussion Questions: Is this Ethical Behavior?

1. Is it ethical to take office supplies from work for home use?

2. Is it ethical to use company time to solicit signatures for a petition concerning a current social issue?

3. If there are slight defects in a product you are selling, are you obligated to tell the buyer?

4. Is it ethical to make personal long-distance calls from the office?

5. Is it ethical to use company time for personal business (ie: doctor’s appointment)?

6. Suppose you have a friend who works a ticket office of the convention center where your favorite performer will be appearing. Is it ethical for you to ask the friend to get you tickets?

7. How do you differentiate between a bribe and a gift?

8. If you exaggerate your credentials in an interview, is this ethical?

9. Is it immoral to do less than your best in terms of work performance?

10. Are transfers that break up families a breach of ethics?

11. How can companies foster ethical behavior among those working for them?