



Ethical Leadership in Assisted Living Everyday Problems & Solutions

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Purpose

- The purpose of this course is to provide a scoping review of principles, ethical problems, solutions and benefits associated with ethical leadership within assisted living communities.

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Description

- "Ethical Leadership in Assisted Living: Everyday Problems & Solutions" examines the powerful impact of leaders driven by ethical and moral principles within assisted living communities.

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- Everyday ethical dilemmas and issues are presented along with resident-centered ethical decision-making solutions. The presentation also provides numerous examples of benefits and positive outcomes associated with ethical leadership in assisted living.

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- Ultimately, "Ethical Leadership in Assisted Living: Everyday Problems & Solutions" is about creating a place residents call home and where care and services are exemplary and residents experience great satisfaction and quality of life.

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Learning Objectives

1. Describe core principles of ethical leadership
2. Identify everyday ethical problems and solutions

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3. List and describe benefits and positive outcomes associated with ethical leadership in assisted living

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Introduction

- Because assisted living communities are places where residents live, people work, families and others visit; where social relationships and care merge together, including end-of-life care, there is ethical uncertainty and conflict

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- Assisted living communities are modern hybrids of both residential living and care
- Residents have a wide variety of physical, mental and emotional, cognitive and behavioral characteristics

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- Employees and families also are diverse in their personalities, backgrounds, cultures, religions and so on, making assisted living a multidimensional, multifactorial “soup”

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- It is therefore, imperative for leaders to be driven by an ethical and moral compass which can powerfully influence the quality of life and care, atmosphere and personality of the community

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- To be effective, leaders must be able to identify ethical issues and their underlying causes, and then make decisions and implement change to foster and promote ethical and moral living spaces for older adults

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Learning Objective 1

Describe Core Principles of Ethical Leadership

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What is a Principle?

- “A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning”
- It is a truth, an idea, concept or proposition

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- Some also regard a principle as a rule, belief or idea that guides a person's thoughts and behaviors
- It may also be thought of as ways we should behave
- So, what are these "ways"?

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- Respect and dignity for residents
- Integrity in caregiving
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Accountability and loyalty
- Service to others

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- Honesty and justice
- Promoting self-determination
- Promoting diversity, inclusion and equality in the workplace
- Transparency and approachability
- Empathy and compassion
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Respect and Dignity for Residents

- This is one of the most fundamental principle involved in ethical leadership
- It involves recognizing individuality, personal preferences and rights of each resident

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- It also involves respectful communication to ensure resident's needs are met and staff is treated with compassion and empathy

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Integrity in Caregiving

- Another essential core principle that should not be compromised
- Integrity means being honest, trustworthy and reliable to others

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- Leaders and staff act or behave with integrity to better ensure high standards and ethical conduct
- Integrity builds trust with residents, families and staff

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Confidentiality and Privacy

- Legally and ethically, these are a must
- Leaders and staff must maintain protect resident information of all kinds including medical records and personal details

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Accountability and Loyalty

- Ethical leaders and staff hold themselves accountable for their behaviors and are loyal to their mission to provide the best quality of care and life for their residents

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- Being accountable means to not pass blame onto others when things go wrong
- Accountability and loyalty require open and honest communication and leading by example

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Service to Others

- To serve is to do what is ethical, right and moral for residents, families and staff as well as the community as a whole
- Leading by service is powerful

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Honesty and Justice

- Honesty is the basis of trust and love
- Leaders must communicate openly and honestly regardless of the problem or situation
- Justice means treating all fairly

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Promoting Self-Determination

- If we believe in person-centered care, this is the basis for it
- Residents have the right to pilot their own lives within the context of their situation

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- This involves being aware of their wishes, values and preferences and treating each resident as a unique human being

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Promoting Diversity, Inclusion and Equality in the Workplace

- These concepts are essential to ethical leaders and apply to every person in the community
- All are welcome

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Transparency and Approachability

- Leaders must be see-through
- What you see is what you get
- This builds trust and respect which draws others in so that communication and action can take place

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Empathy and Compassion

- The act of trying to understand and share thoughts and feelings with others
- Sharing pain of others and attempting to alleviate it (think of emotional intelligence and mindfulness)

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Gold Standard Ethical Principles in Geriatrics and Long-Term Care

1. Beneficence – do what is right
2. Non-maleficence – do no harm
3. Futility of treatment – informing about consequences

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4. Confidentiality
5. Autonomy – choice with consequences
6. Physician-resident relationship – fidelity and confidentiality
7. Truth-telling
8. Justice

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9. Non-abandonment
10. Dignity – avoiding surplus safety and excess disability
11. Fairness or uniformity in approach
12. Limited resources

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Learning Objective 2

Identify Everyday Ethical Problems and Solutions

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- We certainly have no shortage of things that can go ethically or morally sideways, do we?
- Ethical dilemmas are simply a natural part of senior care at any level, be it AL, SNF, home care or hospice

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- Most ethical problems arise within the context of resident safety, dignity or independence where there is a fine balance between right and wrong; good and bad

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- Ensuring residents have a voice in their care decisions, preferences about daily routines, intimacy, and personal identity, requires careful application of informed consent, advance directives and ethical decision-making

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- Staff misconduct or violation of principles
- Boundaries and boundary violations
- Balancing autonomy and safety (especially with cognitive decline)
- End-of-life decisions

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- Cultural and religious sensitivities
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Financial matters and exploitation
- Rights versus responsibility

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Staff Misconduct or Violation of Principles

- Leaders and staff should be trained and aware of any type of misconduct or violations including abuse, neglect, and exploitation

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Boundaries and Boundary Violations

- Boundaries protect all parties, maintain trust and ensure ethical behavior and practice
- These violations can occur with residents, families and staff
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Violations Might Include the Following

- Gift-giving from residents or their families
- Socializing with family members or relatives outside of the AL
- Disclosing personal information

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- Giving or borrowing money
- Dual relationships (resident is a friend)
- Physical or prolonged touch
- Online interactions

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Balancing Autonomy and Safety (Especially with Cognitive Decline)

- Choice should be respected as should safety concerns
- There should be an ethical balance between the two

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End-of-Life Decisions

- Navigating decisions associated with advance directives, DNRs, and hospice and palliative care while respecting the resident's wishes and need for peace, dignity and comfort

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Cultural and Religious Sensitivities

- Leaders and staff should respect personally held beliefs and tailor care and support to ensure they meet the physical, cultural and spiritual needs of the resident

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Privacy and Confidentiality

- These apply to all aspects of the resident's care and life including medical records and personal spaces
- Safety and dignity must be balanced

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Financial Matters and Exploitation

- Leaders and staff should always be aware of potential or real theft or financial exploitation

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Rights Versus Responsibility

- While residents have a number of rights, they also come with responsibilities and leadership and staff should be aware of the sometimes-delicate balance between the two

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Learning Objective 3

List and Describe Benefits and Positive Outcomes Associated with Ethical Leadership in Assisted Living

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- The outcomes of ethical leadership in assisted living are countless and affect residents, families, employees, and the community as a whole
- Satisfaction is undoubtedly improved with ethical leadership

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- A culture of trust, respect and dignity as well as transparent communication can all be associated with this high level of leadership
- Collaboration among caregivers
- Service and care quality can increase

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- Staff turnover may be reduced
- Accountability and good decision-making
- Community reputation
- Decrease in value conflicts among staff
- Improved resident independence

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- Greater resident autonomy and safety
- Better end-of-life decisions and experiences
- Less abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Greater privacy and confidentiality
- Respect for culture, religion and gender

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- Greater integrity, loyalty, and justice
- Fewer boundary violations
- Healthier work environment
- Greater well-being and morale
- Safe work and living environment

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- Improved care and services
- Enhanced professionalism
- Less stigma about cognitive decline
- More workplace honesty
- Greater sense of inclusion and community

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- More appreciation for diversity and equity
- Better emotional intelligence
- More approachable leaders
- Greater empathy and compassion

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Final Thoughts

- Ethical leadership is greatly need right now because the very nature of assisted living communities is fertile ground for ethical problems and issues

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- While there are many ways to approach problems among residents, families or staff, or the processes of care and services, a strong ethical and moral approach to leadership seems to be the right fit in assisted living communities and beyond

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