Ethics and Professionalism in the Workplace

Presented by RCC Career Services
Definitions

- Ethics: concepts of right and wrong; moral principles guiding behavior
- Professionalism: conduct or qualities marking a professional person

Adapted from dictionary.com
What are employers looking for?

Employers are looking for ethical behavior in these areas:

- **Reliability** - As a professional employee, you will be expected to get your job done. This means being prompt and keeping your commitments.
- **Accountability** - If you make a mistake, admit it and fix it; don’t blame someone else.
- **Honesty** - Always tell the truth.

Adapted from employee-motivation-skills.com: [http://www.employee-motivation-skills.com/workplace-behavior-ethics.html](http://www.employee-motivation-skills.com/workplace-behavior-ethics.html)
How should we conduct ourselves as professionals?

- Employers expect job applicants and employees to have skills in these areas when they work in professional roles
  - Communication: Professionals speak and write effectively, handle conflict calmly, carry themselves with confidence, are able to convey information to groups
  - Teamwork: Professionals are able to build consensus and manage themselves and others
  - Time Management: Professionals are detail-oriented, intrinsically motivated, meet deadlines calmly, plan and lead positively while prioritizing tasks and adapting
  - Personal skills: Professionals are competent, creative, critical thinkers who project a professional appearance and exude ethical, positive qualities

Adapted from thebalance.com: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-skills-every-professional-needs-to-have-4150386
What qualities can I work on to help me be more professional?

- You can work on specific skills which will help you develop the qualities employers are seeking.
  - Competence: Keep working and learning to become an expert in your field/job
  - Etiquette: Study and learn proper phone and written/email communication etiquette
  - Organizational skills: Keep your workplace neat and come up with a system to easily access what you or someone else may need

Adapted from dummies.com: http://www.dummies.com/careers/find-a-job.skills-and-personal-qualities-that-employers-want/
Ethics and Professionalism cover all relationships in the workplace

- Employers seek employees who exhibit ethical, professional behavior with:
  - Their manager or supervisor
  - Their colleagues/coworkers
  - Customers/clients/patients
  - The community

This slide and following adapted from El Paso Community College’s Ethics in the Workplace, [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)
What are some ethical, professional behaviors?

- Productivity
- Accountability - be quick to take responsibility and corrective action
- Initiative - set goals, follow through, set the example
- Critical thinking - review and assess data and come up with a plan of action
- Conflict resolution - have those difficult conversations calmly
- Punctuality
- Positive attitude

Adapted from careertrend.com: [https://careertrend.com/exhibit-professionalism-11140.html](https://careertrend.com/exhibit-professionalism-11140.html) and [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)
If you are fortunate enough to work in an ethical, professional workplace, you will notice some of these positive results:

- Loyalty - long term employees
- Productivity
- High Morale - passion for work
- Growth and Expansion
- Recognition
- Creativity
- Collaboration

Adapted from chron.com: [http://smallbusiness.chron.com/characteristics-ethical-people-workplace-15703.html](http://smallbusiness.chron.com/characteristics-ethical-people-workplace-15703.html)

And EPCC: [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)
How can you encourage ethics and professionalism?

- Remember: YOU might be the boss one day! Look for ways to start encouraging these practices from your first day on the job.
  - Fairness
  - Clear, consistent communication
  - Policies and procedures
  - Transparency
  - Training
  - Plans of action
  - Constructive feedback

Adapted from EPCC: [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)

Characteristics of an unethical, unprofessional workplace

- Illegal practices
- Theft
- Ignoring policies/procedures
- Lack of communication
- Withholding information
- Poor customer service
- Gossip
- Ignoring problems
- Lying
- Poor attendance and tardiness

Adapted from EPCC: [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)

Things unethical, unprofessional people might say

- Everybody does it
- That’s not part of my job description
- Nobody will notice
- I don’t get paid enough to do that

Adapted from inc.com: https://www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/100-things-unprofessional-people-cant-stop-saying.html

And EPCC: http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20In%20The%20Workplace.pdf
Consequences of unethical and unprofessional behavior

- Unethical, unprofessional behavior in the workplace by even one person can have a domino effect and spread to colleagues and throughout an organization, resulting in:
  - Low morale
  - Stricter rules
  - Fewer privileges
  - Undesirable work environment
  - Lower growth and productivity
  - Job loss
  - Closing of business

Adapted from futureofworking.com: [https://futureofworking.com/social-loafing-in-the-workplace/](https://futureofworking.com/social-loafing-in-the-workplace/)

And EPCC: [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)
Sexual Harassment

A specific form of unprofessional, unethical behavior
Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

- Is based on the victim’s perception, not the intent
- The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be anyone in the work environment.
- The victim can be the person being harassed or anyone else affected by the offensive conduct.
- The harasser’s conduct must be unwelcome.

Adapted from eeoc.gov: https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm
And EPCC: http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf
What does sexual harassment consist of and what can it affect?

- Consists of:
  - Unwelcome sexual advances
  - Requests for sexual favors
  - Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

- Can affect:
  - Victim’s work performance and work
  - Victim’s employment status
  - Work environment - can become hostile, intimidating, and offensive for victim and others

Adapted from eeoc.gov: https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-sex.cfm and EPCC: http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf
Examples of Sexual Harassment

- Sexual comments
- Undue attention
- Verbal and/or physical sexual advances
- Inappropriate body language
- Visual displays
- Explicit sexual behavior
- Sexual bribery (Quid Pro Quo)

Adapted from thebalance.com: https://www.thebalance.com/examples-of-sexual-and-non-sexual-harassment-2060884

And EPCC: http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf
What to do about sexual harassment

- The victim should instantly inform the harasser directly that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop
- Report sexual harassment to your supervisor and the designated official at your workplace


And EPCC: [http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf)