

# 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

# 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.

# 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

# 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

# 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>

# 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> and

<http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf>

# Characteristics of an ethical, professional workplace

- ▶ 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>

And EPCC: <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>

And employeedevelopmentsystems.com: <http://www.employeedevelopmentsystems.com/2011/05/how-to-encourage-professionalism-in-the-workplace/>

# 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>

And chron.com: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-unethical-behavior-organization-13629.html>

# 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/>

And EPCC: <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 eec.gov: [https://www.eec.gov/laws/types/sexual\\_harassment.cfm](https://www.eec.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

Adapted from aauw.org: <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/legal-resources/know-your-rights-at-work/workplace-sexual-harassment/>

And EPCC: <http://www.epcc.edu/CareerServices/Presentations/Ethics%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf>