

Exercise: Promoting an Ethical Climate

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION: Many Army leaders are surprised when unethical actions of others in their organizations are attributed to them and their ethical leadership. The leader may have just arrived at the organization and the ethical climate in operation may be more reflective of the previous leader than the new leader's own espoused values and ethical leadership.

The indirect and important implication of the below set of factors is that a single leader alone will not be able to create and implement all of the supporting/reinforcing systems needed. It takes the collective effort of the organization's leaders, acting consistently in their embodiment of Army Values and ethical leadership, to create and reinforce an ethical climate across the organization.

As you complete this interpretive exercise and transition to further reflection and action, keep in mind how you will enlist and engage the leaders of your organization in ethical climate formation and reinforcement.

EXAMPLE: Jerry Sandusky's immoral actions as a serial sexual predator were allowed to continue at Penn State in a culture where expectations and priorities were not clearly communicated and multiple university officials failed to act.

INSTRUCTIONS: An ethical climate occurs when ethical decision making is encouraged in an open and positive manner, teamwork is promoted, and leaders are focused on stewardship of the Army profession. This exercise provides nine actions effective leaders take to establish and reinforce an ethical climate.

For each action, read the description and reflect on whether you currently perform the action sufficiently. If you currently perform the action, check the box on the left and write a brief description of how you implement it as a reminder to keep doing so regularly. If you need to implement the action more or don't do so at all, check the box on the right and write a brief description of how you can start incorporating the action into your work.

Exercise: Promoting an Ethical Climate

<p>Incorporate value-based leadership—integrity, vision, trust, listening, respect of followers, clear thinking, and inclusion—in daily interactions with others.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Pay attention to (and let others know you pay attention to) your actions and the actions of others that exemplify values and ethical leadership.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Establish clear expectations of ethical conduct. Implement policies, procedures, and training (including onboarding/new personnel orientation) that reflect the organization's values.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Be actively engaged and personally involved in resolving or taking action on incidents or crises that involve or threaten the organization's values and standards of ethical leadership.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Provide feedback, coaching, and support regarding ethical behavior to increase awareness of ethics and appropriate behavior.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Recognize and reward behaviors that support organizational values. Provide formal and informal recognition of ethical behavior.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Dedicate considerable time to establishing relationships with subordinates and peers and demonstrate that they can trust you. Building trust is fundamental to a values-based ethical climate.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>Align organizational selection, specialized training attendance, and promotion criteria to recognize those that model the organization's values and ethics.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>
<p>While holding true to your ethical standards, also emphasize that mistakes will sometimes be made, but that it is the ability to learn from mistakes that is most important. Identify and reiterate stories whereby you or other leaders made mistakes but recovered and learned from them.</p>	
<p>I currently do this by...</p>	<p>I need to implement this more by...</p>