

Ethical Leadership



Important Things to Know

Simply put, ethical leadership involves doing what is right. It applies even when “no one will know” or when it goes against the way things may have been done in the past. Other key points about what Diamond embraces as ethical leadership include the following:

- It involves actions taken and actions not taken
- It acknowledges that trust is a valuable commodity and, once lost, is difficult to regain
- It embraces the perspective of the broader community, and considers what is best for the organization as a whole
- It includes acting in a timely manner when warning signs of problems occur
- It can require standing up against pressure

We all serve in a leadership role in some capacity, so if you’re seriously interested in making a significant contribution to Diamond, you’ll want to pay attention to the concept of ethical leadership. Why? Because ethical business cultures have been proven to engender more favorable job attitudes among employees, greater camaraderie and cooperation, less deviant behavior, more reporting of suspected and actual violations and an improved bottom line. Not a bad list.

What Is Ethical Leadership?

Ethical leadership involves acting with integrity, leading by example, addressing problems, making ethical decisions, and creating a culture of compliance. In this ongoing effort, managers are vital, as they are in the best position to communicate Diamond’s core values of quality care, ethical conduct and financial stewardship.

The most powerful way to inspire direct reports and colleagues to act in an ethical manner is to model the desired behaviors. Here are some actions of an ethical leader:

- Leads by example, setting a tone that mirrors Diamond’s values
- Fosters a sense of community within the team
- Develops effective listening strategies
- Trains and reinforces ethical values and behavioral expectations
- Holds self and others accountable
- Admits mistakes and works to correct them
- Keeps promises, honors commitments and tells the truth
- Communicates policy and decisions transparently
- Upholds ethical values in decision making
- Addresses ethical violations promptly and effectively

Warning Signs and Consequences

Examples of unethical leadership include:

- Sharing confidential information without permission, including talking about other personnel behind their backs
- Making decisions based solely on whether they are popular, profitable or convenient
- Taking credit for others’ accomplishments or shirking blame for one’s own errors or misjudgements
- Giving or receiving bribes, special favors or preferential treatment
- Fostering a workplace in which employees don’t know where they stand and fear reprisals, retaliation or sabotage
- Creating a team culture that discourages conversations around ethical concerns

Everyone, and certainly managers are responsible for both behaving in an ethical manner every day on the job, ensuring that their direct reports do likewise, and maintaining an atmosphere of trust, fairness and integrity in which employees feel comfortable bringing up and working through ethical dilemmas. This means being aware of warning signs, monitoring activities, welcoming questions and discussions of ethical issues, and reporting any serious concerns or issues to the compliance office for resolution. Clear, direct and honest communication is key to creating and maintaining Diamond’s climate of integrity.