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Ethical Challenges

Spring 2024

3/23/2024

Enhancing and Elevating Ethical Consciousness

Introduction:

In the evolving landscape of public service, the significance of ethical standards within governmental and nonprofit agencies cannot be overstated. These institutions are entrusted with public resources and the collective welfare of the communities they serve, making ethical conduct not just a matter of internal policy, but a foundation pillar of public trust and effectiveness. The purpose of this paper is to explore strategies for enhancing and elevating the ethical consciousness among employees of a community-based agency, an endeavor critical to fostering a culture of integrity, accountability, and transparency in organizations that are instrumental in societal development and welfare.

My paper will draw upon several theoretical frameworks and texts that offer insights into the development of ethical organizations and the promotion of ethical behavior among employees. Among the key references will be the work of Frank Barrett and Ronald Fry whose contributions to understanding the significance of the promising approach of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a growing discipline to organizational capacity and building, which provides a valuable perspective ethical leadership and shaping of organizational culture. Terry Cooper's insights of leaders setting positive examples, and Craig Johnson's framework on the ethical challenges in public administration which offers a comprehensive analysis of the ethical dilemmas and responsibilities faced by public servants, providing a robust foundation for discussing ethical standards in government and nonprofit sectors.

Additionally, the leadership theories propounded by Barbara Kellerman and James MacGregor Burns, as synthesized by Craig Johnson, will be examined for their relevance to ethical leadership and the cultivation of ethical consciousness within organizations. Johnson's insights into the moral imperatives of leadership and the mechanisms through which ethical standards are communicated and upheld in organizations will be instrumental in developing strategies for ethical enhancement and elevation.

A cornerstone of the theoretical foundation of this paper will be the strengths-based approach to community development, as articulated by Angela Blanchard in her TEDx talk and further explored by Graume Stuart. Blanchard's application of asset-based community-driven development (ABCD) principles in her work with Neighborhood Centers Inc offers practical and inspiring model for leveraging community strengths and assets in service of ethical and effective public service. This approach, which emphasizes the mobilization of individual and community assets, skills, and passions, and is driven by the principles of community and relationship building, provides a compelling framework for enhancing and elevating ethical consciousness in a way that is intrinsically aligned with community values and strengths.

By integrating these diverse theoretical perspectives and practical insights, this paper aims to offer a multifaceted approach to enhancing and elevating ethical consciousness among employees of community-based agencies. Through the lens of ethical leadership, public administration ethics, and strengths-based community development, I seek to outline effective strategies for building organizations that are not only ethically grounded but also deeply connected to the communities they serve.

Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture:

Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture by setting a moral compass and creating an environment where ethical behavior is valued and promoted (Barrett & Fry, 2012). According to Fry, ethical leaders are instrumental in fostering a culture of Integrity, accountability, and transparency, guiding ethical behavior of employees through their actions and decisions. Cooper (2006) emphasizes the significance of leaders setting a positive example, asserting that the ethical conduct of leaders directly influences the ethical standards of their employees. Similarly, Johnson (2018) highlights the impact of leadership behavior on employee ethics, suggesting that leaders who exhibit behavior inspire their followers to emulate these practices, thereby enhancing and elevating the overall ethical climate of the organization. These perspectives collectively highlight the pivotal role of ethical leadership in cultivating an organizational culture that prioritizes ethical behavior at all levels.

Cooper's Components of Responsible Conduct:

Cooper's framework for ethical behavior in public administration, as outlined in our course, in his 2006 work, revolves around four critical components: normative frameworks, accountability, ethical competence, and public interest. Normative frameworks are essential as they provide the ethical guidelines and values that guide public servants' actions. Accountability ensures that public administrators are responsible and answerable for their actions, promoting transparency and trust in public service. Ethical competence involves the ability of public servants to understand and apply ethical principles in decision-making processes, requiring continuous education and ethical awareness. Lastly, prioritizing the public interest is fundamental, as it ensures that the actions and decisions of public administrators are aimed at promoting the welfare and well-being of the community they serve. Together, these components form a

comprehensive basis for ethical conduct in public administration, fostering an environment where ethical decisions are made consistently and responsibly (Cooper, 2006).

Johnson's Ethical Framework:

Johnson's approach to building ethical organizations through leadership, as presented in his 2018 work, emphasizes the critical role of leaders in establishing and nurturing an ethical climate. He advocates for the development of a clear and compelling vision that articulates the ethical standards and values of the organization. This visioning process is key to guiding the behavior and decision-making within the organization and ensuring that all actions align with the established ethical framework.

Johnson stresses the importance of aligning the organization's values with its practices, ensuring that ethical considerations are integrated into the daily operations of the organization. This values alignment helps to create a consistent ethical environment where employees understand and embody the organization's ethical standards in their work.

Furthermore, Johnson highlights the significance of ethical decision-making processes that are transparent, inclusive, and reflective. These processes should encourage critical thinking, consider the ethical implications of decisions, and involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, thereby fostering a culture of ethical deliberation and responsibility.

Through these strategies-visioning, values alignment, and ethical decision-making processes-Johnson implicates that leaders can effectively cultivate an ethical organizational culture that not only supports ethical behavior but also promotes a sense of shared ethical commitment and accountability among all members of the organization.

Applying Appreciative Inquiry:

Appreciative Inquiry (AI), as described by Barrett and Fry (2012), is a method that enhances and elevates organizational ethics by focusing on the positive aspects of organizational life. AI operates on the premise that organizations can improve by identifying what works well and envisioning future possibilities based on these strengths. This approach supports ethical culture by recognizing and amplifying ethical practices already present within the organization. Through AI, organizations can engage in a collaborative process of exploring and sharing stories of ethical behavior, which helps to reinforce and expand these practices. By concentrating on positive examples and potential, AI facilitates a constructive dialogue that can inspire and embed ethical values and behaviors across the organization, thereby nurturing a more robust ethical culture (Barrett, &Fry, 2012).

Nasheedah's Strategies for Enhancing and Elevating Ethical Consciousness:

Based on my discussion 12 posting, to effectively enhance and elevate the ethical consciousness within an organization, it is suggesting an integrated approach combining insights of Cooper, Johnson, and the principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Cooper's emphasis on ethical leadership, clear codes of ethics, regular ethical training, and rewarding ethical behavior establishes a foundational framework for ethical integrity. Johnson adds to this by advocating for vision that embeds core ethical values, creating a supportive ethical climate, and establishing accountability systems.

My favorite, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), offers a strengths-based perspective, focusing on positive aspects and success factors within the organization to enhance and elevate ethical consciousness. This approach involves identifying the organization's strengths, opportunities for ethical

enhancement and elevation, aspirations for ethical culture, and results that indicate ethical success. By blending these strategies, I envision a comprehensive method for fostering an ethical organizational culture that not only sets standards and expectations but also actively cultivates a values-driven and ethically conscious environment.

<div align="center">References</div>

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