



Ethical Leadership Scenarios

Ethical questions and situations are common in leadership. Below are just some examples you may encounter. How might you proceed? Based on what? What factors might you consider? There is often no one right way. How might you go about deciding the way for you?

1. You and your staff are deeply committed to the clients you serve. Unfortunately, there are a lot of organizational policies and procedures that hinder your ability to serve your clients as effectively as you could or should. You recently discover that one of your staff has discovered a workaround to one of the organization's policies that will help to better serve your clients. As their manager, it is your role to ensure they are following policies and procedures. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*

2. You have completed an exhaustive hiring process and have found the perfect candidate. Unfortunately, HR has informed you that the candidate has rejected the offer. You then extend an offer to one of the other candidates, who seems to fit the qualifications, though they lack the dynamism you were hoping for. The candidate asks for a week to consider which you gladly oblige. In the meantime, you receive a mea culpa from HR that due to a mix up in communication, the first candidate actually is interested in the position. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*

3. You have been an active member of a community support group for quite some time. One week, you notice one of your staff members is also present. You cannot be sure if they saw you. As the group is anonymous you do not want to bring it up with them at work. You are not sure if you should stay in the group as it discusses many personal things, and this might impact your working relationship. At the same time, this group is a central source of support for you. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*



4. One of your colleagues was chosen over you to participate in an ongoing leadership development program. It is a costly program and one you cannot afford on your own. The expectation is that the recipient will use the knowledge they gain to enhance the work of the organization. You discover that your colleague is planning on leaving the organization shortly after the program finishes. You have every plan to stay with the organization and could legitimately use the opportunity to enhance its growth. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider*

5. You recently discover that your boss is having a romantic relationship with a staff member. Both people are married. To your knowledge, there is no special treatment being given and nothing that seems to be directly impacting the work. Eventually HR catches wind that something may be going on. They ask you if you have heard anything. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*

6. You find out that a recently hired member of your team was given a starting salary far below what other newly hired staff at the same level have received. You know that the organization is strongly against staff discussing salary (though they know legally they cannot prohibit it.) You believe that your staff was treated unethically and unfairly, and that discrimination may have played a part. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*

7. One of your colleagues has been going through a difficult time personally. This has spilled over into their work which has noticeably declined. To support them, you and your other colleagues have picked up the slack to help out and have been covering for them while they get it together. They are a well-respected colleague and, before their personal challenges, always performed to the highest standard. You find out that the boss is considering giving them a promotion you have had your eye on. They praise the colleague's recent work, which mostly has been yours. Telling your boss will go against your colleague and potentially put them in danger of being fired. What would you do?
 - a. *What factors would you consider?*
 - b. *What would your decision depend on?*
 - c. *Who are the people involved whose needs you will consider?*