

# PROFESSIONALISM 101

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Ethics Series

2016

# Course Information

- Course Title: Professionalism 101
- Course Codes: DOC 503/CLEET 16-2278
- Original Course Created By: Phillip Miller, David Wortham and Amado Garcia
- Revised by: Valerie Hale, CTS, EDU and Terri Vogt, APOII, EDU;  
Date: 25AUG2016;
- Course Approval/Date: Phil Gilstrap, Training Manager, EDU; 15SEPT2016
- Training Category: On-line supervisory
- Training Credit: 2 Hours
- Target Population: All DOC Staff/ Supervisors
- Evaluation Process: N/A
- Data Sources:

Dictionary.com

The Public Image of Corrections, Sgt. Chris Pearson; Mass. Dept. of Corr., 25MAY2010; correctionsone.com  
Integrity and the Correctional Professional, William Sturgeon, 19JUNE2010; correctionsone.com

Merriam-Webster

Erin Hick, CorrectionsOne Associate Editor; Aug9, 2011

OP-110110 Enrollment Procedures for New Employees

Pre-service Training prepared by Emran Khan/Mikeal Murra/Terri Vogt 21MAY 2003

An Examination of Employee Morale in Correctional Institutions; Lawrence Andrew Hartman III; May 3, 2003

Source: <http://theydiffer.com/difference-between-personal-and-professional-ethics>

- Copyright Clearance: Received from all required

# Course Objectives

Upon completion of this block of instruction the participant will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of professionalism
- Identify six essentials recognized in all professions
- Examine the steps in becoming a professional
- Describe how professionalism affects public perception
- Identify positive traits that directly affect professionalism
- Examine the positive effects professionalism in the work environment
- Assess how a lack of professionalism effects the work environment

# Introduction

Professionalism is a vital part of achieving and maintaining respect in the work place. Having the respect of a co-worker or inmate can make a difference when attempting to resolve various situations. This course is designed to increase awareness of what constitutes professionalism and the positive effects professionalism has in and out of the workplace.



*EMPLOYEES OF THE  
OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONS*

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*Our Mission:*

- *To protect the Public*
- *To protect the Employees*
- *To protect the Offenders*

The Department of  
Corrections will  
create a culture  
that:

- *Empowers Individuals*
- *Encourages Teamwork*
- *Employs Best Practices*
- *Embraces Diversity*

*Our Values:*

- *Professionalism*
- *Rehabilitation*
- *Integrity*
- *Diversity*
- *Excellence*

# Correctional Employee Oath

“I do hereby solemnly affirm to support the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and abide by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Oklahoma, as well as the policies and procedures of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. I will treat all employees and offenders with respect and dignity. I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me. I will conduct myself in such a manner to enhance and establish a positive tradition of excellence for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.”

Attachment I OP-110110



**Oklahoma  
Department of  
Corrections  
CREDO**

**Our responsibilities to  
the public are:**

To protect our  
citizens.

To provide proper  
management of  
offenders under our  
supervision.

To use state  
resources efficiently  
and effectively.

**Our duty is to protect the public,  
our fellow employees, and the  
offenders placed under the  
supervision of the agency.**





To provide safe and healthy working conditions;  
To provide equitable pay and benefits;  
To provide access to supportive services in times of need or crisis; and  
To involve employees in work teams which will empower them and provide them with opportunities to actively participate in decision making and problem solving.

## **Our responsibilities to our fellow employees are:**

- To acknowledge each as an individual, to be treated with courtesy, understanding, and respect;
- To recognize that each employee contributes to the quality of our programs and services;
- To provide opportunities for personal and professional growth and advancement;



**As we meet each responsibility, our duty to the public, employees, and offenders will be fulfilled.**

Attachment F OP-110110

## **Our responsibilities to the inmates are:**

- To promote law-abiding behavior by providing the opportunity to improve value judgments and acquire social, educational, and vocational skills;
- To offer a climate of safety, helpfulness, and courtesy; and
- To serve as a positive role model.



# SIX ESSENTIALS RECOGNIZED IN ALL PROFESSIONS

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Work in the field of corrections in the U.S. has been increasingly recognized as a profession.

1. A profession requires an organized body of knowledge as a common possession and extended by the united efforts of those engaged in the calling.

2. Facilities must be provided for professional training in those bodies of knowledge and procedure.

3. Standards of qualification must be established and recognized by the members for admission to be identified with the profession.

4. You have qualified yourself to be admitted into the arena of professional correctional services.

5. There must be a Code of Ethics prescribing standards of conduct in the relationships of the members of the professional service for reasons beyond exclusively economic considerations. As mentioned before, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections prescribes a Code of Ethics. It is recommended that you take a close look at what it has to offer.

6. There must be a professional organization of a substantial number of the members qualified to practice the profession who will exercise an influence on the maintenance of professional standards and discipline and will promote programs of study and research to strengthen and improve present procedures. There are such organizations available that you may choose to join.

### **Examples of Professional Organizations:**

- American Correctional Association (ACA)
- Oklahoma Correctional Association (OCA)
- Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA)
- National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABJA)
- Fraternal Order of Police (FAP)
- Oklahoma Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (OSPOA)
- International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP)

# STEPS IN BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

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# Professionalism

1. professional character, spirit, or methods.
2. the standing, practice, or methods of a professional, as distinguished from an amateur.

Dictionary.com

Take a moment to think of a person you believe exhibits one or both of these.

Professionalism means different things to different people.

Your ideas of what makes someone unprofessional may vary as well.

Have you ever had to work with someone who lacks professionalism?



## Self-Evaluation

This is accomplished through self-reflection.

- How do you see yourself?
- How do you feel about yourself?
- Do you like the way others see you?

Acquire  
and  
maintain a  
proper  
attitude  
toward  
inmates.

- Be interested in the welfare of inmates.
- Try to improve people without coddling them.
- Secure their confidence without confiding in them.
- Gain their respect.
- Be able to discipline without holding a grudge.
- Put yourself in their shoes to determine the effect your attitude is having on them.
- Learn to say “no” without anger.

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Reasons and Benefits

“Training is one of the chief methods of maintaining and improving intellectual capital, so the quality of an organization’s training affects its value. Untrained or poorly trained employees cost significantly more to support than well-trained employees do.”



“Training affects employee retention and is a valuable commodity that, if viewed as an investment rather than as an expense, can produce high returns.”



# The Difference

## Training

“...Organizational effort aimed at helping employees to acquire the basic skills required for the efficient execution of the functions for which they are hired.”

“*Training* — activities a company offers employees to help them become more proficient at the tasks that are part of their jobs” — is indispensable.

## Development

“...Activities undertaken to expose employees to perform additional duties and assume positions of importance in the organizational hierarchy.”

*Development* — professional “programs that allow employees to function better interpersonally and prepare them for future roles — helps managers attract top job candidates, retain their best workers and identify future leaders, and boosts the bottom line.”

# Goals of Employee Development

How might these goals be accomplished?

Raise overall staff expertise when employees have vastly different backgrounds.

Boost employees' job satisfaction.

Increased confidence, in turn leading to greater job satisfaction and improved employee retention.



Mentorships  
Workshops  
Job shadowing

End Result?

Increased prominence (and versatility) in the organization.



Many people equate learning and development with professional qualifications.



## Other professional development ideas:

- Reading professional journals, books, research papers, articles etc.
- Coaching, training courses, academic study, conferences and webinars
- Research activities, blogging and publishing articles
- Training others and giving presentations or speaking at a conference
- Joining committees, professional associations, and participating in industry forums

# SUPERVISORS

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**Why Professional Behavior? What Supervisors  
Need to Know**

“Your success depends on your ability to project and maintain a professional image that is backed up by competence, confidence, and commitment.”



## **Your behavior affects many people:**

“Your behavior toward your employees directly affects their performance, productivity, morale, and loyalty. Supervisors who are respected by employees are able to get the best performance from their workers and achieve the best results.”

“Your behavior toward colleagues directly affects your effectiveness, the success of your department, and your future in the organization. Supervisors who get along well with colleagues and are admired by their peers have the best opportunities for recognition and advancement.”





“Your behavior toward your boss and others in top management affects your career and your opportunities in the organization. Supervisors who project a professional image are generally those who succeed and move up in management.”

“Your behavior toward... others outside the organization is also important. To these people you represent the organization. If they have confidence in you and respect for your professionalism, they will continue their relationships with the organization.



# Strategies to Remain Focused

“In the best of all worlds, the institutional culture in the form of communication with peers and immediate supervisors is self-correcting, in that they influence those exhibiting problem behavior to improve and change their actions in a positive way. Sometimes a hand on the shoulder saying, “hey, we don’t do that here” is all it takes to correct the problem. Too often the early indicators are ignored.”



“Giving feedback at work is often difficult. Many managers and supervisors put off conducting evaluation and performance reviews because they are uncomfortable giving feedback, especially when it is negative... While giving feedback at work can be difficult or awkward, when delivered well it can lead to more productivity and improves the work environment.”

“Very often the problem employee is not listening to constructive advice. Carefully constructed, effective communication, verbally or in writing, may get that person’s attention. There may be some behavior that has been extremely offensive, but hard to define. Once the right words were chosen, the person seemed to get the message and make positive adjustments.”





“If the [supervisor] engages in or even condones offensive kinds of behaviors... they quickly become the norm. Conversely, if the leader is clear and consistent and specific about his/her ideas regarding professionalism, and if there is accountability at all levels of the organization, unprofessional behavior will be minimized.”

# MORALE

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Is morale directly related to professionalism?

**The answer to this question is yes it is, and here is why.**

“Employee morale is instrumental in creating a unified and functional work environment. Morale influences the beliefs and actions of an individual or unit, as well as dictates the atmosphere of the environment.”



**TREAT  
EMPLOYEES  
LIKE THEY  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE  
AND THEY  
WILL.**

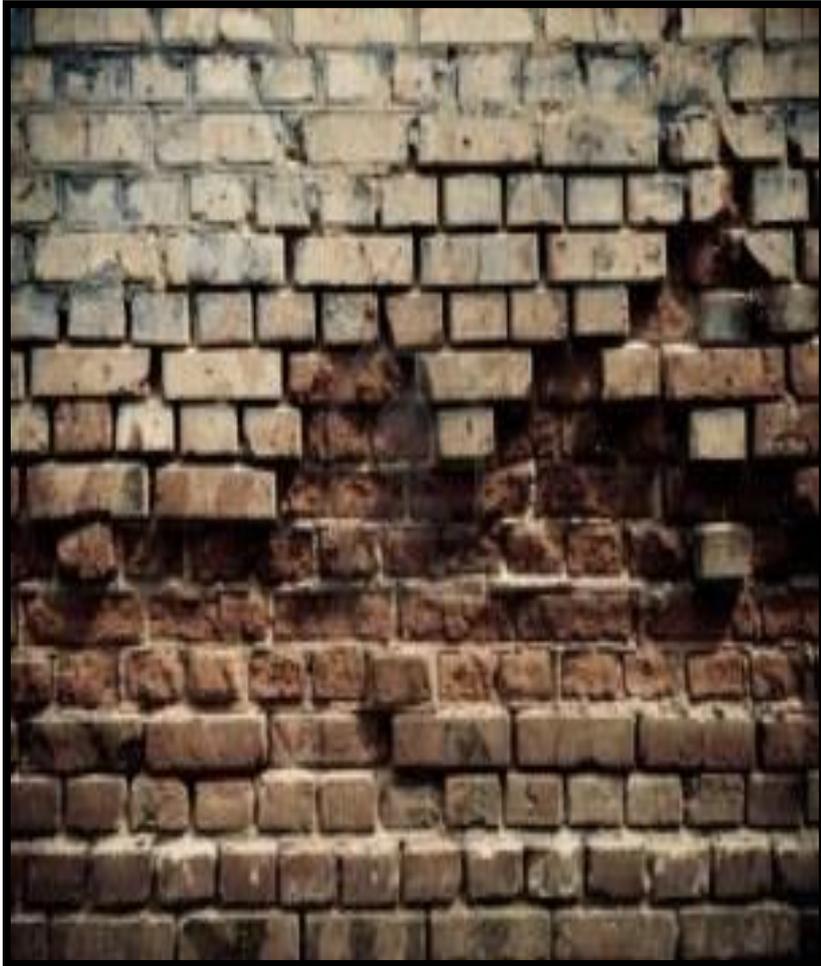
“”  
Jim Goodnight  
CEO, SAS

Positive, or high morale, increases employee motivation, encourages teamwork, and unifies the workforce toward the organizational mission. High morale will encourage positive self-image, promote professionalism, and effective performance. “Positive morale is built from the foundation of an organization, the motivation from effective leaders, and the positive influence by the peer group.”

“Conversely, negative, or low morale, has many adverse consequences for the cohesion of the unit.... Negative morale may lead to complacency and inattention to duties, which is [a] dangerous... [for] correctional employees.”



“Other harmful effects of low morale include increased turnover, tardiness, absenteeism, and abuse of sick time. These results not only increase the amount of stress facing correctional staff, but create a multitude of personnel issues for [supervisors] and [administrators].”



“Negative morale reduces individual and group performance levels. Low morale tends to escalate throughout the ranks until, ultimately, it poisons the entire institution.”

# Issues Affecting Morale

Training and Education

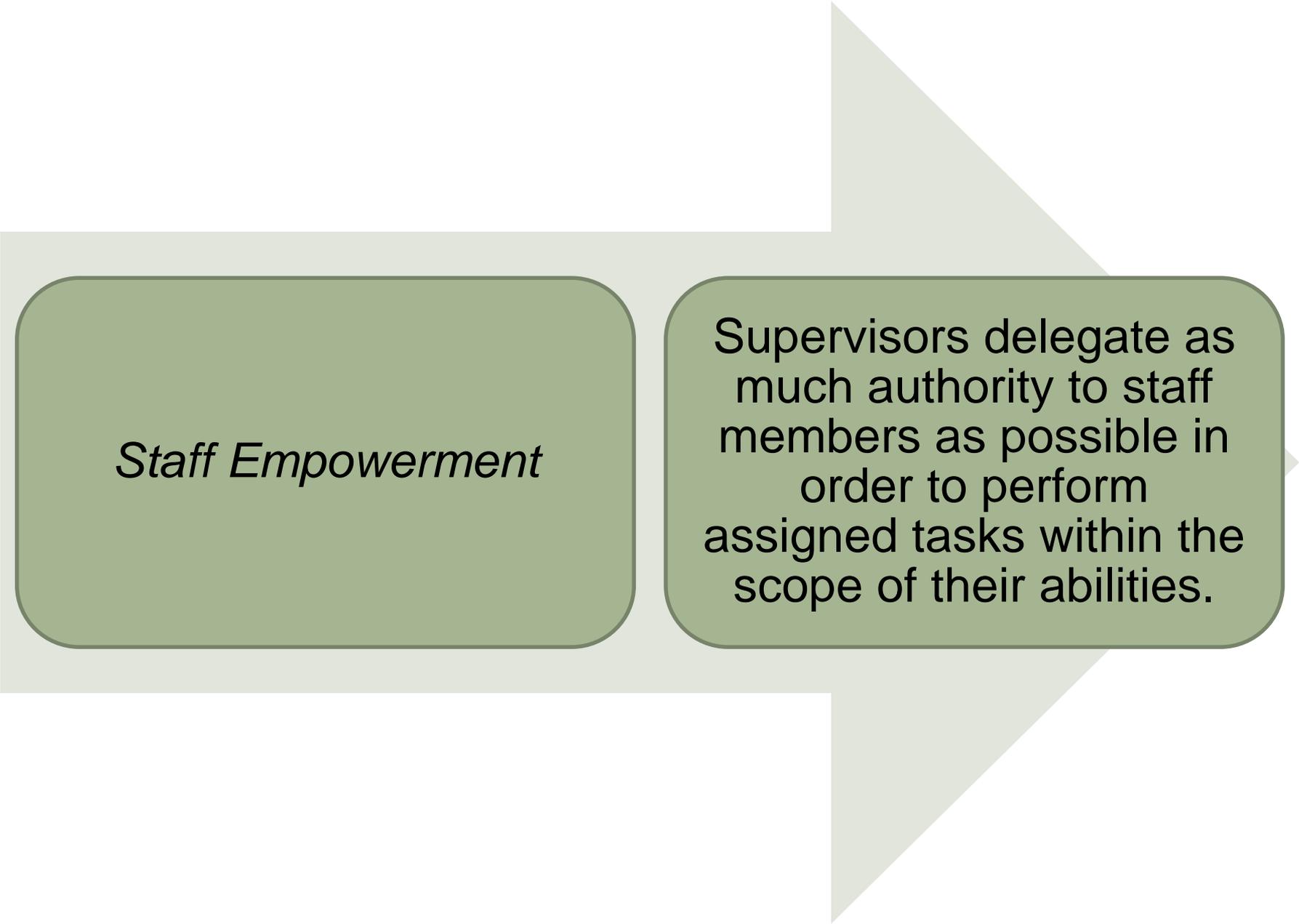
“Training is essential for correctional staff due to the constant evolving methodology.... It is essential for correctional staff to receive training to protect themselves, those in their care, and the security of the institution.”

*Supervision*

“Personnel are a correctional facility's best resource, therefore effective supervision and support is indispensable.”

Mission Statement, Procedures,  
and Roles

“If a mission statement is lacking, employees may have difficulty...” understanding how their job duties fit into the overall goals and mission of the organization.



*Staff Empowerment*

Supervisors delegate as much authority to staff members as possible in order to perform assigned tasks within the scope of their abilities.

## *Recognition, Feedback and Communication*

“A contributing factor to poor morale is lack of communication which creates barriers, an environment of staff distrust, and the encouragement of rumors. If rumors are not addressed, credibility may be given to the false information.”



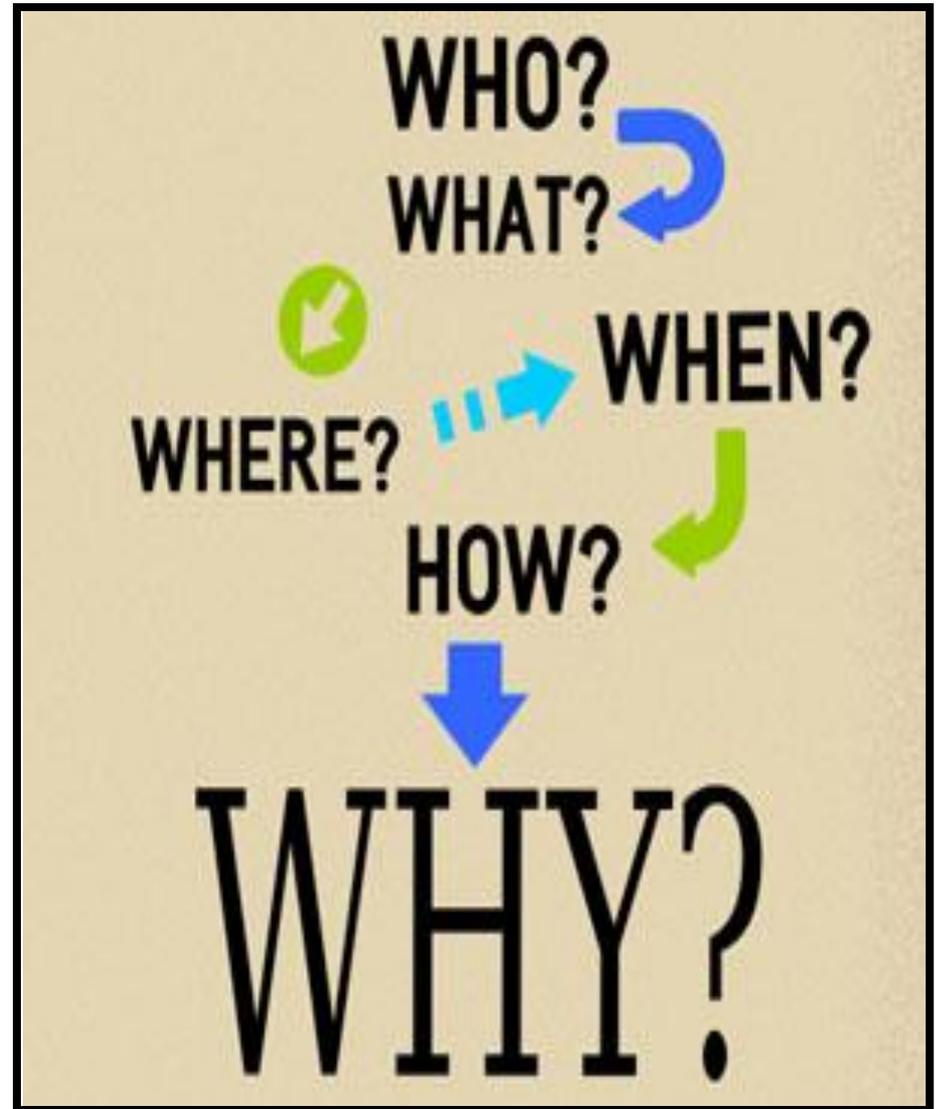


Creating a positive... environment for increased “morale includes frequent communication and feedback with other staff members” which promotes a feeling of being a valued member of the organization.

“Communication among units/departments must be allowed to be open and truthful.”

# Feedback

**“Feedback should be constructive, relevant, and pertinent. Staff debriefings support staff well-being and enhance morale.... Feedback increases employee incentive and morale.”**



# Recognition



Director of Field Operations Scott Crow presents commendations to the individuals who saved the life of Leon Day after suffering a heart attack on April 26 at the Osage Casino.

“Recognition of quality work supports confidence and bolsters morale. Most employees appreciate sincere thanks for a job well done. Recognition informs correctional personnel the action taken and decisions made were appropriate and appreciated.”

## ***Institutional Environment***

“Employee morale is instrumental in creating a unified and functional atmosphere. Staff contributes to the stability of the correctional environment through the prevention of potential problems... A safe and secure environment is required to reduce inappropriate inmate behavior and increase employee job satisfaction.”

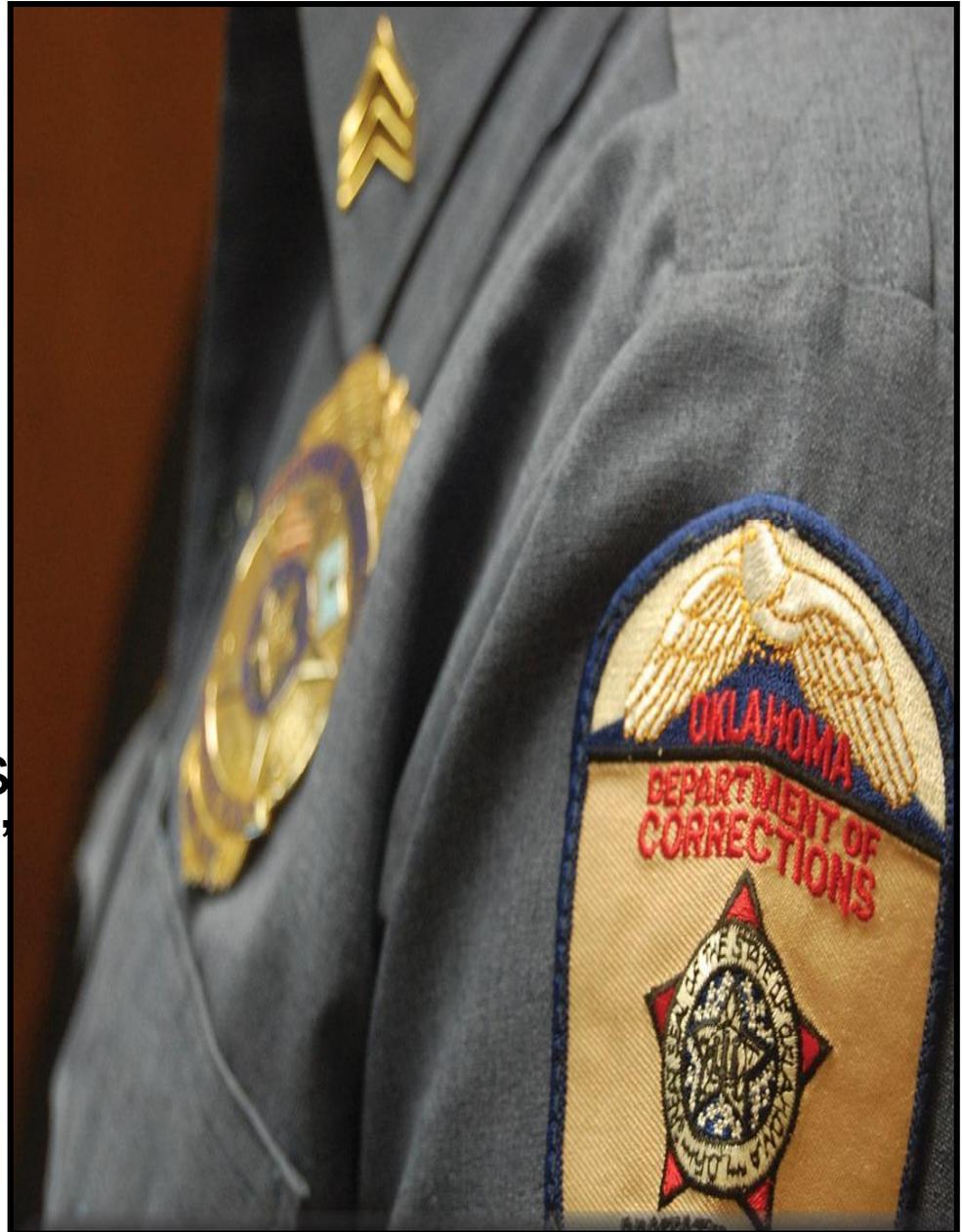


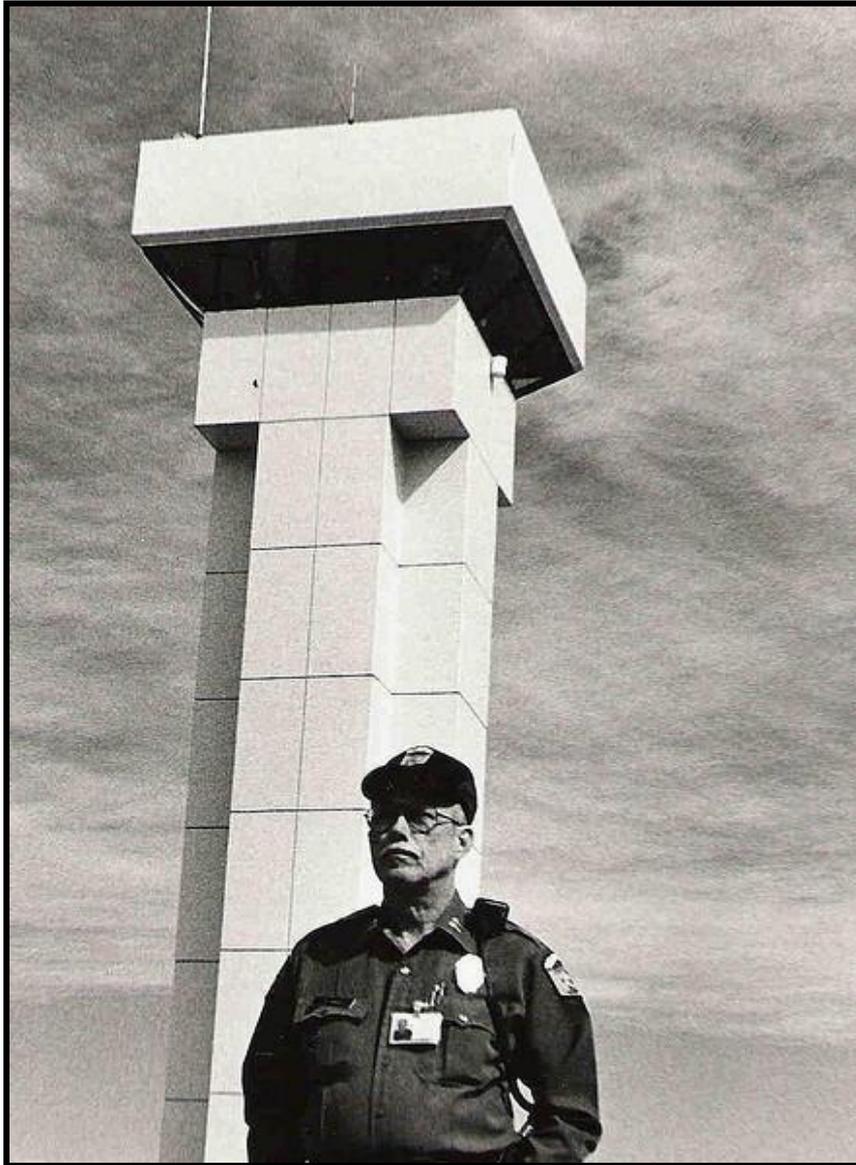
An environment must be established to promote communication between officers, staff members and administrators.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Public relations is “the continuing process by which management endeavors to obtain the goodwill and understanding of its customers, its employees and the public at large....”  
(J.C. Seidel)





Good public image depends largely upon the “image” you create in the minds of the people. Careless speech, the expression of negative aspects of a correctional career, the denial of the right of human dignity of those confined, improper use of the uniform or position, impolite and discourteous handling of the public can create a poor public image.

# Public Perception

“Mainstream media often portrays correctional staff as brutal, corrupt, ignorant bullies who take advantage of unfortunate inmates and violate their civil rights. Anyone who has worked in corrections knows the daily reality is far from the image portrayed by the media and film industry.”



*Excerpt from an article by Sgt. Chris Pearson – Mass. Department of Corrections; The Public Image of Corrections. Published: 05/24/2010; corrections.com*

Shawshank Redemption 1994

“A negative public perception of a correctional organization has serious consequences, including damaging the community relations of prison systems and jeopardizing their legislative support. The failure of public officials and others to fully understand the issues confuses the public and demoralizes corrections staff who feel as if their contributions to public safety are being minimized in the public eye.”



Shawshank Redemption 1994

“Unfortunately, employee misconduct also reinforces negative stereotypes. Although it is only a minority of correctional employees who engage in destructive behavior, all employees are painted with the same brush. The only antidote to this negative correctional stereotyping is community education and organizational professionalism. Both methodologies serve to enhance our image and restore credit to an honorable profession.”



The New York State Police have arrested 57-year old Clinton Correctional Facility Correction Officer Gene Palmer of Dannemora, NY. Palmer is charged with Promoting Prison Contraband 1st Degree, a Class D Felony, two counts of tampering with Physical Evidence, Class E Felonies, and one count of Official Misconduct, a Class A Misdemeanor. The arrest is the result of the ongoing investigation into the escape of inmates David Sweat and Richard Matt. Palmer pleaded not guilty and was remanded to the Clinton County Jail on \$25,000 bail.

“...Each day the integrity of every correctional professional is measured by multiple groups of people:

- Other correctional employees
- Inmates
- Families of inmates
- The criminal justice system
- General public”



Every correctional employee needs to be aware of the importance of his/her role in the organization. Without purpose, any job becomes meaningless.

Good public relations stem primarily from goodwill of the employees.

The Department of Corrections places a high value on its public image.



The Children's Center Rehabilitation Hospital Gift Drop  
December 22, 2015 - The Children's Center  
Rehabilitation Hospital - Bethany, OK



## News Story

Friday, May 13, 2016

### **DOC Employees Participate in Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Oklahoma**

Earlier this week 30 Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) employees helped carry the Flame of Hope during the Law Enforcement Torch Run to kick off the 47<sup>th</sup> annual Summer Games of the Special Olympics Oklahoma in Stillwater.

More than 5,000 Special Olympics Oklahoma athletes are participating in this year's event, more than any previous year. Athletes come from 14 geographic areas of Oklahoma where they completed competitions.

Adding to that, the DOC's team was the largest group of volunteers for the event in agency history.

The team was made up of agents in the Office of the Inspector General, Tulsa County District Probation and Parole and Dick Connor Correctional Center. The team participated in a 10-mile leg of the annual relay run that carries the torch from Tulsa to Stillwater for the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics.

The distance from Tulsa to Stillwater is approximately 70 miles.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run was created in 1986 and has grown to over 116 law enforcement agencies. Participating law enforcement agencies raise money leading up to the event through merchandise sales and local fundraising events to support Special Olympics Oklahoma.

# *(All Too Frequent)* News Stories and Headlines

- **Two Oklahoma corrections officers lose jobs in wake of sexual misconduct investigation** Published: September 21, 2012
- **Bartered sex, corruption and cover-ups behind bars in nation's largest women's prison** Miami Herald; December 13, 2015
- **Drugs, money, love and cell phones: How prison guards go bad** June 25, 2015 kfor, NewsChannel 4
- **Five Rikers correctional officers fired for brutally beating an inmate claim wrongful termination** New York Daily News, April 12, 2016
  - An administrative law judge in September 2014 also had described the beat down as an example of “brazen misconduct” and recommended the officers' firing.
- **Oklahoma Prison Employees Disciplined**

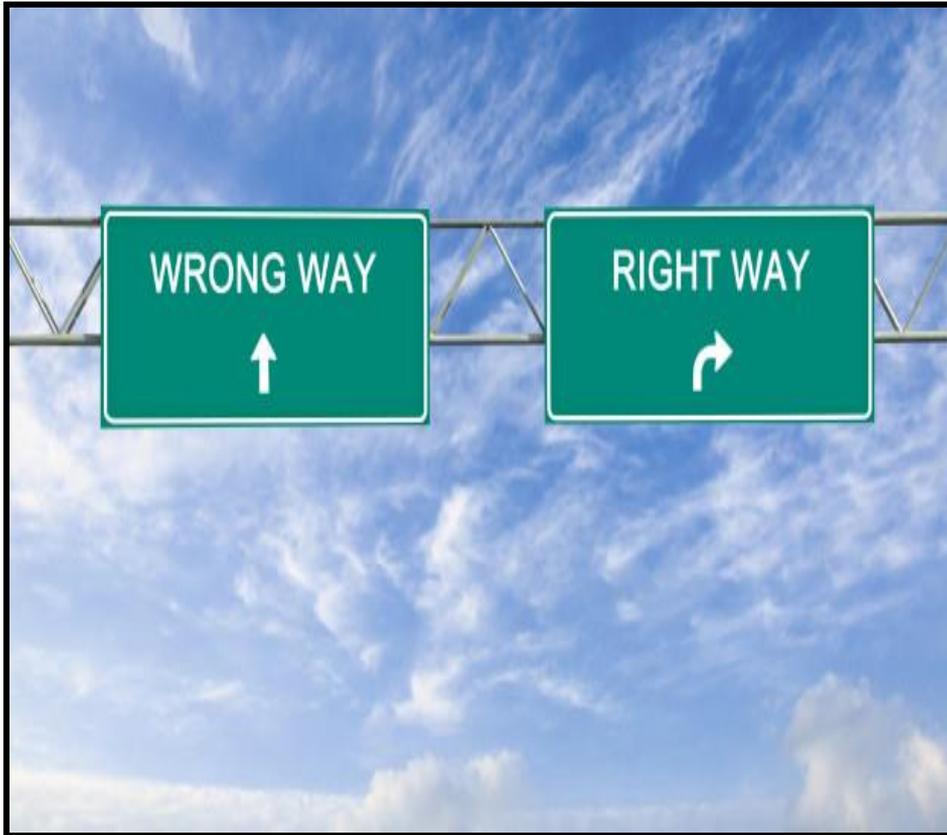
*Prison Legal News, July 15, 2013*

# ETHICS AND MORALS

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There is a Difference

# Ethics and Morals



## Source of Principles

**“Ethics** are external standards that are provided by institutions, groups, or culture to which an individual belongs. For example, lawyers, correctional officers and staff, policemen, and doctors all have to follow an ethical code developed by their profession, regardless of their own feelings or preferences. Ethics can also be considered a social system or a framework for acceptable behavior.”

**“Morals** are also influenced by culture or society, but they are personal principles created and upheld by individuals themselves.”

# Personal vs Professional Ethics

“The biggest difference between personal and professional codes of conduct is perhaps the strictness with which people conform to them. The values that you define for yourself are up to you to be followed or not. However, those defined in a company or by a profession must be followed by you, since breach of these principles or rules may harm your reputation and status. But if you do not adhere to your personal ethics, it might hardly make a difference, depending on the circumstances. Even then, you must keep in mind that violation of your own rules may harm others around you.”

Source: <http://theydiffer.com/difference-between-personal-and-professional-ethics/>

# Comparison

<b>Personal Ethics</b>	<b>Professional Ethics</b>
Includes your personal values and moral qualities.	Rules imposed on an employee in a company, or as member of a profession, e.g. doctor or lawyer.
Incorporated by family, friends and surroundings since your childhood.	Learnt when you are a part of a professional setting or when you are being trained or educated for working there.
Examples: honesty, care, and sincerity.	Examples: no gossiping, time management, punctuality, confidentiality, transparency.
Not conforming to these may harm or hurt others.	Not adhering to these may harm your professional reputation.
Your personal needs are satisfied by following these.	Your professional needs are satisfied by following these.

# Positive Character Traits

- Decency
- Goodness
- Honesty
- Morality
- Morals
- Ethics
- Rightness
- Virtue
- Honor
- Incorruptibility
- Right-mindedness
- Irreproachability
- Correctness



# Conflicts Between Ethics and Morals

❖ “One professional example of ethics conflicting with morals is the work of a defense attorney. A lawyer’s morals may tell her that murder is reprehensible and that murderers should be punished, but her ethics as a professional lawyer, require her to defend her client to the best of her abilities, even if she knows that the client is guilty.”

❖ Another example can be found in the medical field. In most parts of the world, a doctor may not euthanize a patient, even at the patient's request, as per ethical standards for health professionals. However, the same doctor may personally believe in a patient's right to die, as per the doctor's own morality.

# Pros of Professionalism

- Staff and offenders are more likely to trust you
- People may not always like you but will respect that you do your job
- Positive work relations
- Increases creditability
- Reduces the possibility of offending others
- You can directly effect the respect/value your ID or badge carries
- You have the ability to raise the level of professionalism in your office, work area or facility



# Problems Caused By Lack of Professionalism

- Lack of trust/respect
- Increase possibility to offend, demean or alienate others
- Low creditability/ confidence of others
- Hostile/poor work environment
- Poor team work
- Others may follow your example



## Consider This:

“An officer catches inmate Smith, in the dormitory, stealing property from inmate Jones while everyone else was on the compound. Inmate Smith begs and pleads with the officer that this is his first time doing this and his prison term ends in just two weeks. Inmate Smith puts the property back and asks the officer to let him go. The officer lets her sympathetic feelings take over and she fails to use ethics in this situation. The officer verbally counsels inmate Smith and lets him go without a disciplinary report or a transfer to administrative confinement pending investigation. The officer’s shift ends and she did not brief the incoming shift about the incident.”

“Later that evening, inmate Smith steals the same property, only this time he is caught by inmate Jones who owns the property. Inmate Jones beats inmate Smith to within one inch of his life. As a direct consequence of improper adherence of ethics by the corrections officer, the agency is faced with an emergency situation requiring outside medical transport, a criminal investigation, an aggravated battery, and a crime scene. All of which could have resulted in a homicide. Now you can see how not making the right decision can place everyone in danger. Corruption can occur even when an officer has the best of intentions. In this scenario we would refer to it as ‘Noble cause corruption’, when an officer intends to do the right thing and it leads to a very bad thing.”

# SCENARIOS

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You are off duty and taking your family out to a restaurant. You have almost finished your meal when you notice an offender on your caseload just coming in to work there. He/she sees you and nods to acknowledge you. He/she has a brief conversation with the manager and then disappears. When your waiter brings the bill you see a \$50 discount on the final total. You ask about the discount and the waiter informs you it is in the restaurant's policy to provide meals to law enforcement personnel at half price.

- Is there an ethical issue here?
- What are the possible consequences if you accept the discount?
- What are the possible consequences if you do not accept the discount?
- What do you believe is the proper course of action in this situation?

You are a nurse at the prison hospital. Inmate X is a serial rapist and is presently incarcerated for raping and torturing at least seven women, two of whom died as a result of their injuries. Inmate X is critically ill and requires constant attention to save his life. You have at least ten other inmates to attend to with non-life threatening illnesses/injuries. You know that if you tend to your general duties and fail to give full time and attention to inmate X, he will die.

- Is there an ethical issue here?
- What are the likely consequences if you decide to stick to rigid standards and care for inmates equally?
- What are the likely consequences if you provide extra care to inmate X?
- What do you believe is the proper course of action in this situation?

You are assigned to train a cadet for your shift. The cadet is a close friend of the shift supervisor and chief of security . The third day that you are working with them you are instructed to pack an inmate's property because he/she is going to the Segregated Housing Unit for misconduct. The inmate has a lot of canteen items and the cadet tells you they have not eaten all day because it is days before payday and they cannot afford groceries. The cadet slips some items into his/her pants pockets and you do not stop it from happening. You know chances are the inmate will not remember what canteen items they had.

- Is there an ethical issue here?
- What are the possible consequences?
- What do you believe is the proper course of action in this situation?

# Conclusion

Professionalism “in the field of corrections separates the correctional professionals from the inmates we are charged with incarcerating.... The person who has compromised his/her integrity has let down the entire criminal justice system and all the men and women who risk their lives daily. Anyone in the criminal justice system who compromises their integrity betrays the public’s trust and weakens the entire system.”

