



# Workplace Ethics

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Challenging ethical decisions  
can approach you when you  
least expect it!

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We hope this  
program helps  
you become  
better prepared!

# Goals



## About Today



- Definition of ethics.
- Realize the most common behaviors that are associated with ethics violations.
- The ethical triangle.
- Seven steps for making ethical decisions.
- Conservation district real world scenarios.
- Next steps/Q & A



# Introduction

We are providing this training opportunity to empower you, so you don't find ourselves in a '*gotch ya*' situation.

So let's 'warm up'.....at your tables, please introduce yourself and describe

**YOUR LAST BEST DAY!**

Maybe it was a picnic, a walk with your doggie, a road trip, a special event?

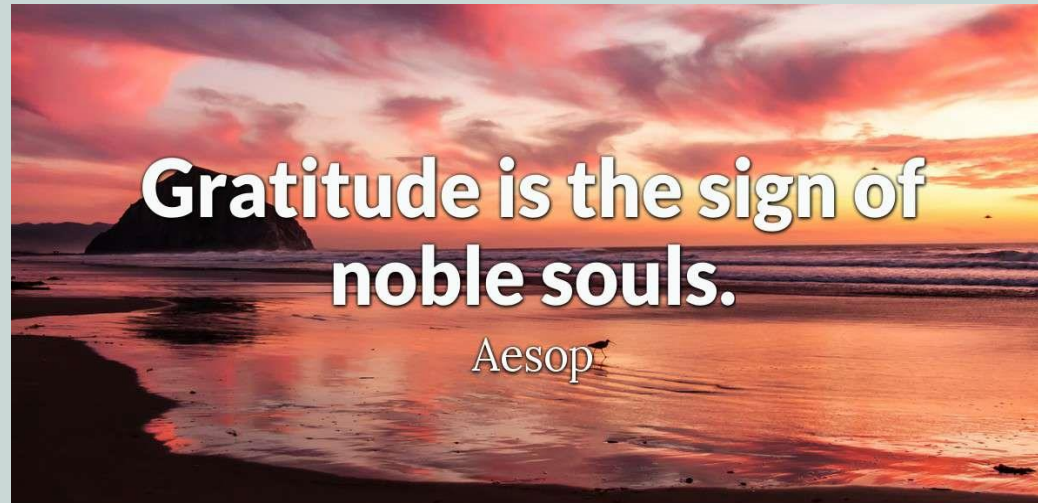
PLEASE it must be able to be aired on PUBLIC TV! ☺



# Please Say Thank You



Take the time to thank others for this opportunity.



Gratitude goes along way!



# Housekeeping & Ground Rules

1. Please participate—this is YOUR program! Anyone is welcome to share.
2. What is said here--stays here - **Confidentiality Rules!** Everyone agree?
3. Respect each other's ideas and thoughts.
4. Respect the diverse thoughts, opinions, and backgrounds of all of your colleagues.
5. Please participate - this is YOUR class!
6. Others?



# Consider this....



*“A clear conscience makes for a soft pillow.”*

*Chinese proverb*



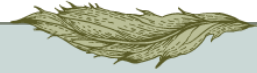


# Ethics Definitions



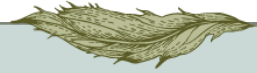


# Ethics



- Ethics refers to guidelines for behavior that enable us to discern right from wrong behavior.
- Standards of conduct which indicate how one *should* behave based on obligations.
- Deals with the ability to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, and propriety from impropriety. **It is the commitment to do what is right, good and proper.**

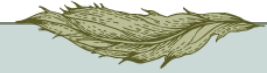
# Ethics



Ethics is defined as rules of conduct or moral principles that guide individual or group behavior. The focus in business ethics is on awareness of organizational values, guidelines and codes, and behaving within those boundaries when faced with dilemmas.

When we focus on ethics, we try to answer how we **should** treat people, whether some actions are inherently good or bad, what we ought to do in certain circumstances.

# Ethics



Ethics is mostly likely violated when you ask yourself of others....

***“WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?”***



# How about Your Conservation District?



One thing you or your conservation district does to encourage ethical behavior in your workplace:

- Conduct annual harassment free workplace training programs.
- Leaders keep all issues reported confidential.
- Leaders walk their talk; stand up for principles. Will not bend to the 'will' of others for personal gain.
- Safety or environmental issues are reported to appropriate channels.
- Leaders listen to the ethnical challenges that employees present, and together and confidentially figure out the next steps.

Please discuss at your tables.





# Global Business Ethics Survey 2023

ethics.org

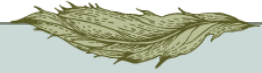


# The Global Business Ethics Survey®



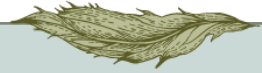
- The Ethics and Compliance Initiative ([www.ethics.org](http://www.ethics.org)) leads this international survey.
- Dr. Kidder founder and president of the ECI.
- The Global Business Ethics Survey® (GBES®) is a source of current information for Ethics & Compliance professionals.
- Conducted in more than 40 countries around the globe, the GBES surveys thousands of employees about their experiences and perceptions around ethics in the workplace.

# About the Global Business Ethics Survey



- 75,000+ employees surveyed.
- Data from 5 regions: Africa/Middle East; Asia Pacific; Caribbean, Central & South America; Europe; and North America
- The GBES is a longitudinal, cross-sectional study of worldwide ethical trends that ECI has conducted since 1994.
- Survey participants are asked about a variety of topics, including:
  - the strength of the ethics culture in their workplace;
  - instances of misconduct that they have observed and efforts underway in their organization to promote integrity.

# Global Business Ethics Survey Key Findings 2023



1. Employees continue to face exceptionally high levels of pressure to compromise workplace standards or the law.
2. Workplace misconduct is at an all time high.
3. Globally, reporting of observed misconduct is at a record high.
4. Retaliation against employees who report misconduct continues to occur at unacceptable rates.
5. Few employees say they work in an ethical workplace culture.
6. Many organizations are not taking the steps that are proven to significantly reduce risk of ethics violations.

# Summary of Survey Findings



1. What do you think about your organization based on these six findings?
  - Similar?
  - Different?
  - Your Thoughts?
  - Surprises?
2. Please discuss at your tables.



# Summary of Survey Findings



This report focuses on the four major outcomes that ECI has found to be measures of organizational conduct. When organizations prioritize ethics and integrity, employees are:

1. Less likely to feel pressure to violate ethics standards;
2. Less likely to engage in ethical misconduct;
3. More likely to report misconduct they observe; and,
4. Less likely to experience retaliation for reporting.



# Ethics & Human Nature



# Most common behaviors associated with ethics violations



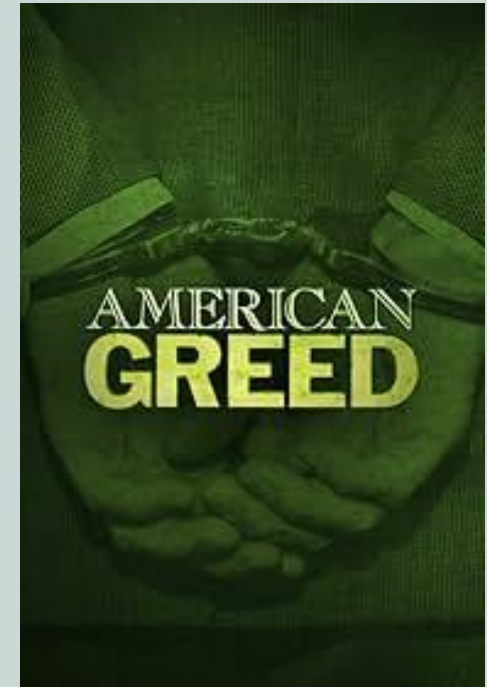
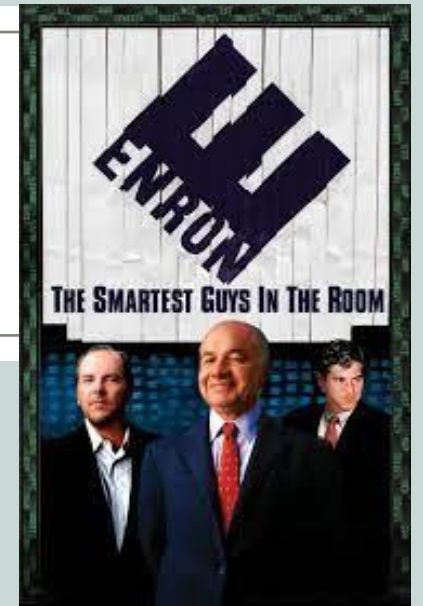
- **Greed:** the desire to have more than you need or deserve. No matter how much you pay this individual, he/she will always look for means to have more. *"If I don't do it—someone else will"*.
- **Lust:** Plain and simple, as humans we want things...
- **Anger:** Employee may get frustrated with 'injustices' they may have encountered and sometimes by committing unethical acts, they feel they are getting even or what is '**theirs**'.
- **Peer Pressure:** Peers influence some of our decisions. We learn what is acceptable in our organization by what is 'allowed'. Human instinct of wanting to "fit in".
- **Employee Errors in Judgement:** Employees sometimes simply don't know what they don't know.



# In the Headlines



# Ethics in the News





# Ethics in the News




External pressures can impact ethics.

- NASA and Challenger catastrophe (1986)
  - Timing pressures (White House, media, Congress)
  - Political parties---November election.
  - VW 'Dieselgate'.
- As leaders, you need to reduce the impact of these pressures—do not just pass them down to your colleagues. Most often, those exerting the pressures will not be the ones held accountable for the ethical failures.

You do **NOT** want your  
Conservation District to be 'in the  
news'



A decorative vine graphic with leaves and swirls, positioned above the quote.

"Oh what a tangled web we  
weave,  
When first we practice to deceive."  
- Walter Scott

Quoted from

Lizzie James



# Employees can be compromised—LOYALTY



- Challenges can occur when:
  - Employees are placed under extreme pressure to fulfill organizational goals.
  - Employees are expected to be loyal to their leaders, employers, supervisor, clients, customers or consumers.
- While loyalty is viewed as a desirable trait in an employee, taken to an extreme, it can become '*blinding*'. Extremely loyal employees may make moral compromises if they believe it is for the good of the organization, the clients they serve; and if they get '*in trouble*' for not being loyal.
  - If you hear yourself saying— 'If I don't do this—someone else will'—look out!
  - If you are being persuaded to keep someone out of 'trouble'.



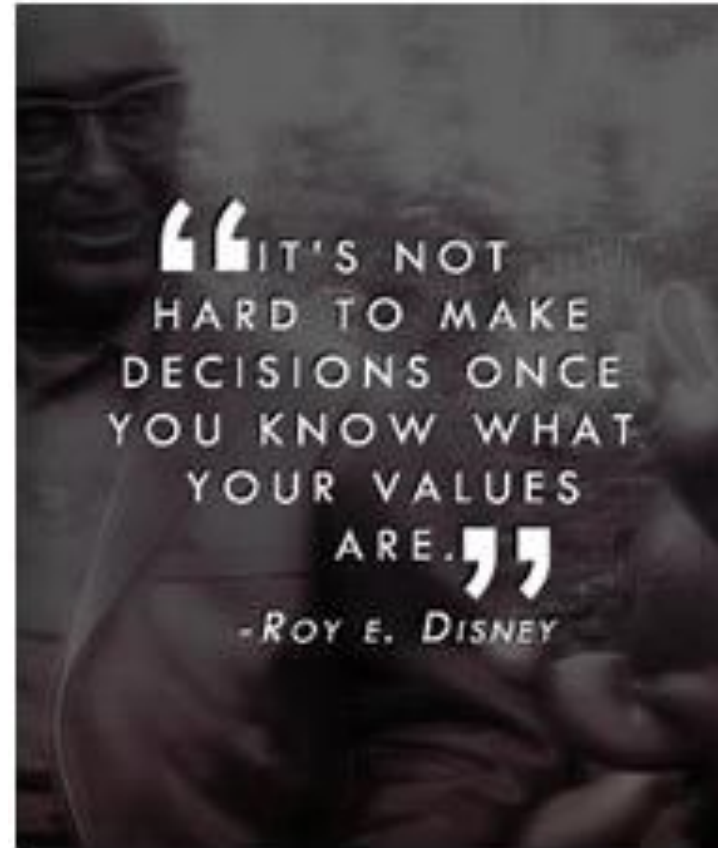
# Values



Values defined: “A filter system which we develop that guides our view of reality.”

1. Ethical Values
2. Non-Ethical Values





# PA State Ethics Commission

Brian Jacisin, Chief Counsel  
PA State Ethics  
Commission



# Conflict of Interests

*“A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgement or actions regarding primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest.”*

**Primary Interests:** Principal goals of your profession/activity.

**Secondary Interests:** Includes not only financial gain but any motives or desires for advancement of you, your family or friends.

# No Solicitation or Acceptance

- Anything of monetary value.
- A gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment.
- Donor's advantage.
- Vote, official action or judgement of the public official.
- Any influence you would not have received otherwise.



# Ethical Decision-Making Model





A black and white photograph of a hand pointing upwards with the index finger. The hand is wearing a watch with a dark strap. A large, bright blue 'X' is superimposed over the image, with the text 'ETHICAL DECISION MAKING' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters centered across it. The background is a blurred, high-contrast image of what appears to be a city skyline or industrial structures.

# ETHICAL DECISION MAKING





# Ethical Decision Making

1. Unconscious  
Thoughts

2. Unthinking  
Custom &  
Practices

3. Default  
Settings

4. Reflective  
Practices





# Seven Steps to Ethical Decision Making

1. Define the problem(s) (PLUS factors).
2. Seek relevant assistance, guidance and support.
3. Identify alternatives.
4. Evaluate the alternatives (PLUS factors).
5. Make the decision.
6. Implement the decision.
7. Evaluate the decision (PLUS factors)





# Seven Steps to Ethical Decision Making: PLUS Factors

## **P = Policies**

Is it consistent with my organization's policies, procedures and guidelines?

## **L= Legal**

Is it acceptable under the applicable laws and regulations?

## **U = Universal**

Does it conform to the universal principles/values my organization has adopted?

## **S= Self**

Does it satisfy my personal definition of right, good and fair? Does it serve me vs. the overall organization?



# Ethical Decisions



You may not believe you have power; BUT consider that many times you have:

1. Little or no direct supervision in the field.
2. Access to people, resources, and networks; privileged access that your clients do not have.
3. Clients know they “HAVE TO” listen to you because you issue permits/issue out of compliance reports, etc.
4. Decision-making power (Services, Grants, Budgets, etc.).
5. Others?

*"If you lose your job, you lose your job. But if you caved to the demand, you wouldn't be the same person anymore. You must accept that it's better to get fired and maintain your integrity."*

Conservation District Manager



# Conservation District Real World Scenarios

What Would You Do?



# Boundaries are Essential



The only people who get  
upset about you setting  
boundaries are the ones who  
were benefiting from you  
having none.

unknown

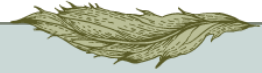




React

Respond

# Small Groups: What Would You Do?



01

Conflict of  
interest

02

Bribes/Financial  
Gain

03

Power and  
authority  
'PUSHING' you

04

Confidential  
Information &  
Complaints

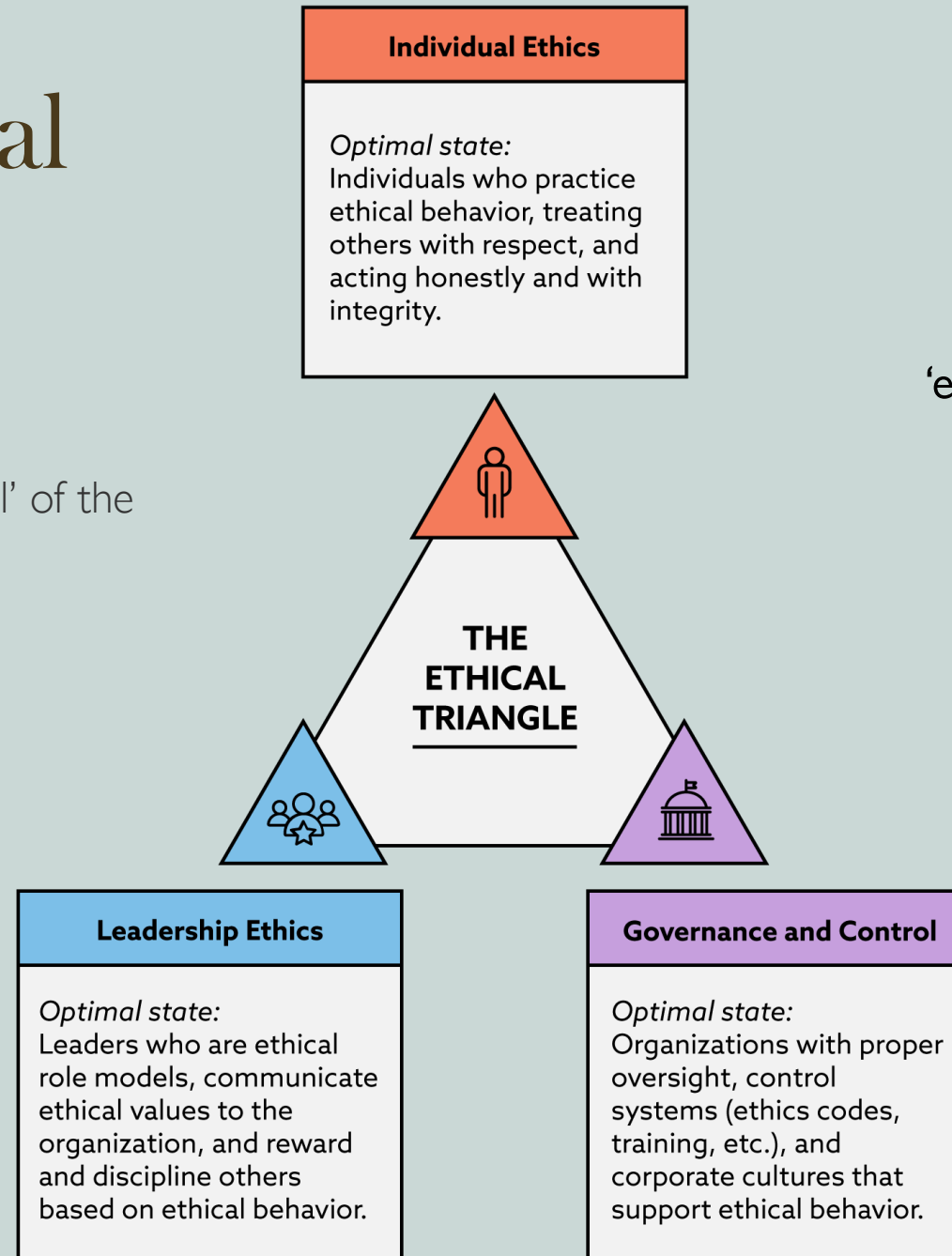


# Ethics & Culture



# The Ethical Triangle

1. Individual Ethics
2. Leadership Ethics
3. Governance and 'control' of the organization.



Do different cultures have different 'ethics' present? How they handle things? What is acceptable? Not acceptable?



# How Unethical Behavior Spreads



# How to Minimize 'Ethical Fading'

A few guiding principles to determine what is the ethical thing to do?

1. Will my actions fulfill promises I made and uphold my word? Is my 'word', the 'word' that is ethical?
2. Will my actions be legal?
3. Will my actions be fair and just to the people affected by them?
4. Would I want the people I respect most to learn of my actions?

A "no" answer to any of the questions suggests that the person is ethically veering off course.



Quinn Mills, Author



# Ways To Reduce Ethically Fading



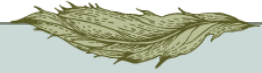
1. Honestly assess your needs and resources.
2. Establish a strong foundation.
3. Build a culture of integrity — from the top down.
4. Keep a “values focus” in moments big and small.
5. Re-evaluate and revise as needed.



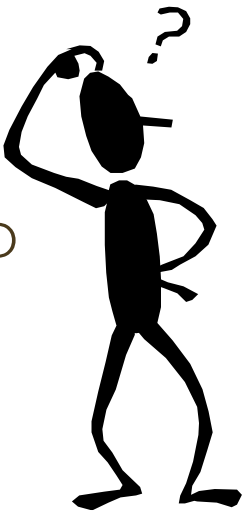
# Final Thoughts/Checkpoints on Ethics



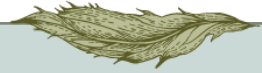
# Before You Act/Speak...Consider?



- Is there equal power between me and the person I'm interacting?
- Would I behave the same way if my significant other, parent, or child were standing next to me?
- Would I want someone to do or say such things to me, to my family, or to my friends?



# Before You Act/Speak...Consider?



- Would I want to see how I'm behaving or what I'm saying on the evening news, on the local radio station, and/or in the local or national newspaper?
- Be mindful of 'water cooler' conversations.
- Do I look over my shoulder to see who is around before I speak?



# Start, Stop & Continue

Consider our discussion about Ethics workshop today.  
Based on these ideas, what actions/behaviors would you:

Start	Stop	Continue
<b>Start</b> doing what would make a positive difference?	<b>Stop</b> doing what would impede a more positive journey?	<b>Continue</b> doing what you are already doing that works well.





*Thank you very much!*

*Any Questions?*





## **Ethical Decision Making**

1. Define the problem(s) (PLUS factors).
2. Seek relevant assistance, guidance and support.
3. Identify alternatives.
4. Evaluate the alternatives (PLUS factors).
5. Make the decision.
6. Implement the decision.
7. Evaluate the decision (PLUS factors).

### **P = Policies**

Is it consistent with my organization's policies, procedures and guidelines?

### **L= Legal**

Is it acceptable under the applicable laws and regulations?

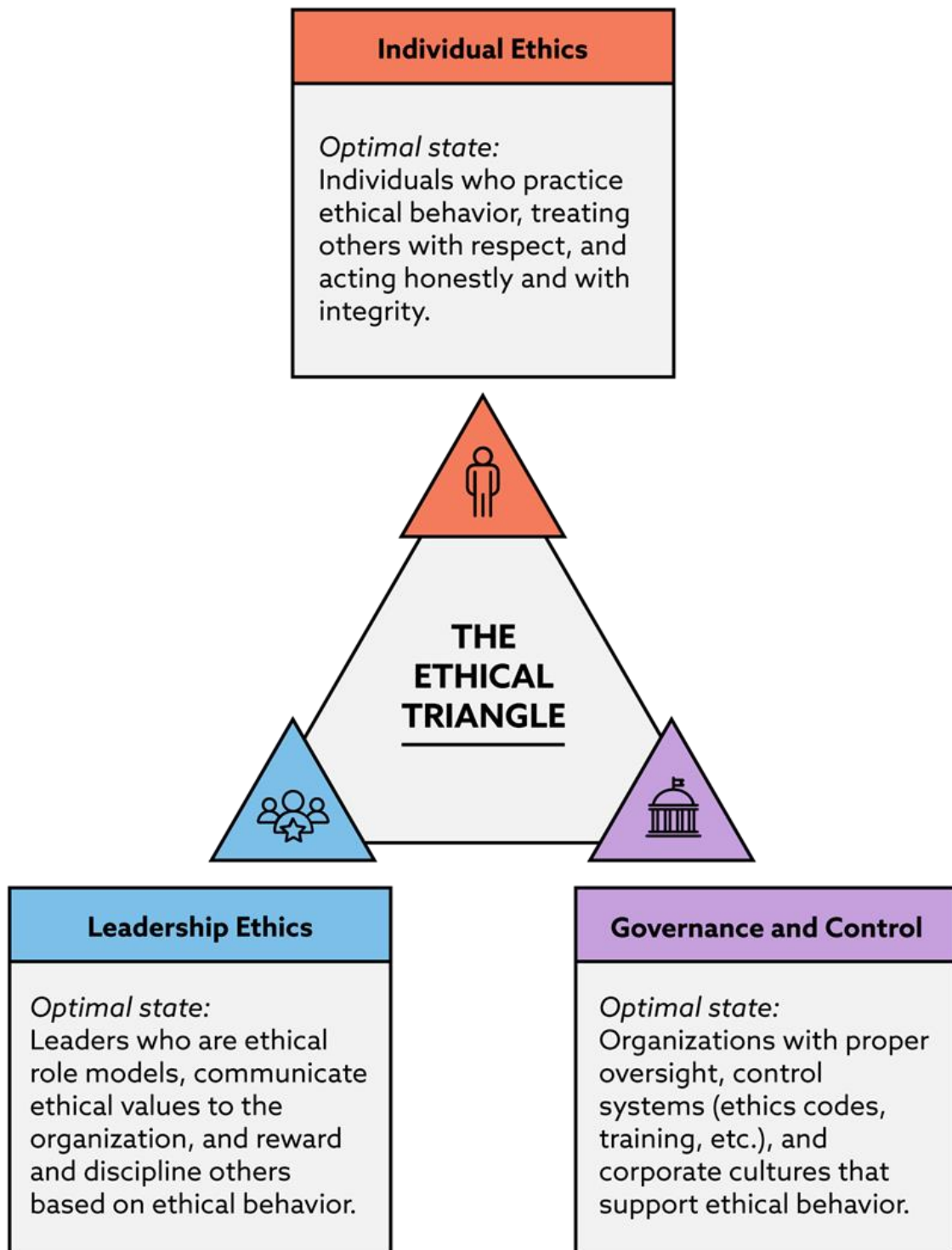
### **U = Universal**

Does it conform to the universal principles/values of my organization?

### **S= Self**

Does it satisfy my personal definition of right, good and fair? Does it serve me vs. the overall organization, community, etc.?

## Ethical Triangle



## Conservation District (CD) Real World Scenarios



### In your small groups, please:

1. Define your scenario to your group (please exclude names to protect the 'guilty' and innocent). If you do NOT have any examples—you may use one of the examples listed below.
2. How did you respond to and navigate the situation? If you could have an 'instant re-play'--what would do you do differently?
3. What was leadership's (Board, Conservation District Mgr.) response to the situation. Do you wish it was a different response?

#### Group 1: Conflict of Interest:

- During COVID when vaccines were very difficult to secure, the local health care facility offered all Conservation District employee's a vaccine if they could get their 'permit faster'. This request was made on a 'public' multi-party video call. **What do you do?**
- A Board member that has compliance issues on their farm but feels they don't need to make any changes since they are '*on the board*'. **What do you do?**

#### Group 2: Bribes/Financial or Other Gain:

- You were offered a great deal on buying a new vehicle if you purchase CD vehicles from a dealer. **What do you do?**
- You speak at a local group as a CD member and are offered an 'honorarium'. **What do you do?**

#### Group 3: Power & Authority 'PUSHING' You:

- The local state elected official instructed the Conservation District to '*go ahead and trust these guys—they will do the right thing*'. Issue their permit later—they want to move forward NOW! The CD spent almost a year gaining compliance from them. **What do you do?**
- A CD leader/board member may exclude a CD staff member from a permitting situation, stating, '*they will handle it*'. **What do you do?**

#### Group 4: Confidential Information/Complaints:

- A community member that you are visiting during a CD visit, tries to obtain information from you about a local farm that they may want to purchase. You are asked, '*do you know is it up for sale*'? **What do you do?**
- You are contacted by a landowner that is having a 'fight' with his/her neighbor and they file a complaint that after it is researched—seems totally unfounded. They continue to file complaints. **What do you do?**