

The Integrity Principle

Principle III: Integrity

To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention professionals should perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage should not subordinate service and the public trust. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion. It *cannot* accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

- a. All information should be presented fairly and accurately. Prevention professionals should document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- b. Prevention professionals should not misrepresent either directly or by implication professional qualifications or affiliations.
- c. Where there is evidence of impairment in a colleague or a service recipient, prevention professionals should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- d. Prevention professionals should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, product, individual, or organization in a way that is misleading.

What the Principle Means

The Integrity Principle is about building and maintaining the trust of others—their trust in prevention overall and their trust in you as a representative of the prevention field. This involves putting the service of prevention and the well-being of others first and foremost. Self-interest and personal gain must be set aside. It also means being honest, accurate, and forthright in all aspects of your work, including your qualifications and associations. Deception of any kind is unacceptable.

Providing Accurate Information

It is important that everything you produce and present is accurate. Here are some guidelines to follow whenever you produce or present information:

- *Be truthful* when presenting data and other types of information.
- *Check the accuracy* of any data and information you use if you didn't develop it yourself.
- Make sure all data and information is from a *reliable source*.

Giving Credit

The Integrity Principle also dictates that prevention practitioners appropriately credit the materials that they use. Copyright laws protect the authors/creators of original published or unpublished work by

establishing rules for how this work can be used and reproduced. These laws apply to any materials you create yourself or for your agency. They also apply to materials that are not your own or your agency's, even if you use them for nonprofit educational purposes.

Here are some guidelines to follow when deciding when and how to credit your sources:

- *Information, ideas or data:* Any time you use information, ideas, or data that are not your own or your agency's, you need to credit the author and source where you found it.
- *Images:* Most of the time when you use images such as charts, graphs, photos, artwork, or graphics that are not your own or your agency's, you will need to obtain permission from the original author/creator or publisher. There are some exceptions, such as for images that are considered to be in the "public domain." If you are uncertain whether permission is required, contact the original author/creator or publisher, to find out. You must also credit the source for charts and graphs; and credit the artist or photographer for photos, artwork, or graphics.
- *Actual text:* If you include the actual text from a source that is not your own or your agency's, you will most likely need to obtain permission from the original author/creator or publisher. In all cases, you must credit the author and source. You must also put in quotes any text that you have copied verbatim to prevent plagiarizing, even if the text is in the public domain and permission is not needed.

Showing Support

It's not always easy to know what to do when you suspect that someone you work with is abusing tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. According to the Integrity Principle, when a colleague or service recipient shows evidence of impairment (e.g., stress, depression, or substance abuse), prevention professionals "should be supportive of assistance or treatment." The following are some ways to demonstrate support:

- Talk to the individual and encourage him/her to get help or treatment.
- Find out what support resources are available at your agency (e.g. employee assistance program) and share them with the individual.
- Refer the individual to a professional counselor.
- Accommodate efforts by the individual to attend recovery meetings and support groups.

Avoiding Deception

According to the Prevention Code of Ethics, integrity "cannot accommodate deceit." Deception involves misleading others or trying to make them believe something that is not true. For example, deception may be used to:

- Further one's own personal or professional interests (e.g., falsifying information on a resume to get a job)

- Meet the expectations or goals of an organization, task force, or community (e.g., withholding negative evaluation results about a popular prevention program because the school community supports its continued use)
- Benefit a program or help an individual (e.g., exaggerating data in a grant application to increase the chances of getting funded).

As these examples reveal, deception is not only about what you say or do—it's also about what you *don't* say and do—that could weaken the trust other people have in you, and in prevention as a whole. Regardless of the intention, deception of any kind is unacceptable because it diminishes the trust of others and undermines integrity.

Truthfully Representing Yourself and Your Associations

The Integrity Principle states that prevention professionals cannot misrepresent themselves or their associations. For example, prevention professionals must be honest and forthcoming about their:

- Qualifications (e.g., education, skills, training, experience)
- Roles and responsibilities in prevention activities
- Affiliations with funding sources and partners/collaborators