



Understanding Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Description:

This tool provides guidelines on Codes of Ethics and Conduct and an organizational assessment.

How it can be used:

Codes of Ethics and Codes of Conduct are sometimes used interchangeably. Although there are similarities, there are some key differences that are important to know when you are preparing for accreditation. Both are necessary and valuable, and both will help your organization become stronger. Use this tool to determine if your organization needs to create or revise your Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct and how well you are adhering to your Ethical Framework.

Using the table below, consider the similarities and differences between a Code of Ethics and a Code of Conduct.

Briefly, the Code of Ethics provides the decision-making framework based on organizational values while the Code of Conduct translates the Code of Ethics into specific behaviours. Or, put another way, a Code of Ethics provides the underlying principles that determine *why* things should be done in a certain way while the Code of Conduct describes *how* things should be done.

	Code of Ethics	Code of Conduct
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codifies the values of the organization Outlines principles to guide decision-making Promotes high standards of practice Establishes a framework for professional behaviour and responsibilities Reinforces organizational identity Provides general principles to guide behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines specific practices and behaviors that are to be encouraged or prohibited under the Code of Ethics Lays out guidelines and procedures to be used to determine whether violations of the Code of Ethics have occurred Delineates the consequences for such violations Governs more specific areas such as dress code or acceptance of gifts and what penalties should be imposed for specific infractions
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements of overarching principles that outline what is right and wrong General principles that guide rather than dictate behaviours May contain aspirations and ideals, and more specific elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific behaviours that are required or prohibited Guidelines and procedures Consequences of violations

Together your Code of Ethics and your Code of Conduct (along with some other documents) are part of your organization's **Ethical Framework**.



Assess the following elements of your organization’s Ethical Framework by reviewing adherence to your Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct documents.

Ethical Framework		
<input type="checkbox"/> My organization’s Code of Ethics is based on our values and principles	<input type="checkbox"/> My organization’s Code of Ethics is not based on our values and principles	<input type="checkbox"/> My organization does not have a Code of Ethics
<input type="checkbox"/> My organization’s Code of Conduct is updated annually and is based on our Code of Ethics	<input type="checkbox"/> My organization’s Code of Conduct has not been revised in the last 12 months and is not related to our Code of Ethics	<input type="checkbox"/> My organization does not have a Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/> All employees in my organization understand the role of the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct and know when and how to use them	<input type="checkbox"/> Some employees in my organization understand the role of the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct and know when and how to use them	<input type="checkbox"/> Employees in my organization do not generally understand the role of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct and don’t know when and how to use them
<input type="checkbox"/> We promote my organization’s Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct to our employees, clients and community	<input type="checkbox"/> We promote my organization’s Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct to our employees	<input type="checkbox"/> We do not promote my organization’s Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/> All of the employees in my organization understand the need to act ethically with clients and community	<input type="checkbox"/> The Managers in my organization are well versed in ethical conduct if a client is unhappy with one of our employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Most of our employees do not know how to act ethically with clients or community
<p>Ticks in this column mean the organization is on track to implementing an Ethical Framework.</p> <p><i>Monitor and review to continually improve.</i></p>	<p>Ticks in this column mean the organization has gaps in implementing an Ethical Framework.</p> <p><i>There is work still to be done. Reach out to your accrediting body, your network, partners or an FNIHB contact to get back on track.</i></p>	<p>Ticks in this column mean the organization likely hasn’t implemented an Ethical Framework.</p> <p><i>Immediate action is recommended. Reach out to your accrediting body, your network, partners or an FNIHB contact to get on track.</i></p>