

Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Our Guidelines for Citizenship

Preamble

We are the people of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. We believe that, to build and sustain a successful organization, we must embrace a culture characterized by personal commitment to each other, our customers, and our work. We define commitment as an understanding, acceptance, and active participation in the shared responsibility to meet needs and obligations. We recognize that, as individuals and as an organization, this commitment must be supported by clear statements that help us identify how we are each expected to conduct ourselves, and how we each would like to be treated. We therefore adopt the following guidelines for our daily work together:

I. Our Commitment to Customers

1. Our customers expect us to provide leadership and vision for the improvement of health care through its products and services, and through its ability to bring people together for a common purpose.
2. Our customers expect to get value for their money, and they expect our products and services to be timely and high quality.
3. Our customers expect to have their needs met by staff that are knowledgeable, courteous, and guided by the principles of quality improvement.
4. Our customers expect to receive information that is accurate, need-specific, and consistent. They expect to have to ask only once, and they expect staff to talk to each other and share information about their needs.
5. Our customers expect us to not waste their time and resources with overly complex and extraneous materials or information.
6. Our customers expect us to show interest and concern for their particular situation, and are delighted with interactions that are personalized and friendly.

II. How We Treat Each Other

1. We are all individuals, each deserving acknowledgment of his or her value, each deserving respect, each deserving the acceptance and interest of us all. We bring our own distinct viewpoints and talents to the organization, and we welcome the diversity that this adds to the whole of us. We do not pass judgment on personalities and lifestyles.
2. We communicate, openly and honestly to each other, and keep each other informed on a daily basis. We acknowledge disagreement without fear and address difficult subjects without delay. We seek to understand opinions that differ from our own, and we both give and receive feedback constructively. We resolve personal disagreements with those directly involved. We keep our word, and we keep confidences that are entrusted to us.

3. We listen to each other.
4. We forgive each other, and we are not afraid to say “I’m sorry” and “thank you”.
5. We are a team. We depend on and are responsible for each other. We ask for help when we need it, and offer support, both practical and emotional, when we can. Our jobs are intertwined and flexible; we do not allow job descriptions or hierarchy to limit the nature of the work, or who does it. We are accountable for the work we agree to do, and we are honest about our capacity to take on more. We are trustworthy and conscientious in our own work, and in any work we do on behalf of others.
6. We believe in humor as a means to keep each other grounded. Our mission is serious, but we do not always have to be. We are not afraid to laugh at ourselves and allow ourselves to be teased, but our humor is friendly and fun and never mean-spirited.
7. We celebrate successes together, and we acknowledge and value the individual contributions that make them happen.
8. We show respect for the personal space, property, and privacy of each individual.

III. Our Organization’s Support for Us

1. IHI is an organization that values its integrity. Through its commitment to excellence, it fosters a sense of pride, dignity, and professionalism in our work for it. It is in vigorous compliance with all the legal requirements of a non-profit organization, and it practices the concepts of continuous quality improvement in its policies, actions, and daily work.
2. IHI understands and supports our individual needs and aspirations. It provides us, within its utmost capabilities, job security and opportunities for personal growth and professional development. It provides us with positive and constructive feedback for improvement.
3. IHI respects us, acknowledges our contributions, and trusts us.
4. IHI views us as partners, actively seeking our input in a constant review of programs and actions to determine consistency with our mission and long-term goals. It does not dictate policy, but works in collaboration with us to create and maintain operating principles that are clear and specific, but also flexible and continuously improved.
5. IHI supports open, solid, and easy communication among and across all levels and committees – including the Board of Directors – about individual programs and activities and how they relate to each other. It is forthcoming and honest with information regarding the organization’s strategic direction and financial condition.
6. IHI is committed to supporting a positive environment in which we feel both physically and emotionally safe, in which our physical workspace is pleasant and efficient, in which we each understand our roles and responsibilities, in which needed resources are supplied in a timely manner, and in which celebration is both frequent and joyful.
7. IHI recognizes the importance of a healthy balance between work and personal life, and provides adequate support so that people do not feel strained in this regard.

IV. Our Support for the Organization

1. We are each caretakers of IHI's mission and vision, sharing in its commitment to excellence and practice of continuous improvement. We each understand how our individual work supports the organization's goals.
2. We are responsible and accountable for our work. We ensure that it is completed efficiently, with attention to accuracy and quality. We constantly examine our processes and look for opportunities to enhance quality while reducing costs. We are knowledgeable about our work, and we seek opportunities to expand that knowledge and keep it current.
3. We are quick to take initiative, solving problems creatively and working independently to meet the needs of customers and coworkers. We "hit the ground running," at times juggling duties and responsibilities, understanding that some ambiguity is always inevitable and that it need not be paralyzing.
4. We are reliable and trustworthy. The organization can depend on us to show up and do our best for it.
5. We are focused on delighting our customers, anticipating their needs, responding to them promptly, and constantly searching for better ways to serve them.
6. To our customers and to the public, we represent the IHI, and we therefore maintain a professional appearance and attitude when working outside of the office.
7. We are responsible and frugal in our use of resources, minimizing the cost of waste to the organization, and maximizing opportunities for recycling and conservation.
8. We accept responsibility for the shared stewardship of the organization, and we participate freely in efforts to improve its management and operations.

Making It Real

This document is a representation of our beliefs as an organization, a reflection of who and what we would like to be. In order to make IHI's Guidelines for Citizenship a living document that is relevant to all current and future employees and associates, a system must be developed that will provide communication about the content and a method for measuring its effectiveness.