

making ethics real

a practical guide for speaking up

You have options:

Remember, if you are ever uncomfortable speaking up about an ethics or compliance concern, you can reach out to your supervisor, department/school management, the Ombudsperson, related central office, the Integrity and Compliance Office or the VCU Helpline.

To learn more, visit go.vcu.edu/reporting-concerns

www.compliance.vcu.edu



VCU

Integrity and Compliance

ASK QUESTIONS

DO: Ask questions to gain clarity and focus on finding a solution that is in line with our mission and goals.

- What is the goal we are trying to meet?
- What challenges or risks are involved?
- Who else should be consulted or part of the decision?
- Is this decision in line with our ethical standards and core values?

DON'T: Debate, argue or assume you know all the relevant information.

CONSULT OTHERS

DO: Build relationships and seek guidance from a diverse network of colleagues. Choose people who may have a different perspective and will give you honest feedback.

DON'T: Make important decisions without speaking to others first. Your colleagues have valuable input and ideas. Everyone appreciates being included.

GET THE FACTS

DO: Stick to the facts rather than your feelings to support and explain your position.

DON'T: Assume the other person has all the facts and is ignoring important details.

FRAMING THE ISSUE

DO: Offer alternative solutions that better support our mission and goals based on the facts you gathered. Use neutral language to explain how your idea lessens risks, and incorporate others' input into the solution.

DON'T: Use emotionally-charged words or phrases that may put others on the defense and pay attention to your tone of voice and volume. It's easy to get caught up in the moment, and you may need to schedule a time to talk later if the discussion begins to escalate.

Speaking up is easier when you think about what you want to say, how you want to say it to be effective and when you practice so you are comfortable. Consider rehearsing with a trusted colleague or friend.