

staffing practice. Much of that research is summarized in usable formats in this book. The eighth point suggests that when confronted with ethical issues, it is appropriate to seek ethical advice from others. Handling troubling ethical issues alone is unwise.

The final point is that one must be aware of an organization's climate and culture for ethical behavior. Organizations differ in their ethical climate/culture, and this has two implications for staffing.²² First, an organization may have expectations for *how* staffing decisions are made. How an organization communicates with recruits (including those who are rejected) and whether selection decisions are made hierarchically or collaboratively are two examples of ethical staffing issues that may well vary from organization to organization. Second, an organization's ethics climate may well affect *which* staffing decisions are made. An organization that has high expectations for ethics may weight selection information differently (placing more weight on, say, background checks) than an organization with more typical expectations.

In both of these ways, one needs to realize that while some ethics considerations are universal, in other cases, what is considered ethical in one climate may be seen as a breach of ethics in another.

It should be recognized that many pressure points on HR professionals may cause them to compromise the ethical standards discussed above. Research suggests that the principal causes of this pressure are the felt need to follow a boss's directive, meet overly aggressive business objectives, help the organization survive, meet scheduling pressures, be a team player, save jobs, and advance the boss's career.²³

The suggestions for ethical staffing practice in Exhibit 1.8 are a guide to one's own behavior. Being aware of and consciously attempting to follow these constitute a professional and ethical responsibility. But what about situations in which ethical lapses are suspected or observed in others?

One response to the situation is to do nothing—neither report nor attempt to change the misconduct. Research suggests a small proportion (about 20%) choose to ignore and not report misconduct.²⁴ Major reasons for this response include a belief that no action would be taken, a fear of retaliation from one's boss or senior management, not trusting promises of confidentiality, and a fear of not being seen as a team player. Against such reasons for inaction must be weighed the harm that has, or could, come to the employer, the employee, or the job applicant. Moreover, failure to report the misconduct may well increase the chances that it will be repeated, with continuing harmful consequences. Not reporting misconduct may also conflict with one's personal values and create remorse for not having done the right thing. Finally, a failure to report misconduct may bring penalties to oneself if that failure subsequently becomes known to one's boss or senior management. In short, "looking the other way" should not be viewed as a safe, wise, or ethical choice.