**Developing a Code of Conduct**

**Session Flow & Talking Points**

**1. Why a Code of Ethics Matters**

* **Sets the tone** for professional behavior and decision-making in the practice.
* Provides **clarity and consistency** for staff when faced with difficult situations.
* Serves as a **communication tool** for patients, vendors, and the community to understand the practice’s values.
* Can help protect the practice legally by showing proactive commitment to ethical standards.

**2. Foundations of an Effective Code**

Ask the group:

* What **values** do we want to be known for? (e.g., respect, honesty, compassion, professionalism)
* What **principles** guide our patient care and business operations?
* How do we want **staff to treat each other** and our patients—especially under pressure?
* Where do we draw the line on **conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and professional boundaries**?

**3. Key Elements to Include**

* **Patient Care Standards**
	+ Commitment to patient safety, dignity, and quality care.
	+ Respect for privacy and confidentiality (HIPAA compliance).
* **Professional Conduct**
	+ Respect for coworkers, patients, and the community.
	+ Zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination.
* **Integrity in Business Practices**
	+ Honesty in billing, insurance dealings, and financial transparency.
	+ Avoiding conflicts of interest.
* **Workplace Culture**
	+ Teamwork, accountability, and mutual respect.
	+ Commitment to continuous learning and improvement.
* **Compliance & Accountability**
	+ Following laws, regulations, and internal policies.
	+ Accepting responsibility for actions.

**4. Interactive Group Activity**

**Step 1 – Values Brainstorm**

* Break attendees into small groups.
* Give each group a list of common healthcare values and have them select their top 5–7 for their practice.
* Ask: *What does this value look like in action?*

**Step 2 – Drafting Principles**

* Turn each value into a clear statement.
	+ Example: Value = “Respect” → Statement: “We treat all patients, staff, and visitors with dignity, compassion, and courtesy at all times.”

**Step 3 – Refinement**

* Bring the group back together and combine overlapping ideas.
* Identify any gaps (e.g., ethics in social media use, vendor relations, patient communication).

**Step 4 – Commitment Statement**

* End with a short paragraph the practice can adapt:
*“As a team, we are committed to providing ethical, compassionate, and professional care to all patients, treating each other with respect, and upholding the highest standards in all aspects of our work.”*

**5. Implementation Tips**

* **Roll it out formally** to staff (training, signed acknowledgment).
* Post in **employee areas** and possibly on the practice’s website for transparency.
* **Review annually** to keep it relevant.
* Integrate into **onboarding and performance reviews**.