

## **Deciding How to Decide: Let Your Values Be Your Guide**

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### **1. Background**

Most of our decisions are constrained by “realities” like budgets, time horizons, infrastructure or policies. But what if they weren’t? In the absence of typical limits, how do you decide how to decide?

Our quality assurance audit team confronted this problem in the fall of 2018 as we embarked on extensive revisions of our policies and procedures (P&Ps). With everything on the table, we immediately turned to “experts,” other groups’ P&Ps, feedback from the people we audit, guidance from regulatory bodies, and documented best practices—and we combed through our own data. In so doing, we discovered that while helpful, there was no “one way” to achieve our goals.

### **2. Goals**

1. To develop effective P&Ps as well as standard operating procedures (SOPs) which advance the mission of the Cancer Center in general and the Quality Assurance and Safety Monitoring Committee in particular.
2. To have P&Ps and SOPs which reflect best practices and the current regulatory environment.
3. To improve our stakeholders’ experiences with audits and the auditors.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

1. Establish team values, a team vision, and mission statement.
2. Clarify how our team works within that vision and mission.
3. Allow our values, vision, and mission to constrain decision-making in the development of our P&Ps and SOPs.

### **4. Outcomes and Future Directions**

First, we have been able to concentrate on selecting policies and procedures that move our vision forward. By filtering ideas through a matrix of “how does this make us a better partner with teams,” or “how does this make us better advocates for patient safety,” we have made better decisions about critical issues like which studies to audit, case selection, and audit frequency.

Second, by developing a cohesive understanding of “who we are” and “what we do” we have been able to make better choices outside of our policies and procedures, including how we provide education and how we communicate.

*Category: Training & Quality Assurance – Work in Progress*

Finally, our group decision-making has been supported by our values. For instance, one of our values is that we will use available data to understand trends. Because of this value, we have dug deep into our data about audits to understand what we already know about our process and its impact.

We anticipate that we will continue to use our values, vision, and mission as a tool. Having recognized the strength of values-based decision-making to unite our group and serve as a north star for our work, our next steps are to begin promulgating them from our team to constituents with whom we work.