

**University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program Edith Baker Integrated
Behavioral Healthcare Fellowship (M01HP31376)**

***ETHICS AND THE LAW FROM AN INTEGRATED HEALTH
PROSPECTIVE***

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Deborah Lessard is a nurse-attorney with a graduate degree in organizational communication. She earned her CPHRM (Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management from the American Hospital Association) and has a certification in Strategic Decision Making and Risk Management from Stanford University. Lessard practices as an independent healthcare consultant and adjunct faculty in graduate nursing, and the leadership and organizational communication programs.

Lessard has 30 years of progressive executive and consultative experience in the areas of professional and general liability insurance, risk finance, clinical risk management, enterprise risk management, claims and litigation, quality improvement, patient safety, and legislative and political advocacy.

She helps organizations identify where they can create value and where they can protect value by managing and leveraging risk. She does this by identifying operational gaps which requires assessment of trade-offs and values and aligning with the organization's mission, vision and values.

Lessard has developed an interdisciplinary body of knowledge which separates her from other consultants. She integrates her legal, healthcare and communication science backgrounds with neuroeconomicsⁱ, decision science and enterprise risk management. This enables her to view issues and construct solutions from a diverse stakeholder perspective.

In her work, she addresses how individual and organizational biases and heuristics (the "organizational culture") influence, impede and derail new ideas, initiatives, decisions and judgments. Biases influence how uncertainty is managed and since business involves uncertainty, this work is crucial. Individuals judge on a relative basis and people find safety in group think. Lessard employs strategies to debias individuals and groups and specifically, the subject matter expert (SME) so the SME can provide a true and valid opinion or projection on issues. These strategies focus on eliminating or mitigating ambiguity in uncertainty. A focus of her work is in the intersection of ethics, law and clinical/operational practices.

Lessard has experience in facilitating cross-enterprise collaboration. She uses collaborative negotiation principles in addition to traditional advocacy principles to frame issues and advance creative solutions. In this way, She separates the people from the problem and the interests from the positions. This creates the platform to obtain buy-in and result in win/win solutions rather than win/lose outcomes.

ⁱ Neuroeconomics is an emerging field of study bridging psychology, neurology and investor behavior and providing insight into how the brain receives new ideas as well as the cognitive processes involved in financial decision making.