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U2C4L2

## Performance Indicators

### Key Words:

Communication

Counseling

Development

Evaluation

Flexibility

Purpose

Support

### What You Will Learn to Do

Outline a developmental counseling plan

### Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, non-verbal, visual, and written techniques
- Treat self and others with respect

### Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe performance indicators used to assess leadership skills
- Describe the qualities and skills of an effective counselor
- Identify assessment and counseling strategies

## Introduction

This lesson covers performance indicators, leadership and developmental skills, as well as mentoring. You will learn mentoring and counseling skills, such as active listening, responding, and questioning. The two major types of developmental counseling—event-oriented and growth counseling—are also discussed.

## Performance Indicators

<i>Leaders of character and competence.. act to achieve excellence by providing purpose, direction and motivation.</i>					
Values "Be"	Attributes "Be"	Skills <sup>4</sup> "Know"	Actions <sup>5</sup> "Do"		
Loyalty Duty Respect Selfless Service Honor Integrity Personal Courage	Mental <sup>1</sup>	Interpersonal	Influencing	Operating	Improving
	Physical <sup>2</sup>	Conceptual	Communicating	Planning/ Preparing	Developing
		Technical	Decision Making	Executing	Building
	Emotional <sup>3</sup>	Tactical	Motivating	Assessing	Learning

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## Values

Values include loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. This section covers what to look for when determining these specific values.

### Loyalty

Leaders who demonstrate loyalty:

- Bear true faith and allegiance in the correct order to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, and the organization
- Observe higher headquarters' priorities
- Work within the system without manipulating it for personal gain



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## Duty

Leaders who demonstrate devotion to duty:

- Fulfill obligations — professional, legal, and moral
- Carry out mission requirements
- Meet professional standards
- Set the example
- Comply with policies and directives
- Continually pursue excellence

## Respect

Leaders who demonstrate respect:

- Treat people as they should be treated
- Create a climate of fairness and equal opportunity
- Are discreet and tactful when correcting or questioning others
- Show concern for and make an effort to check on the safety and well being of others
- Are courteous
- Don't take advantage of positions of authority

## Selfless Service

Leaders who demonstrate selfless service:

- Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before their own
- Sustain team morale
- Share subordinates' hardships
- Give credit for success to others and accept responsibility for failure themselves

## Honor

Leaders who demonstrate honor:

- Live up to Army values
- Don't lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those actions by others

## Integrity

Leaders who demonstrate integrity:

- Do what is right legally and morally
- Possess high personal moral standards
- Are honest in word and deed
- Show consistently good moral judgment and behavior
- Put being right ahead of being popular

## Personal Courage

Leaders who demonstrate personal courage:

- Show physical and moral bravery
- Take responsibility for decisions and actions
- Accept responsibility for mistakes and shortcomings

## Attributes

Attributes are positive qualities, traits, and characteristics. The attributes covered in this section include mental, physical, and emotional.

### Mental Attributes

Leaders who demonstrate desirable mental attributes:

- Possess and display will, self-discipline, initiative, judgment, self-confidence, intelligence, common sense, and cultural awareness
- Think and act quickly and logically, even when there are no clear instructions or the plan falls apart
- Analyze situations
- Combine complex ideas to generate feasible courses of action
- Balance resolve and flexibility
- Show a desire to succeed; do not quit in the face of adversity
- Do their fair share
- Balance competing demands
- Embrace and use the talents of all members to build team cohesion



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### Physical Attributes

Leaders who demonstrate desirable physical attributes:

- Maintain an appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing
- Present a neat and professional appearance
- Meet established norms of personal hygiene, grooming, and cleanliness
- Maintain Army height and weight standards (not applicable to DA civilians)
- Render appropriate military and civilian courtesies
- Demonstrate nonverbal expressions and gestures appropriate to the situation
- Are personally energetic
- Cope with hardship
- Complete physically demanding endeavors
- Continue to function under adverse conditions
- Lead by example in performance, fitness, and appearance

## Emotional Attributes

Leaders who demonstrate appropriate emotional attributes:

- Show self-confidence
- Remain calm during conditions of stress, chaos, and rapid change
- Exercise self-control, balance, and stability
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Demonstrate mature, responsible behavior that inspires trust and earns respect

## Skills



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Specific skills should be examined when reviewing performance. These include interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical skills. Obviously, not every skill is applicable to every individual.

### Interpersonal Skills

Leaders who demonstrate interpersonal skills:

- Coach, teach, counsel, motivate, and empower subordinates
- Readily interact with others
- Earn trust and respect
- Actively contribute to problem solving and decision making
- Are sought out by peers for expertise and counsel

### Conceptual Skills

Leaders who demonstrate conceptual skills:

- Reason critically and ethically
- Think creatively
- Anticipate requirements and contingencies
- Improvise within the commander's intent
- Use appropriate reference materials
- Pay attention to details

### Technical Skills

Leaders who demonstrate technical skills:

- Possess or develop the expertise necessary to accomplish all assigned tasks and functions
- Know standards for task accomplishment
- Know the small unit tactics, techniques, and procedures that support the organization's mission
- Know the drills that support the organization's mission
- Prepare clear, concise operation orders
- Understand how to apply the factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC) to mission analysis
- Master basic soldier skills
- Know how to use and maintain equipment
- Know how and what to inspect or check
- Use technology, especially information technology, to enhance communication



### Did you know...?

#### **METT-TC**

You might be wondering what METT-TC stands for. This acronym means:

M-Mission

E-Enemy

T-Time

T-Terrain

T-Troops

C-Civilians

## Actions

When assessing action performance, look for those qualities that include influencing, communication (both oral and written), decision making, motivating, operating, planning and preparing, executing, assessing, improving, developing, building, and learning. This section covers these specific actions.

### Influencing

Leaders who influence:

- Use appropriate methods to reach goals while operating and improving



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- Motivate subordinates to accomplish tasks and missions
- Set the example by demonstrating enthusiasm for — and, if necessary, methods of — accomplishing assigned tasks
- Make themselves available to assist peers and subordinates
- Share information with subordinates
- Encourage subordinates and peers to express candid opinions
- Actively listen to feedback and act appropriately based on it
- Mediate peer conflicts and disagreements
- Tactfully confront and correct others when necessary
- Earn respect and obtain willing cooperation of peers, subordinates, and superiors
- Challenge others to match their example
- Take care of subordinates and their families, providing for their health, welfare, morale, and training
- Are persuasive in peer discussions and prudently rally peer pressure against peers when required
- Provide a team vision for the future
- Shape the organizational climate by setting, sustaining, and ensuring a values-based environment

## Communicating

**Communication** is critical to good leadership. Leaders who communicate effectively:

- Display good oral, written, and listening skills
- Know how to persuade others
- Express thoughts and ideas clearly to individuals and groups

### Oral Communication

Leaders who effectively communicate orally:

- Speak clearly and concisely
- Speak enthusiastically and maintain listeners' interest and involvement
- Make appropriate eye contact when speaking
- Use gestures that are appropriate but not distracting
- Convey ideas, feelings, sincerity, and conviction
- Express well-thought-out and well-organized ideas
- Use grammatically and doctrinally correct terms and phrases
- Use appropriate visual aids
- Act to determine, recognize and resolve misunderstandings
- Listen and watch attentively; make appropriate notes; convey the essence of what was said or done to others
- Respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal feedback
- Keep conversations on track

### Written Communication

Leaders who effectively communicate in writing:

- Are understood in a single rapid reading by the intended audience
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Have legible handwriting
- Put the "bottom line up front"
- Use the active voice
- Use an appropriate format, a clear organization, and a reasonably simple style
- Use only essential acronyms and spell out those used
- Stay on topic
- Correctly use facts and data

## **Decision Making**

Leaders who make effective, timely decisions:

- Employ sound judgment and logical reasoning
- Gather and analyze relevant information about changing situations to recognize and define emerging problems
- Make logical assumptions in the absence of facts
- Uncover critical issues to use as a guide in both making decisions and taking advantage of opportunities
- Keep informed about developments and policy changes inside and outside the organization
- Recognize and generate innovative solutions
- Develop alternative courses of action and choose the best course of action based on analysis of their relative costs and benefits
- Anticipate needs for action
- Relate and compare information from different sources to identify possible cause-and-effect relationships
- Consider the impact and implications of decisions on others and on situations
- Involve others in decisions and keep them informed of consequences that affect them
- Take charge when in charge
- Define intent
- Consider contingencies and their consequences
- Remain decisive after discovering a mistake
- Act in the absence of guidance
- Improvise within commander's intent; handle a fluid environment

## **Motivating**

Leaders who effectively motivate:

- Inspire, encourage, and guide others toward mission accomplishment
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks
- Attempt to satisfy subordinates' needs

- Give subordinates the reason for tasks
- Provide accurate, timely, and (where appropriate) positive feedback
- Actively listen for feedback from subordinates
- Use feedback to modify duties, tasks, requirements, and goals when appropriate
- Recognize individual and team accomplishments and reward them appropriately
- Recognize poor performance and address it appropriately
- Justly apply disciplinary measures
- Keep subordinates informed
- Clearly articulate expectations
- Consider duty positions, capabilities, and developmental needs when assigning tasks
- Provide early warning to subordinate leaders of tasks they will be responsible for
- Define requirements by issuing clear and concise orders or guidance
- Allocate as much time as possible for task completion
- Accept responsibility for organizational performance
- Credit subordinates for good performance
- Take responsibility for and correct poor performance

## **Operating**

Leaders who effectively operate:

- Accomplish short-term missions
- Demonstrate tactical and technical competency appropriate to their rank and position
- Complete individual and unit tasks to standard, on time, and within the commander's intent

## **Planning and Preparing**

Leaders who effectively plan:

- Develop feasible and acceptable plans for themselves and others that accomplish the mission while expending minimum resources and posturing the organization for future missions
- Use forward planning to ensure each course of action achieves the desired outcome
- Use reverse planning to ensure that all tasks can be executed in the time available and that tasks depending on other tasks are executed in the correct sequence
- Determine specified and implied tasks and restate the higher headquarters' mission in terms appropriate to the organization
- Incorporate adequate controls such as time phasing; ensure others understand when actions should begin or end
- Adhere to the "1/3 — 2/3 Rule"; give subordinates time to plan, 1/3 time for notice and 2/3 time to execution
- Allocate time to prepare and conduct rehearsals

- Ensure all courses of action accomplish the mission within the commander's intent
- Allocate available resources to competing demands by setting task priorities based on the relative importance of each task
- Address likely contingencies
- Remain flexible
- Consider SOPs, the factors of METT-TC, and the military aspects of terrain (OACOK)



### Did you know...?

That the acronym OACOK stands for:

- O- Observation
- A- Avenues of approach
- C- Cover and concealment
- O- Obstacles
- K- Key Terrain

- Coordinate plans with higher, lower, adjacent, and affected organizations
- Personally arrive on time and meet deadlines; require subordinates and their organizations to accomplish tasks on time
- Delegate all tasks except those that are required to do personally
- Schedule activities so the organization meets all commitments in critical performance areas
- Recognize and resolve scheduling conflicts
- Notify peers and subordinates as far in advance as possible when their support is required
- Use some form of a personal planning calendar to organize requirements

## Executing

Leaders who effectively execute:

- Use technical and tactical skills to meet mission standards, take care of people, and accomplish the mission with available resources
- Perform individual and collective tasks to standard
- Execute plans, adjusting when necessary, to accomplish the mission
- Encourage initiative
- Keep higher and lower headquarters, superiors, and subordinates informed
- Keep track of people and equipment
- Make necessary on-the-spot corrections

- Adapt to and handle fluid environments
- Work through obstacles, difficulties, and hardships to accomplish the mission
- Keep track of task assignments, adjust assignments, if necessary; follow up

## **Assessing**

Leaders who effectively assess:

- Use assessment techniques and evaluation tools, especially After Action Reviews (AARs), to identify lessons learned and facilitate consistent improvement
- Establish and employ procedures for monitoring, coordinating, and regulating subordinates' actions and activities
- Conduct initial assessments when beginning a new task or assuming a new position
- Conduct In Progress Reviews (IPRs)
- Analyze activities to determine how desired end states are achieved or affected
- Seek sustainment in areas when the organization meets the standard
- Observe and assess actions in progress without over supervising
- Judge results based on standards
- Sort out important actual and potential problems
- Conduct and facilitate AARs; identify lessons
- Determine causes, effects, and contributing factors for problems
- Analyze activities to determine how desired end states can be achieved ethically

## **Improving**

Leaders who effectively improve the organization:

- Sustain skills and actions that benefit themselves and each of their people for the future
- Sustain and renew the organization for the future by managing change and exploiting individual and institutional learning capabilities
- Create and sustain an environment where all leaders, subordinates, and organizations can reach their full potential

## **Developing**

Leaders who effectively develop:

- Strive to improve themselves, subordinates, and the organization
- Mentor by investing adequate time and effort in counseling, coaching, and teaching their individual subordinates and subordinate leaders
- Set the example by displaying high standards of duty performance, personal appearance, military and professional bearing, and ethics
- Create a climate that expects good performance, recognizes superior performance, and doesn't accept poor performance
- Design tasks to provide practice in areas of subordinate leaders' weaknesses

- Clearly articulate tasks and expectations and set realistic standards
- Guide subordinate leaders in thinking through problems for themselves
- Anticipate mistakes and freely offer assistance without being overbearing
- Observe, assess, counsel, coach, and evaluate subordinate leaders
- Motivate subordinates to develop themselves
- Arrange training opportunities that help subordinates achieve insight, self-awareness, self-esteem, and effectiveness
- Balance the organization's tasks, goals, and objectives with subordinates' personal and professional needs
- Develop subordinate leaders who demonstrate respect for natural resources and the environment
- Act to expand and enhance subordinates' competence and self-confidence
- Encourage initiative
- Create and contribute to a positive organizational climate
- Build on successes
- Improve weaknesses

## **Building**

Leaders who effectively build:

- Spend time and resources improving the organization
- Foster a healthy ethical climate
- Act to improve the organization's collective performance
- Comply with and support organizational goals
- Encourage people to work effectively with each other
- Promote teamwork and team achievement
- Are examples of team players
- Offer suggestions, but properly execute decisions of the chain of command and NCO (Non-Commission Officer) support channel — even unpopular ones — as if they were their own
- Accept and act on assigned tasks
- Volunteer in useful ways
- Remain positive when the situation becomes confused or changes
- Use the chain of command and NCO support channel to solve problems
- Support equal opportunity
- Prevent sexual harassment
- Participate in organizational activities and functions
- Participate in team tasks and missions without being requested to do so
- Establish an organizational climate that demonstrates respect for the environment and stewards natural resources

## Learning

Leaders who effectively learn:

- Seek self-improvement in weak areas
- Encourage organizational growth
- Envision, adapt, and lead change
- Act to expand and enhance personal and organizational knowledge and capabilities
- Apply lessons learned
- Ask incisive questions
- Envision ways to improve
- Design ways to practice
- Endeavor to broaden their understanding
- Transform experience into knowledge and use it to improve future performance
- Make knowledge accessible to the entire organization
- Exhibit reasonable self-awareness
- Take time off to grow and recreate
- Embrace and manage change; adopt a future orientation
- Use experience to improve themselves and the organization

## Developmental Counseling

Leadership **development** is one of the most important responsibilities. Developing your leadership abilities should be one of your highest priorities.

Leadership development reviews are a means to focus leadership growth. Think of them as AARs with a focus of making leaders more effective. These important reviews are not necessarily limited to internal counseling sessions; leadership feedback mechanisms also apply in operational settings such as the CTCs.

Just as training includes AARs and training strategies to fix shortcomings, leadership development includes performance reviews. These reviews result in agreements between leader and subordinate on a development strategy or plan of action that builds on the subordinate's strengths and establishes goals to improve on weaknesses. Leaders conduct performance reviews and create plans of action during developmental counseling.

Leadership development reviews are a component of the broader concept of developmental counseling. Developmental **counseling** is subordinate-centered communication that produces a plan outlining actions that subordinates must take to achieve individual and organizational goals. During developmental counseling, subordinates are not merely passive listeners; they're actively involved in the process. The Developmental Counseling Form (DA Form 4856-E, which is discussed at the end of this section) provides a useful framework to prepare for almost any type of counseling. Use it to help you mentally organize issues and isolate important, relevant items to cover during counseling sessions.

Developmental counseling is a shared effort. As a leader, you assist your subordinates in identifying strengths and weaknesses and creating plans of action. You then support them throughout the plan implementation and assessment; however, to achieve success, your subordinates must be forthright in their commitment to improve and candid in their own assessment and goal setting.

## The Leader's Responsibilities

Organizational readiness and mission accomplishment depend on every member's ability to perform to established standards. Leaders must mentor their subordinates through teaching, coaching, and counseling. Leaders coach subordinates the same way sports coaches improve their teams: by identifying weaknesses, setting goals, developing and implementing plans of action, and providing oversight and motivation throughout the process. To be effective coaches, leaders must thoroughly understand the strengths, weaknesses, and professional goals of their subordinates.

People often perceive counseling as an adverse action. Effective leaders who counsel properly can change that perception. Leaders conduct counseling to help subordinates become better members of the team, maintain or improve performance, and prepare for the future. Just as no easy answers exist for exactly what to do in all leadership situations, no easy answers exist for exactly what to do in all counseling situations. To conduct effective counseling, however, you should develop a counseling style with the characteristics as follows:

- **Purpose:** Clearly define the purpose of the counseling.
- **Flexibility:** Fit the counseling style to the character of each subordinate and to the relationship desired.
- **Respect:** View subordinates as unique, complex individuals, each with a distinct set of values, beliefs, and attitudes.
- **Communication:** Establish open, two-way communication with subordinates using spoken language, nonverbal actions, gestures, and body language. Effective counselors listen more than they speak.
- **Support:** Encourage subordinates through actions while guiding them through their problems.

## The Leader as a Counselor

Cadet leaders must demonstrate certain qualities to be effective counselors. These qualities include respect for subordinates, self-awareness and cultural awareness, empathy, and credibility.

### Respect for Subordinates

As a leader, you show respect for subordinates when you allow them to take responsibility for their own ideas and actions. Respecting subordinates helps create mutual respect in the leader-subordinate relationship. Mutual respect improves the chances of changing (or maintaining) behavior and achieving goals.

## Self-awareness and Cultural Awareness

As a leader, you must be fully aware of your own values, needs, and biases prior to counseling subordinates. Self-aware leaders are less likely to project their biases onto subordinates. Also, aware leaders are more likely to act consistently with their own values and actions.

Cultural awareness is a mental attribute. As a leader, you need to be aware of the similarities and differences between individuals of different cultural backgrounds and how these factors may influence values, perspectives, and actions. Don't let unfamiliarity with cultural backgrounds hinder you in addressing cultural issues, especially if they generate concerns within the organization or hinder team building. Cultural awareness enhances your ability to display empathy.

## Empathy

Empathy is the action of being understanding of, and sensitive to, the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another person to the point that you can almost feel or experience them yourself. Leaders with empathy can put themselves in their subordinate's shoes; they can see a situation from the other person's perspective.

By understanding the subordinate's position, you can help a subordinate develop a plan of action that fits the subordinate's personality and needs, one that works for the subordinate. If you don't fully comprehend a situation from your subordinate's point of view, you have less credibility and influence and your subordinate is less likely to commit to the agreed upon plan of action.

## Credibility

Leaders achieve credibility by being honest and consistent in their statements and actions. To be credible, use a straightforward style with your subordinates. Behave in a manner that your subordinates respect and trust. You can earn credibility by repeatedly demonstrating your willingness to assist a subordinate and being consistent in what you say and do. If you lack credibility with your subordinates, you'll find it difficult to influence them.

## Leader Counseling Skills

One challenging aspect of counseling is selecting the proper approach to a specific situation. To counsel effectively, the technique you use must fit the situation, your capabilities, and your subordinate's expectations. In some cases, you may only need to give information or listen. A subordinate's improvement may call for just a brief word of praise. Other situations may require structured counseling followed by definite actions.

All leaders should seek to develop and improve their own counseling abilities. You can improve your counseling techniques by studying human behavior, learning the kinds of problems that affect your subordinates, and developing your interpersonal skills. The

techniques needed to provide effective counseling will vary from person to person and session to session; however, general skills that you'll need in almost every situation include active listening, responding, and questioning.

## Active Listening

During counseling, you must actively listen to your subordinate. When you're actively listening, you communicate verbally and non-verbally that you've received the subordinate's message. To fully understand a subordinate's message, you must listen to the words and observe the subordinate's manners. Elements of active listening you should use include:

- **Eye contact:** Maintaining eye contact without staring helps show sincere interest. Occasional breaks of contact are normal and acceptable. Subordinates may perceive excessive breaks of eye contact, paper shuffling, and clock-watching as a lack of interest or concern. These are guidelines only. Based on cultural background, participants in a particular counseling session may have different ideas about what proper eye contact is.
- **Body posture:** Being relaxed and comfortable will help put the subordinate at ease. However, a too-relaxed position or slouching may be interpreted as a lack of interest.
- **Head nods:** Occasionally nodding your head shows you're paying attention and encourages the subordinate to continue.
- **Facial expression:** Keep your facial expressions natural and relaxed. A blank look or fixed expression may disturb the subordinate. Smiling too much or frowning may discourage the subordinate from continuing.
- **Verbal expressions:** Refrain from talking too much and avoid interrupting. Let the subordinate do the talking while keeping the discussion on the counseling subject. Speaking only when necessary reinforces the importance of what the subordinate is saying and encourages the subordinate to continue. Silence can also do this, but be careful. Occasional silence may indicate to the subordinate that it's okay to continue talking, but a long silence can sometimes be distracting and make the subordinate feel uncomfortable.



Active listening also means listening thoughtfully and deliberately to the way a subordinate says things. Stay alert for common themes. A subordinate's opening and closing statements as well as recurring references may indicate the subordinate's priorities. Inconsistencies and gaps may indicate a subordinate's avoidance of the real issue. This confusion and uncertainty may suggest additional questions.

While listening pay attention to the subordinate's gestures. These actions complete the total message. By watching the subordinate's actions, you can "see" the feelings behind the words. Not all actions are proof of a subordinate's feelings, but they should be taken into consideration. Note differences between what the subordinate says and does. Nonverbal indicators of a subordinate's attitude include:

- Boredom: Drumming on the table, doodling, clicking a ball-point pen, or resting the head in the palm of the hand.
- Self-confidence: Standing tall, leaning back with hands behind the head, and maintaining steady eye contact.
- Defensiveness: Pushing deeply into a chair, glaring at the leader, and making sarcastic comments as well as crossing or folding arms in front of the chest.
- Frustration: Rubbing eyes, pulling on an ear, taking short breaths, wringing the hands, or frequently changing total body position.
- Interest, friendliness, and openness: Moving toward the leader while sitting.
- Openness or anxiety: Sitting on the edge of the chair with arms uncrossed and hands open.

Consider these indicators carefully. Although each indicator may show something about the subordinate, don't assume a particular behavior absolutely means something. Ask the subordinate about the indicator so you can better understand the behavior and allow the subordinate to take responsibility for it.

## Responding

Responding skills follow up on active listening skills. A leader responds to communicate that the leader understands the subordinate. From time to time, check your understanding: clarify and confirm what has been said. Respond to subordinates both verbally and nonverbally. Verbal responses consist of summarizing, interpreting, and clarifying the subordinate's message. Nonverbal responses include eye contact and occasional gestures such as a head nod.

## Questioning

Although questioning is a necessary skill, you must use it with caution. Too many questions can aggravate the power differential between a leader and a subordinate and place the subordinate in a passive mode. The subordinate may also react to excessive questioning as an intrusion of privacy and become defensive. During a leadership

development review, ask questions to obtain information or to get the subordinate to think about a particular situation. Generally, the questions should be open-ended so as to evoke more than a yes or no answer. Well-posed questions may help to verify understanding, encourage further explanation, or help the subordinate move through the stages of the counseling session.

## Counseling Errors

Effective leaders avoid common counseling mistakes. Dominating the counseling by talking too much, giving unnecessary or inappropriate "advice," not truly listening, and projecting personal likes, dislikes, biases, and prejudices all interfere with effective counseling. You should also avoid other common mistakes such as rash judgments, stereotypes, loss of emotional control, and inflexible methods of counseling and improper follow-up. To improve your counseling skills, refer to the following guidelines.

- Determine the subordinate's role in the situation and what the subordinate has done to resolve the problem or improve performance.
- Draw conclusions based on more than the subordinate's statement.
- Try to understand what the subordinate says and feels; listen to what the subordinate says and how the subordinate says it.
- Show empathy when discussing the problem.
- When asking questions, be sure that you need the information.
- Keep the conversation open-ended; avoid interrupting.
- Give the subordinate your full attention.
- Be receptive to the subordinate's feelings without feeling responsible to save the subordinate from hurting.
- Encourage the subordinate to take the initiative and to say what the subordinate wants to say.
- Avoid interrogating.
- Keep your personal experiences out of the counseling session unless you believe your experiences will really help.
- Listen more; talk less.
- Remain objective.
- Avoid confirming a subordinate's prejudices.
- Help the subordinate help himself.
- Know what information to keep confidential and what to present to the chain of command.

## The Leader's Limitations

Leaders can't help everyone in every situation. Even professional counselors can't provide all the help that a person might need. You must recognize your limitations and, when the situation calls for it, refer a subordinate to a person or agency more qualified to help.

## Types of Developmental Counseling

You can often categorize developmental counseling based on the topic of the session. The two major categories of counseling are event-oriented and performance/professional growth.

### Event-oriented Counseling

Event-oriented counseling involves a specific event or situation. It may precede events, such as going to a promotion board or attending a school; or it may follow events, such as a noteworthy duty performance, a problem with performance or mission accomplishment, or a personal problem. Examples of event-oriented counseling include, but are not limited to:

- Specific instances of superior or substandard performance
- Reception and integration counseling
- Crisis counseling
- Referral counseling
- Promotion counseling
- Adverse separation counseling

### Counseling for Specific Instances

Sometimes counseling is tied to specific instances of superior or substandard duty performance. You tell your subordinate whether or not the performance met the standard and what the subordinate did right or wrong. The key to successful counseling for specific performance is to conduct it as close to the event as possible.

Many leaders focus counseling for specific instances on poor performance and miss, or at least fail to acknowledge, excellent performance. You should counsel subordinates for specific examples of superior as well as substandard duty performance. To measure your own performance and counseling emphasis, you can note how often you document counseling for superior versus substandard performance.

You should counsel subordinates who don't meet the standard. If the subordinate's performance is unsatisfactory because of a lack of knowledge or ability, you and the subordinate should develop a plan to improve the subordinate's skills. Corrective training may be required at times to ensure the subordinate knows and achieves the standard. After the subordinate can achieve the standard, you should end the corrective training.

When counseling a subordinate for a specific performance, take the following actions:

- Tell the subordinate the purpose of the counseling, what was expected, and how the subordinate failed to meet the standard.
- Address the specific unacceptable behavior or action, not the person's character.
- Tell the subordinate the effect of the behavior, action, or performance on the rest of the organization.

- Actively listen to the subordinate's response.
  - Remain unemotional.
  - Teach the subordinate how to meet the standard.
  - Be prepared to do some personal counseling because a failure to meet the standard may be related to or the result of an unresolved personal problem.
- Identify your responsibilities in implementing the plan of action; continue to assess and follow up on the subordinate's progress.
  - Adjust plan of action as necessary.

### **Reception and Integration Counseling**

As the leader, you must counsel new team members. This reception and integration counseling serves two purposes: it identifies and helps fix any problems or concerns that new members may have, and it lets them know the standards and how they fit into the team. It clarifies job titles and sends the message that the chain of command cares. Reception and integration counseling should begin immediately upon arrival so new team members can quickly become integrated into the organization.

### **Crisis Counseling**

You may conduct crisis counseling to get a subordinate through the initial shock after receiving negative news, such as notification of the death of a loved one. You may assist the subordinate by listening and, as appropriate, providing assistance. Assistance may include referring the subordinate to a **support** activity or coordinating external agency support. Crisis counseling focuses on the subordinate's immediate, short-term needs.

### **Referral Counseling**

Referral counseling helps subordinates work through a personal situation and may or may not follow crisis counseling. Referral counseling may also act as preventative counseling before the situation becomes a problem.

### **Promotion Counseling**

Leaders conduct promotion counseling for all who are eligible for advancement.

### **Adverse Separation Counseling**

Adverse separation counseling may involve informing the Cadet of the administrative actions available to the commander in the event substandard performance continues and of the consequences associated with those administrative actions.

Developmental counseling may not apply when an individual has engaged in more serious acts of misconduct. In those situations, you should refer the matter to the commander. When the leader's rehabilitative efforts fail, counseling with a view towards separation fills an administrative prerequisite to many administrative discharges and serves as a final warning to the soldier to improve performance or face discharge. In

many situations, it may be beneficial to involve the chain of command as soon as you determine that adverse separation counseling might be required. A unit first sergeant or commander should be the person who informs the Cadet of the notification requirements.

## Performance and Professional Growth Counseling

Performance and Professional Growth counseling are two counseling types with which you should be familiar. This section discusses both of these.

### Performance Counseling

During performance counseling, you conduct an **evaluation**, a review of a subordinate's duty performance during a certain period. You and the subordinate jointly establish performance objectives and standards for the next period. Rather than dwelling on the past, you should focus the session on the subordinate's strengths, areas needing improvement, and potential.

As a leader, you must ensure you've tied your expectations to performance objectives and appropriate standards. You must establish standards that your subordinates can work towards and must teach them how to achieve the standards if they are to develop.

### Professional Growth Counseling

Professional growth counseling includes planning for the accomplishment of individual and professional goals. You conduct this counseling to assist subordinates in achieving organizational and individual goals. During the counseling, you and your subordinate conduct a review to identify and discuss the subordinate's strengths and weaknesses and create a plan of action to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This counseling isn't normally event-driven.

As part of professional growth counseling, you may choose to discuss and develop a "pathway to success" with the subordinate. This future-oriented counseling establishes short and long-term goals and objectives. Every person's needs are different, and leaders must apply specific courses of action tailored to each individual.

A counseling session that focuses on resolving a problem may also address improving performance. A session focused on performance may also include a discussion on opportunities for advancement.

## Nondirective Counseling Approach

The nondirective approach is preferred for most counseling sessions. Leaders use their experienced insight and judgment to assist subordinates in developing solutions. You should partially structure this type of counseling by telling the subordinate about the counseling process and explaining what you expect.

During the counseling session, listen rather than make decisions or give advice. Clarify what's said. Cause the subordinate to bring out important points, so as to better

understand the situation. When appropriate, summarize the discussion. Avoid providing solutions or rendering opinions; instead, maintain a focus on individual and organizational goals and objectives. Ensure the subordinate's plan of action supports those goals and objectives.

The directive approach works best to correct simple problems, make on-the-spot corrections, and correct aspects of duty performance. The leader using the directive style does most of the talking and tells the subordinate what to do and when to do it. In contrast to the nondirective approach, the leader directs a course of action for the subordinate.

Choose this approach when time is short, when you alone know what to do, or if a subordinate has limited problem-solving skills. It's also appropriate when a subordinate needs guidance, is immature, or is insecure.

## **Combined Counseling Approach**

In the combined approach, the leader uses techniques from both the directive and nondirective approaches, adjusting them to articulate what's best for the subordinate. The combined approach emphasizes the subordinate's planning and decision making.

With your assistance, the subordinate develops his or her own plan of action. You should listen, suggest possible courses, and help analyze each possible solution to determine its good and bad points. You should then help the subordinate fully understand all aspects of the situation and encourage the subordinate to decide which solution is best.

## **Counseling Techniques**

As a leader, you may select from a variety of techniques when counseling subordinates.

These counseling techniques, when appropriately used, cause subordinates to do things or improve upon their performance. You can use these methods during scheduled counseling sessions or while simply coaching a subordinate. Counseling techniques you can use during the nondirective or combined approaches include:

- Suggesting alternatives. Discuss alternative actions that the subordinate may take, but both you and the subordinate decide which course of action is most appropriate.
- Recommending. Recommend one course of action, but leave the decision to accept the recommended action to the subordinate.
- Persuading. Persuade the subordinate that a given course of action is best, but leave the decision to the subordinate. Successful persuasion depends on the leader's credibility, the subordinate's willingness to listen, and their mutual trust.
- Advising. Advise the subordinate that a given course of action is best. This is the strongest form of influence not involving a command.

Some techniques you can use during the directive approach to counseling include:

- Corrective training. Teach and assist the subordinate in attaining and maintaining the standards. The subordinate completes corrective training when they attain the standard.
- Commanding. Order the subordinate to take a given course of action in clear, exact words. The subordinate understands that he has been given a command and will face the consequences for failing to carry it out.

## The Counseling Process

Effective leaders use the counseling process. It consists of four stages: identify the need for counseling, prepare for counseling, conduct counseling, and follow up.

### Identify the Need for Counseling

Quite often organizational policies, such as counseling associated with an evaluation or counseling required by the command, focus a counseling session. You may, however, conduct developmental counseling whenever the need arises for focused, two-way communication aimed at subordinate development. Developing subordinates consists of observing the subordinate's performance, comparing it to the standard, and then providing feedback to the subordinate in the form of counseling.

### Prepare for Counseling

Successful counseling requires preparation. To prepare for counseling, do the following:

- Select a suitable place.
- Schedule the time.
- Notify the subordinate well in advance.
- Organize information.
- Outline the counseling session components.
- Plan your counseling strategy.
- Establish the right atmosphere.



*Courtesy of Army JROTC*

## **Select a Suitable Place**

Schedule counseling in an environment that minimizes interruptions and is free from distracting sights and sounds.

## **Schedule the Time**

When possible, counsel a subordinate during the duty day. Counseling after duty hours may be rushed or perceived as unfavorable. The length of time required for counseling depends on the complexity of the issue. Generally, a counseling session should last less than an hour. If you need more time, schedule a second session. Additionally, select a time free from competition with other activities and consider what has been planned after the counseling session. Important events can distract a subordinate from concentrating on the counseling.

## **Notify the Subordinate Well in Advance**

For a counseling session to be a subordinate-centered, two-person effort, the subordinate must have time to prepare for it. The subordinate should know why, where, and when the counseling will take place. Counseling following a specific event should happen as close to the event as possible; however, for performance or professional development counseling, subordinates may need a week or more to prepare or review specific products, such as support forms or counseling records.

## **Organize Information**

Solid preparation is essential to effective counseling. Review all pertinent information.

This includes the purpose of the counseling, facts and observations about the subordinate, identification of possible problems, main points of discussion, and the development of a plan of action. Focus on specific and objective behaviors that the subordinate must maintain or improve as well as a plan of action with clear, obtainable goals.

## **Outline the Components of the Counseling Session**

Using the information obtained, determine what to discuss during the counseling session. Note what prompted the counseling, what you aim to achieve, and what your role as a counselor is. Identify possible comments or questions to help you keep the counseling session subordinate-centered and help the subordinate progress through its stages. Although you never know what a subordinate will say or do during counseling, a written outline helps organize the session and enhances the chance of positive results.

## **Plan Counseling Strategy**

As many approaches to counseling exist as there are leaders. The directive, nondirective, and combined approaches to counseling were addressed earlier. Use a strategy that suits your subordinates and the situation.

## **Establish the Right Atmosphere**

The right atmosphere promotes two-way communication between a leader and subordinate. To establish a relaxed atmosphere, you may offer the subordinate a seat or a something to drink. You may want to sit in a chair facing the subordinate since a desk can act as a barrier.

Some situations make an informal atmosphere inappropriate. For example, during counseling to correct substandard performance, you may direct the subordinate to remain standing while you remain seated behind a desk. This formal atmosphere, normally used to give specific guidance, reinforces the leader's rank, position in the chain of command, and authority.

## **Conduct the Counseling Session**

Be flexible when conducting a counseling session. Often counseling for a specific incident occurs spontaneously as leaders encounter subordinates in their daily activities. Good leaders take advantage of naturally occurring events to provide subordinates with feedback.

Even when you haven't prepared for formal counseling, you should address the four basic components of a counseling session. Their purpose is to guide effective counseling rather than mandate a series of rigid steps. Counseling sessions consist of:

- Opening the session
- Developing the plan of action
- Recording and closing the session
- Follow-up

### **Open the Session**

In the session opening, state the purpose of the session and establish a subordinate-centered setting. Establish the preferred setting early in the session by inviting the subordinate to speak. The best way to open a counseling session is to clearly state its purpose. For example, an appropriate purpose statement might be: "The purpose of this counseling is to discuss your duty performance over the past month and to create a plan to enhance performance and attain performance goals." If applicable, start the counseling session by reviewing the status of the previous plan of action.

You and the subordinate should attempt to develop a mutual understanding of the issues. You can best develop this by letting the subordinate do most of the talking. Use active listening; respond, and question without dominating the conversation. Aim to help the subordinate better understand the subject of the counseling, for example, duty performance, a problem situation and its impact, or potential areas for growth.

Both you and the subordinate should provide examples or cite specific observations to reduce the perception that either is unnecessarily biased or judgmental; however, when the issue is substandard performance, you should provide the standard. The conversation, which should be two-way, then addresses what the subordinate needs to do to meet the standard. It's important that you define the issue as substandard performance and don't allow the subordinate to define the issue as an unreasonable standard, unless you consider the standard negotiable or are willing to alter the conditions under which the subordinate is being counseled.

## Develop a Plan of Action

A plan of action identifies a method for achieving a desired result. It specifies what the subordinate must do to reach the goals set during dimensions that were discussed earlier: it should show the subordinate how to modify or maintain his behavior. It should avoid vague intentions such as "Next month I want you to improve your land navigation skills." The plan must use concrete and direct terms. For example, you might say: "Next week you'll attend the map reading class with Cadets from North Central High School's drill team. After the class, Cadet 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Dixon will coach you through the land navigation course. He will help you develop your skill with the compass. I will observe you going through the course with Cadet 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Dixon, and then I will talk to you again and determine where and if you still feel the plan of action sets the stage for successful development."

## Record and Close the Session

Although requirements to record counseling sessions vary, a leader always benefits by documenting the main points of a counseling session. Documentation serves as a reference to the agreed upon plan of action and the subordinate's accomplishments, improvements, personal preferences, or problems. A complete record of counseling aids in making recommendations for professional development, schools, promotions, and evaluation reports.

To close the session, summarize its key points and ask if the subordinate understands the plan of action. Invite the subordinate to review the plan of action and what's necessary to support the successful implementation of the plan of action. These may include providing the subordinate with resources and time, periodically assessing the plan, and following through on referrals. Schedule any future meetings, at least tentatively, before dismissing the subordinate.

## Follow-Up

The counseling process doesn't end with the counseling session. It continues through implementation of the plan of action and evaluation of results. After counseling, you must support subordinates as they implement their plans of action. Support may include teaching, coaching, or providing time and resources. You must observe and assess this process and possibly modify the plan to meet its goals. Appropriate measures after counseling include follow-up counseling, making referrals, informing the chain of

command, and taking corrective measures.

### **Assess the Plan of Action**

The purpose of counseling is to develop subordinates who are better able to achieve personal, professional, and organizational goals. During the assessment, review the plan of action with the subordinate to determine if the desired results were achieved. You and the subordinate should determine the date for this assessment during the initial counseling session. The assessment of the plan of action provides useful information for future follow-up counseling sessions.

### **Conclusion**

This lesson covered performance indicators as well as developmental counseling. Developmental counseling is subordinate-centered communication that outlines actions necessary for subordinates to achieve individual and organizational goals and objectives. It can be either event-oriented, or focused on personal and professional development.



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### **Lesson Check-up**

1. What are the values upon which you base your performance review?
2. Choose two "planning and preparing" actions on which performance reviews are based and discuss them.
3. What are the different skills needed in oral and written communication?
4. What are the characteristics upon which you should develop your counseling style?

