

Lesson 2

Performance Indicators



Key Terms

communication
counseling
development
evaluation
flexibility
purpose
support

What You Will Learn to Do

- Outline a developmental counseling plan

Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, 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
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Chapter 4

Introduction

This lesson focuses on and lists the performance indicators used to assess the leadership of yourself and others based on the leadership dimensions. Use the performance indicators as assessment and counseling tools. When you prepare an evaluation, make comments that apply specifically to the individual you are evaluating. Do not limit yourself to the general indicators listed here. Be specific; be precise; be objective; be fair.

Performance Indicators

This section is organized around the leadership dimensions shown in Figure 4.2.1.

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.

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

Figure 4.2.1: Leadership dimensions.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

¹The mental attributes of an Army leader are will, self-discipline, initiative, judgment, self-confidence, intelligence, and cultural awareness.

²The physical attributes of an Army leader are health fitness, physical fitness, and military and professional bearing.

³The emotional attributes of an Army leader are self-control, balance, and stability.

⁴The interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical skills are different for direct, organizational, and strategic leaders.

⁵The influencing, operating, and improving actions are different for direct, organizational, and strategic leaders.

Loyalty

Leaders who demonstrate loyalty:

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

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.**



Courtesy of Digital Vision, Ltd.

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.

Physical Attributes

Leaders who demonstrate desirable physical attributes:

- Maintain an appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing.
- Present a neat and professional appearance (see Figure 4.2.2).
- Meet established norms of personal hygiene, grooming, and cleanliness.
- Maintain Army height and weight standards.
- Render appropriate military and civilian courtesies.



Courtesy of CACI.

Key Note Term

flexibility – adaptable to change



Figure 4.2.2: Pride in your appearance is a desirable attribute.

Courtesy of CACI.

- **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

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 (see Figure 4.2.3).**
- **Readily interact with others.**
- **Earn trust and respect.**

Figure 4.2.3: Coaching is one way to demonstrate interpersonal skills.

Courtesy of Pete Saloutas/Corbis Images.



- 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 and 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.

Key Note Term

support – to encourage or help

METT-TC

What does METT-TC mean?

- M—mission
- E—Enemy
- T—Terrain
- T—Time
- T—Troops
- C—Civilians

- **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.**

Actions

When assessing action performance, look for those qualities that include influencing, communicating (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.**
- **Motivate subordinates to accomplish tasks and missions.**
- **Set the example by demonstrating enthusiasm for and, if necessary, methods for 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.**

Key Note Term

communication – the sharing of information

- Provide a team vision for the future.
- Shape the organizational climate by setting, sustaining, and ensuring a values-based environment.

Communicating

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 (see Figure 4.2.4).

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 nonverbal feedback.
- Keep conversations on track.

Figure 4.2.4: Good communication skills help you get your message across to others.

Courtesy of CACI.



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.

Note

DA Pam 600-67 discusses techniques for writing effectively.

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 the 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 (see Figure 4.2.5).
- 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.

Figure 4.2.5: Give information as you get it to keep everyone in the loop.

Courtesy of CACI.



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 commanders 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 positioning 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 “ $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{2}{3}$ Rule”; give subordinates time to plan $\frac{1}{3}$ time for notice and $\frac{2}{3}$ time for 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 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the factors of METT-TC, and the military aspects of terrain (OCOKA).**

Another Acronym

What does OCOKA mean?

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

- 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 they 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 and suspense's; 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 oversupervising.
- Judge results based on standards.
- Sort out important actual and potential problems.
- Conduct and facilitate AARs; identify lessons.

Key Note Term

evaluation – to appraise or find the value of

- 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.
- 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 (see Figure 4.2.6).
- Observe, assess, counsel, coach, and evaluate subordinate leaders.
- Motivate subordinates to develop themselves.

Key Note Term

counseling – an interchange of opinions, perceptions, and ideas



Figure 4.2.6: To err is human.

Courtesy of Jon Feingersh/Corbis Images.

- 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.
- Exemplify good team players.
- Offer suggestions, but properly execute decisions of the chain of command and NCO (Noncommissioned Officer) support channel—even unpopular ones—as if they were their own.
- Accept and act on assigned tasks.
- Volunteer in useful ways (see Figure 4.2.7).

Figure 4.2.7: Volunteer to help make your community strong.

Courtesy of Ariel Skelley/Corbis Images.



- 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.

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.

Key Note Term

development – to get gradually stronger and better; to make known in detail

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.

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:

- **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.

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.

All leaders should seek to develop and improve their own counseling abilities. 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 nonverbally 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 the following:

- **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 expressions.** 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 to subordinates, pay attention to their gestures. These actions complete the total message. By watching a 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 the following:

- **Boredom.** Drumming on the table, doodling, clicking a ballpoint 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 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.

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.**

Select a Suitable Place

Schedule counseling in an environment that minimizes interruptions and is free from distracting sights and sounds as shown in Figure 4.2.8.

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.

Figure 4.2.8: Find a quiet and comfortable place for counseling.

Courtesy of Tom Stewart/Corbis Images.



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.

Key Note Term

purpose – a desirable end or aim

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 something to drink. You may want to sit in a chair facing the subordinate because 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 the session**
- **Closing the session**

Ideally, a counseling session results in a subordinate's commitment to a plan of action. Assessment of the plan of action becomes the starting point for follow-up counseling.

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 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 sub-standard 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

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 1st 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 1st Lieutenant Dixon, and then I will talk to you again and determine if your plan of action sets the stage for successful development.

Record 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.

Close the Session

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 is expected of you, the leader. With the subordinate, establish any follow-up measures 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.

In the next lesson, you will be introduced to the valuable skill of negotiating. Through negotiation, you can work with others to accomplish just about any task.

Lesson Review

- 1. What are the values on 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 on which you should develop your counseling style?**