

## Appendix C

# Developmental Counseling

C-1. Subordinate leadership development is one of the most important responsibilities of every Army leader. Developing the leaders who will come after you should be one of your highest priorities. Your legacy and the Army's future rests on the shoulders of those you prepare for greater responsibility.

C-2. Leadership development reviews are a means to focus the growing of tomorrow's leaders. Think of them as AARs with a focus of making leaders more effective every day. These important reviews are not necessarily limited to internal counseling sessions; leadership feedback mechanisms also apply in operational settings such as the CTCs.

C-3. 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.

C-4. 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 appendix) 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.

C-5. Developmental counseling is a shared effort. As a leader, you assist your subordinates in identifying strengths and weaknesses and creating plans of action. Then you 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

C-6. Organizational readiness and mission accomplishment depend on every member's ability to perform to established standards. Supervisors 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. (Chapter 5 discusses coaching.)

C-7. Army leaders evaluate DA civilians using procedures prescribed under the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES). Although TAPES doesn't address developmental counseling, you can use DA Form 4856-E to counsel DA civilians concerning professional growth and career goals. DA Form 4856-E is not appropriate for documenting counseling concerning DA civilian misconduct or poor performance. The servicing civilian personnel office can provide guidance for such situations.

C-8. Soldiers and DA civilians often perceive counseling as an adverse action. Effective leaders

who counsel properly can change that perception. Army 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. However, to conduct effective counseling, you should develop a counseling style with the characteristics listed in Figure C-1.

- **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.

**Figure C-1. Characteristics of Effective Counseling**

## THE LEADER AS A COUNSELOR

C-9. Army 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

C-10. As an Army 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

C-11. As an Army 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.

C-12. Cultural awareness, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a mental attribute. As an Army 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

C-13. 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

C-14. 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

C-15. 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.

C-16. 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

C-17. 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 consider 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 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.

C-18. 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.

C-19. 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.

C-20. 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

C-21. 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

C-22. 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

C-23. 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, inflexible methods of counseling and improper follow-up. To improve your counseling skills, follow the guidelines in Figure C-2.

- 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.

**Figure C-2. Guidelines to Improve Counseling**

### **THE LEADER'S LIMITATIONS**

C-24. Army 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.

C-25. These agencies Figure C-3 lists can help you and your people resolve problems. Although it's generally in an individual's best interest to seek help first from their first-line leaders, leaders must always respect an individual's right to contact most of these agencies on their own.

Appendix C

Activity	Description
Adjutant General	Provides personnel and administrative services support such as orders, ID cards, retirement assistance, deferments, and in- and out-processing.
American Red Cross	Provides communications support between soldiers and families and assistance during or after emergency or compassionate situations.
Army Community Service	Assists military families through their information and referral services, budget and indebtedness counseling, household item loan closet, information on other military posts, and welcome packets for new arrivals.
Army Substance Abuse Program	Provides alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control programs for DA civilians.
Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS)	Serves as a liaison between upper levels of command on the installation and single soldiers.
Army Education Center	Provides services for continuing education and individual learning services support.
Army Emergency Relief	Provides financial assistance and personal budget counseling; coordinates student loans through Army Emergency Relief education loan programs.
Career Counselor	Explains reenlistment options and provides current information on prerequisites for reenlistment and selective reenlistment bonuses.
Chaplain	Provides spiritual and humanitarian counseling to soldiers and DA civilians.
Claims Section, SJA	Handles claims for and against the government, most often those for the loss and damage of household goods.
Legal Assistance Office	Provides legal information or assistance on matters of contracts, citizenship, adoption, marital problems, taxes, wills, and powers of attorney.
Community Counseling Center	Provides alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control programs for soldiers.
Community Health Nurse	Provides preventive health care services.
Community Mental Health Service	Provides assistance and counseling for mental health problems.
Employee Assistance Program	Provides health nurse, mental health service, and social work services for DA civilians.
Equal Opportunity Staff Office and Equal Employment Opportunity Office	Provides assistance for matters involving discrimination in race, color, national origin, gender, and religion. Provides information on procedures for initiating complaints and resolving complaints informally.
Family Advocacy Officer	Coordinates programs supporting children and families including abuse and neglect investigation, counseling, and educational programs.
Finance and Accounting Office	Handles inquiries for pay, allowances, and allotments.
Housing Referral Office	Provides assistance with housing on and off post.
Inspector General	Renders assistance to soldiers and DA civilians. Corrects injustices affecting individuals and eliminates conditions determined to be detrimental to the efficiency, economy, morale, and reputation of the Army. Investigates matters involving fraud, waste, and abuse.
Social Work Office	Provides services dealing with social problems to include crisis intervention, family therapy, marital counseling, and parent or child management assistance.
Transition Office	Provides assistance and information on separation from the Army.

**Figure C-3. Support Activities**

