

## **Appendix B**

# **Counseling**

B-1. Counseling is the process used by leaders to review with a subordinate the subordinate's demonstrated performance and potential (Part Three, Chapter 8).

B-2. Counseling is one of the most important leadership development responsibilities for Army leaders. The Army's future and the legacy of today's Army leaders rests on the shoulders of those they help prepare for greater responsibility.

### **TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING**

B-3. Developmental counseling is categorized by the purpose of the session. The three major categories of developmental counseling are—

- Event counseling.
- Performance counseling.
- Professional growth counseling.

### **EVENT COUNSELING**

B-4. Event-oriented counseling involves a specific event or situation. It may precede events such as appearing before a promotion board or attending training. It can also follow events such as noteworthy duty performance, a problem with performance or mission accomplishment, or a personal issue. Examples of event-oriented counseling include—

- Instances of superior or substandard performance.
- Reception and integration counseling.
- Crisis counseling.
- Referral counseling.
- Promotion counseling.
- Separation counseling.

### **Counseling for Specific Instances**

B-5. Sometimes counseling is tied to specific instances of superior or substandard duty performance. The leader uses the counseling session to convey to the subordinate whether or not the performance met the standard and what the subordinate did right or wrong. Successful counseling for specific performance occurs as close to the event as possible. Leaders should counsel subordinates for exceptional as well as substandard duty performance. The key is to strike a balance between the two. To maintain an appropriate balance, leaders keep track of counseling for exceptional versus substandard performance.

B-6. Although good leaders attempt to balance their counseling emphasis, leaders should always counsel subordinates who do not meet the standard. If the Soldier or civilian's performance is unsatisfactory because of a lack of knowledge or ability, leader and subordinate can develop a plan for improvement. Corrective training helps ensure that the subordinate knows and consistently achieves the standard.

B-7. When counseling a subordinate for a specific performance, take the following actions:

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

- Actively listen to the subordinate's response.
- Remain neutral.
- Teach the subordinate how to meet the standard.
- Be prepared to do some personal counseling, since a failure to meet the standard may be related to or be the result of an unresolved personal problem.
- Explain to the subordinate how an individual development plan will improve performance and identify specific responsibilities in implementing the plan. Continue to assess and follow up on the subordinate's progress. Adjust the plan as necessary.

### **Reception and Integration Counseling**

B-8. Caring and empathic Army leaders should counsel all new team members when they join the organization. Reception and integration counseling serves two important purposes:

- It identifies and helps alleviate any problems or concerns that new members may have, including any issues resulting from the new duty assignment.
- It familiarizes new team members with the organizational standards and how they fit into the team. It clarifies roles and assignments and sends the message that the chain of command cares.

B-9. Reception and integration counseling should among others include the following discussion points:

- Chain of command familiarization.
- Organizational standards.
- Security and safety issues.
- Noncommissioned officer (NCO) support channel (who is in it and how it is used).
- On- and off-duty conduct.
- Personnel/personal affairs/initial and special clothing issue.
- Organizational history, structure, and mission.
- Soldier programs within the organization, such as Soldier of the Month/Quarter/Year, and educational and training opportunities.
- Off limits and danger areas.
- Functions and locations of support activities.
- On- and off-post recreational, educational, cultural, and historical opportunities.
- Foreign nation or host nation orientation.
- Other areas the individual should be aware of as determined by the leader.

### **Crisis Counseling**

B-10. Crisis counseling includes getting a Soldier or employee through a period of shock after receiving negative news, such as the notification of the death of a loved one. It focuses on the subordinate's immediate short-term needs. Leaders may assist the subordinate by listening and providing appropriate assistance. Assisting can also mean referring the subordinate to a support activity or coordinating for external agency support, such as obtaining emergency funding for a flight ticket or putting them in contact with a chaplain.

### **Referral Counseling**

B-11. Referral counseling helps subordinates work through a personal situation. It may or may not follow crisis counseling. Referral counseling aims at preventing a problem from becoming unmanageable if the empathic Army leader succeeds in identifying the problem in time and involves appropriate resources, such as Army Community Services, a chaplain, or an alcohol and drug counselor. (Figure B-4 lists support activities.)

## Promotion Counseling

B-12. Army leaders must conduct promotion counseling for all specialists and sergeants who are eligible for advancement without waivers but not recommended for promotion to the next higher grade. Army regulations require that Soldiers within this category receive initial (event-oriented) counseling when they attain full promotion eligibility and then periodic (performance/personal growth) counseling thereafter.

## Adverse Separation Counseling

B-13. Adverse separation counseling may involve informing the Soldier of the administrative actions available to the commander in the event substandard performance continues and of the consequences associated with those administrative actions (see AR 635-200).

B-14. Developmental counseling may not apply when an individual has engaged in serious acts of misconduct. In those situations, leaders should refer the matter to the commander and the servicing staff judge advocate. When rehabilitative efforts fail, counseling with a view towards separation is required. It is an administrative prerequisite to many administrative discharges, while sending a final warning to the Soldier: improve performance or face discharge. In many situations, it is advisable to involve the chain of command as soon as it is determined that adverse separation counseling might be required. A unit first sergeant or the commander should inform the Soldier of the notification requirements outlined in AR 635-200.

## PERFORMANCE COUNSELING

B-15. During performance counseling, leaders conduct a review of a subordinate's duty performance over a certain period. Simultaneously, leader and subordinate jointly establish performance objectives and standards for the next period. Rather than dwelling on the past, focus on the future: the subordinate's strengths, areas of improvement, and potential.

B-16. Performance counseling is required under the officer, NCO, and Army civilian evaluation reporting systems. The officer evaluation report (OER) (DA Form 67-9) process requires periodic performance counseling as part of the OER Support Form requirements. Mandatory, face-to-face performance counseling between the rater and the rated NCO is required under the noncommissioned officer evaluation reporting system. (See AR 623-3). Performance evaluation for civilian employees also includes both of these requirements.

B-17. Counseling at the beginning of and during the evaluation period ensures the subordinate's personal involvement in the evaluation process. Performance counseling communicates standards and is an opportunity for leaders to establish and clarify the expected values, attributes, and competencies. The OER support form's coverage of leader attributes and competencies is an excellent tool for leader performance counseling. For lieutenants and junior warrant officers, the major performance objectives on the OER Support Form (DA Form 67-9-1) are used as the basis for determining the developmental tasks on the Developmental Support Form (DA Form 67-9-1A). Quarterly face-to-face performance and developmental counseling is required for these junior officers as outlined in AR 623-3. Army leaders ensure that performance objectives and standards are focused and tied to the organization's objectives and the individual's professional development. They should also echo the objectives on the leader's support form as a team member's performance contributes to mission accomplishment.

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COUNSELING

B-18. Professional growth counseling includes planning for the accomplishment of individual and professional goals. During the counseling, leader and subordinate conduct a review to identify and discuss the subordinate's strengths and weaknesses and to create an individual development plan that builds upon those strengths and compensates for (or eliminates) weaknesses.

B-19. As part of professional growth counseling, leader and subordinate may choose to develop a "pathway to success" with short- and long-term goals and objectives. The discussion of the pathway includes opportunities for civilian or military schooling, future duty assignments, special programs, and

reenlistment options. An individual development plan is a requirement for all Soldiers and Army civilians as every person's needs and interests are different.

B-20. Career field counseling is required for lieutenants and captains before they are considered for promotion to major. Raters and senior raters in conjunction with the rated officer need to determine where the officer's skills and talents best fit the needs of the Army. The rated officer's preference and abilities (both performance and intellectual) must be considered. The rater and senior rater should discuss career field designation with the officer prior to making a recommendation on the rated officer's OER.

B-21. While these categories can help organize and focus counseling sessions, they should not be viewed as separate or exhaustive. For example, a counseling session that focuses on resolving a problem may also address improving duty performance. A session focused on performance often includes a discussion on opportunities for professional growth. Regardless of the topic of the counseling session, leaders should follow a basic format to prepare for and conduct it. The Developmental Counseling Form, DA Form 4856, discussed at the end of this appendix provides a useful framework to prepare for almost any type of counseling. Use it to help mentally organize the relevant issues to cover during counseling sessions.

## THE LEADER AS A COUNSELOR

B-22. To be effective, developmental counseling must be a shared effort. Leaders assist their subordinates in identifying strengths and weaknesses and creating plans of action. Once an individual development plan is agreed upon, they support their Soldiers and civilians throughout the plan implementation and continued assessment. To achieve success, subordinates must be forthright in their commitment to improve and candid in their own assessments and goal setting.

B-23. Army leaders evaluate Army civilians using procedures prescribed under civilian personnel policies. DA Form 4856 is appropriate to counsel Army civilians on professional growth and career goals. DA Form 4856 is not adequate to address civilian counseling concerning Army civilian misconduct or poor performance. The servicing Civilian Personnel Office can provide guidance for such situations.

B-24. Caring and empathic Army leaders conduct counseling to help subordinates become better team members, maintain or improve performance, and prepare for the future. While it is not easy to address every possible counseling situation, leader self-awareness and an adaptable counseling style focusing on key characteristics will enhance personal effectiveness as a counselor. These key characteristics include—

- **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 QUALITIES OF THE COUNSELOR

B-25. Army leaders must demonstrate certain qualities to be effective counselors. These qualities include respect for subordinates, self-awareness and cultural awareness, empathy, and credibility.

B-26. One challenging aspect of counseling is selecting the proper approach to a specific situation. To counsel effectively, the technique used must fit the situation, leader capabilities, and subordinate expectations. Sometimes, leaders may only need to give information or listen, while in other situations a subordinate's improvement may call for just a brief word of praise. Difficult circumstances may require structured counseling followed by definite actions, such as referrals to outside experts and agencies.

B-27. Self-aware Army leaders consistently develop and improve their own counseling abilities. They do so by studying human behavior, learning the kinds of problems that affect their followers, and developing