

## **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

their interpersonal skills. The techniques needed to provide effective counseling vary from person to person and session to session. However, general skills that leaders will need in almost every situation include active listening, responding, and questioning.

## ACTIVE LISTENING

B-28. Active listening helps communicate reception of the subordinate's message verbally and nonverbally. To capture the message fully, leaders listen to what is said and observe the subordinate's manners. Key elements of active listening include—

- **Eye contact.** Maintaining eye contact without staring helps show sincere interest. Occasional breaks of eye contact are normal and acceptable, while excessive breaks, paper shuffling, and clock-watching may be perceived as a lack of interest or concern.
- **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 head nodding indicates paying attention and encourages the subordinate to continue.
- **Facial expressions.** Keep facial expressions natural and relaxed to signal a sincere interest.
- **Verbal expressions.** Refrain from talking too much and avoid interrupting. Let the subordinate do the talking, while keeping the discussion on the counseling subject.

B-29. Active listening implies listening thoughtfully and deliberately to capture the nuances of the subordinate's language. Stay alert for common themes. A subordinate's opening and closing statements as well as recurring references may indicate his priorities. Inconsistencies and gaps may indicate an avoidance of the real issue. Certain inconsistencies may suggest additional questions by the counselor.

B-30. Pay attention to the subordinate's gestures to understand the complete message. By watching the subordinate's actions, leaders identify the emotions behind the words. Not all actions are proof of a subordinate's feelings but they should be considered. Nonverbal indicators of a subordinate's attitude include—

- **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.
- **Anxiety.** Sitting on the edge of the chair with arms uncrossed and hands open.

B-31. Leaders consider each indicator carefully. Although each may reveal something about the subordinate, do not judge too quickly. When unsure look for reinforcing indicators or check with the subordinate to understand the behavior, determine what is underlying it, and allow the subordinate to take responsibility.

## RESPONDING

B-32. A leader responds verbally and nonverbally to show understanding of the subordinate. 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

B-33. Although focused questioning is an important skill, counselors should 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 deeper about a particular situation. Questions should evoke more than a yes or no answer. Well-posed questions deepen understanding, encourage further explanation, and help the subordinate perceive the counseling session as a constructive experience.

## **COUNSELING ERRORS**

B-34. 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. Competent leaders avoid rash judgments, stereotyping, losing emotional control, inflexible counseling methods, or improper follow-up.

B-35. To improve leader counseling skills, follow these general guidelines:

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

## **ACCEPTING LIMITATIONS**

B-36. Army leaders cannot help everyone in every situation. Recognize personal limitations and seek outside assistance, when required. When necessary, refer a subordinate to the agency more qualified to help.

B-37. The agency list in figure B-1 assists in solving problems. Although it is generally in an individual's best interest to begin by seeking help from their first-line leaders, caring leaders should respect an individual's preference to contact any of these agencies on their own.

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, and information about other military posts.
Army Substance Abuse Program	Provides alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control programs.
Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS)	Serves as a liaison between installation agencies 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 Army 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 Army 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 Army 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.

Figure B-1. Support activities

## ADAPTIVE APPROACHES TO COUNSELING

B-38. An effective leader approaches each subordinate as an individual. Different people and different situations require different counseling approaches. Three approaches to counseling include nondirective, directive, and combined (see Part Three, Chapter 8 for more). These approaches differ in specific techniques, but all fit the definition of counseling and contribute to its overall purpose. The major difference between the approaches is the degree to which the subordinate participates and interacts during a counseling session. Figure B-2 identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Nondirective</b>	Encourages maturity. Encourages open communication. Develops personal responsibility.	More time-consuming. Requires greatest counselor skills.
<b>Directive</b>	Quickest method. Good for people who need clear, concise direction. Allows counselors to use their experience.	Does not encourage subordinates to be part of the solution. Tends to treat symptoms, not problems. Tends to discourage subordinates from talking freely. Solution is the counselor's, not the subordinate's.
<b>Combined</b>	Moderately quick. Encourages maturity. Encourages open communication. Allows counselors to use their experience.	May take too much time for some situations.

**Figure B-2. Counseling approach summary chart**

## COUNSELING TECHNIQUES

B-39. The Army leader can select from several techniques when counseling subordinates. These techniques may cause subordinates to change behavior and improve upon their performance. Counseling techniques leaders may explore during the nondirective or combined approaches include—

- **Suggesting alternatives.** Discuss alternative actions that the subordinate may take. Leader and subordinate together decide which course of action is most appropriate.
- **Recommending.** Recommend one course of action, but leave the decision to accept it to the subordinate.
- **Persuading.** Persuade the subordinate that a given course of action is best, but leave the final decision to the subordinate. Successful persuasion depends on the leader's credibility, the subordinate's willingness to listen, and 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.

B-40. Techniques to use during the directive approach to counseling include—

- **Corrective training.** Teach and assist the subordinate in attaining and maintaining the required standard. A subordinate completes corrective training when the standard is consistently attained.
- **Commanding.** Order the subordinate to take a given course of action in clear, precise words. The subordinate understands the order and will face consequences for failing to carry it out.



## THE FOUR-STAGE COUNSELING PROCESS

B-41. Effective Army leaders make use of a four-stage counseling process:

- Identify the need for counseling.
- Prepare for counseling.
- Conduct counseling.
- Follow-up.

### STAGE 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED FOR COUNSELING

B-42. Usually organizational policies—such as counseling associated with an evaluation or command directed counseling—focus a counseling session. However, leaders may also conduct developmental counseling whenever the need arises for focused, two-way communication aimed at subordinate's 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.

### STAGE 2: PREPARE FOR COUNSELING

B-43. Successful counseling requires preparation in the following seven areas:

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

#### Select a Suitable Place

B-44. Conduct the counseling in an environment that minimizes interruptions and is free from distracting sights and sounds.

#### Schedule the Time

B-45. When possible, counsel a subordinate during the duty day. Counseling after duty hours may be rushed or perceived as unfavorable. Select a time free from competition with other activities. Consider that important events occurring after the session could distract a subordinate from concentrating on the counseling. The scheduled time for counseling should also be appropriate for the complexity of the issue at hand. Generally, counseling sessions should last less than an hour.

#### Notify the Subordinate Well in Advance

B-46. Counseling is a subordinate-centered, two-person effort for which the subordinate must have adequate time to prepare. The person to be counseled should know why, where, and when the counseling takes place. Counseling tied to a specific event should happen as closely to the event as possible. For performance or professional development counseling, subordinates may need at least a week or more to prepare or review specific documents and resources, including evaluation support forms or counseling records.

#### Organize Information

B-47. The counselor should review all pertinent information, including the purpose of the counseling, facts, and observations about the person to be counseled, identification of possible problems, and main points of discussion. The counselor can outline a possible plan of action with clear obtainable goals as a basis for the final plan development between counselor and the Soldier or civilian.

### Outline the Components of the Counseling Session

B-48. Using the available information, determine the focus and specific topics of the counseling session. Note what prompted the counseling requirement, aims, and counselor role. Identify possible key comments and questions to keep the counseling session subordinate-centered and which can help guide the subordinate through the session's stages. As subordinates may be unpredictable during counseling, a written outline can help keep the session on track and enhances the chance for focused success.

**Counseling Outline**

**Type of counseling:** Initial NCOER counseling for SFC Taylor, a recently promoted new arrival to the unit.

**Place and time:** The platoon office, 1500 hours, 9 October.

**Time to notify the subordinate:** Notify SFC Taylor one week in advance of the counseling session.

**Subordinate preparation:** Instruct SFC Taylor to put together a list of goals and objectives he would like to complete over the next 90 to 180 days. Review the values, attributes, and competencies of FM 6-22.

**Counselor preparation:**

Review the NCO Counseling Checklist/Record

Update or review SFC Taylor's duty description and fill out the rating chain and duty description on the working copy of the NCOER.

Review each of the values and responsibilities in Part IV of the NCOER and the values, attributes, and competencies in FM 6-22. Think of how each applies to SFC Taylor's duties as platoon sergeant.

Review the actions necessary for a success or excellence rating in each value and responsibility.

Make notes in blank spaces on relevant parts of the NCOER to assist in counseling.

**Role as a counselor:** Help SFC Taylor to understand the expectations and standards associated with the platoon sergeant position. Assist SFC Taylor in developing the values, attributes, and competencies that enable him to achieve his performance objectives consistent with those of the platoon and company. Resolve any aspects of the job that SFC Taylor does not clearly understand.

**Session outline:** Complete an outline following the counseling session components listed in figure B-4 and based on the draft duty description on the NCOER. This should happen two to three days prior to the actual counseling session.

Figure B-3. Example of a counseling outline

### Plan the Counseling Strategy

B-49. There are many different approaches to counseling. The directive, nondirective, and combined approaches offer a variety of options that can suit any subordinates and situation (see figure B-3 and Part Three, Chapter 8).

## Establish the Right Atmosphere

B-50. The right atmosphere promotes open, two-way communication between a leader and subordinate. To establish a more relaxed atmosphere, offer the subordinate a seat or a cup of coffee. If appropriate, choose to sit in a chair facing the subordinate since a desk can act as a barrier.

B-51. Some situations require more formal settings. During counseling to correct substandard performance, leaders seated behind a desk may direct the subordinate to remain standing. This reinforces the leader's role and authority and underscores the severity of the situation.

### Example Counseling Session

#### Open the Session

- To establish a relaxed environment for an open exchange, explain to SFC Taylor that the more one discusses and comprehends the importance of the Army Values, leader attributes, and competencies, the easier it is to develop and incorporate them for success into an individual leadership style.
- State the purpose of the counseling session and stress that the initial counseling is based on what SFC Taylor needs to do to be a successful platoon sergeant in the unit. Come to an agreement on the duty description and the specific performance requirements. Discuss related values, competencies, and the standards for success. Explain that subsequent counseling will address his developmental needs as well as how well he is meeting the jointly agreed upon performance objectives. Urge a thorough self-assessment during the next quarter to identify his developmental needs.
- Ensure that SFC Taylor knows the rating chain and resolve any questions he has about his duty position and associated responsibilities. Discuss the close team relationship that must exist between a platoon leader and a platoon sergeant, including the importance of honest, two-way communication.

#### Discuss the Issue

- Jointly review the duty description as spelled out in the NCOER, including all associated responsibilities, such as maintenance, training, and taking care of Soldiers. Relate the responsibilities to leader competencies, attributes, and values. Revise the duty description, if necessary. Highlight areas of special emphasis and additional duties.
- Clearly discuss the meaning of value and responsibility on the NCOER. Discuss the values, attributes, and competencies as outlined in FM 6-22. Ask focused questions to identify if he relates these items to his role as a platoon sergeant.
- Explain to SFC Taylor that the leader's character, presence, and intellect are the basis for competent leadership and that development of the desired leader attributes requires that Army leaders adopt them through consistent self-awareness and lifelong learning. Emphasize that the plan of action to accomplish major performance objectives must encompass the appropriate values, attributes, and competencies. Underscore that the development of the leader's character can never be separate from the overall plan.

#### Assist in Developing a Plan of Action (During the Counseling Session)

- Ask SFC Taylor to identify tasks that will facilitate the accomplishment of the agreed-upon performance objectives. Describe each by using the values, responsibilities, and competencies found on the NCOER and in FM 6-22.
- Discuss how each value, responsibility, and competency applies to the platoon sergeant position. Discuss specific examples of success and excellence in each

value and responsibility block. Ask SFC Taylor for suggestions to make the goals objective, specific, and measurable.

- Ensure that SFC Taylor leaves the counseling session with at least one example of a success or excellence bullet statement as well as sample bullet statements for each value and responsibility. Discuss SFC Taylor's promotion goals and ask him what he considers his strengths and weaknesses. Obtain copies of the last two master sergeant selection board results and match his goals and objectives.

**Close the Session**

- Verify SFC Taylor understands the duty description and performance objectives.
- Stress the importance of teamwork and two-way communication.
- Ensure SFC Taylor understands that you expect him to assist in your development as a platoon leader—both of you have the role of teacher and coach.
- Remind SFC Taylor to perform a self-assessment during the next quarter.
- Set a tentative date during the next quarter for the follow-up counseling.

**Notes on Strategy**

- Offer to answer any questions SFC Taylor may have.
- Expect SFC Taylor to be uncomfortable with the terms and development process and respond in a way that encourages participation throughout the session

**Figure B-4. Example of a counseling session**

**STAGE 3: CONDUCT THE COUNSELING SESSION**

B-52. Caring Army leaders use a balanced mix of formal and informal counseling and learn to take advantage of everyday events to provide subordinates with feedback. Counseling opportunities often appear when leaders encounter subordinates in their daily activities in the field, motor pool, barracks, and wherever else Soldiers and civilians perform their duties. Even during ad-hoc counseling, leaders should address the four basic components of a counseling session:

- Opening the session.
- Discussing the issues.
- Developing a plan of action.
- Recording and closing the session.

**Open the Session**

B-53. In the session opening, the leader counselor states the purpose and establishes a subordinate-centered setting. The counselor establishes an atmosphere of shared purpose by inviting the subordinate to speak. An appropriate purpose statement might be “SFC Taylor, 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 current plan of action.

**Discuss the Issues**

B-54. Leader and counseled individual should attempt to develop a mutual and clear understanding of the counseling issues. Use active listening and invite the subordinate to do most of the talking. Respond and ask questions without dominating the conversation but help the subordinate better understand the subject of the counseling session: duty performance, a problem situation and its impact, or potential areas for growth.

B-55. To reduce the perception of bias or early judgment, both leader and subordinate should provide examples or cite specific observations. When the issue is substandard performance, the leader must be clear why the performance did not meet the standard. During the discussion, the leader must clearly establish what the subordinate must do to meet the standard in the future. It is very important that the leader frames the issue at hand as substandard performance and prevents the subordinate from labeling the issue as an unreasonable standard. An exception would be when the leader considers the current standard as negotiable or is willing to alter the conditions under which the subordinate can meet the standard.

### **Develop a Plan of Action**

B-56. A plan of action identifies a method and pathway for achieving a desired result. It specifies what the subordinate must do to reach agreed-upon goals set during the counseling session. The plan of action must be specific, showing the subordinate how to modify or maintain his or her behavior. Example: “PFC Miller, next week you’ll attend the map reading class with 1st Platoon. After the class, SGT Dixon will personally coach you through the land navigation course. He will help you develop your skills with the compass. After observing you going through the course with SGT Dixon, I will meet with you again to determine if you still need additional training.”

### **Record and Close the Session**

B-57. Although requirements to record counseling sessions vary, a leader always benefits from documenting the main points of a counseling session, even the informal ones. Documentation serves as a ready reference for the agreed-upon plan of action and helps the leader track the subordinate’s accomplishments, improvements, personal preferences, or problems. A good record of counseling enables the leader to make proper recommendations for professional development, schools, promotions, and evaluation reports.

B-58. Army regulations require specific written records of counseling for certain personnel actions, such as barring a Soldier from reenlisting, processing an administrative separation, or placing a Soldier in the overweight program. When a Soldier faces involuntary separation, the leader must maintain accurate counseling records. Documentation of substandard actions often conveys a strong message to subordinates that a further slip in performance or discipline could require more severe action or punishment.

B-59. When closing the counseling session, summarize the key points and ask if the subordinate understands and agrees with the proposed plan of action. With the subordinate present, establish any follow-up measures necessary to support the successful implementation of the plan of action. Follow-up measures may include providing the subordinate with specific resources and time, periodic assessments of the plan, and additional referrals. If possible, schedule future meetings before dismissing the subordinate.

## **STAGE 4: FOLLOW-UP**

### **Leader Responsibilities**

B-60. The counseling process does not end with the initial counseling session. It continues throughout the implementation of the plan of action, consistent with the observed results. Sometimes, the initial plan of action will require modification to meet its goals. Leaders must consistently support their subordinates in implementing the plan of action by teaching, coaching, mentoring, or providing additional time, referrals, and other appropriate resources. Additional measures may include more focused follow-up counseling, informing the chain of command, and taking more severe corrective measures.

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

B-61. During assessment, the leader and the subordinate jointly determine if the desired results were achieved. They should determine the date for their initial assessment during the initial counseling session. The plan of action assessment provides useful information for future follow-up counseling sessions.

## SUMMARY—THE COUNSELING PROCESS AT A GLANCE

B-62. Use figure B-5 as a quick reference whenever counseling Soldiers or civilian team members.

<p>Leaders must demonstrate these qualities to counsel effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respect for subordinates.</li> <li>● Self and cultural awareness.</li> <li>● Credibility.</li> <li>● Empathy.</li> </ul> <p>Leaders must possess these counseling skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Active listening.</li> <li>● Responding.</li> <li>● Questioning.</li> </ul> <p>Effective leaders avoid common counseling mistakes. Leaders should avoid—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personal bias.</li> <li>● Rash judgments.</li> <li>● Stereotyping.</li> <li>● Losing emotional control.</li> <li>● Inflexible counseling methods.</li> <li>● Improper follow-up.</li> </ul>	<p>The Counseling Process:</p> <p>Identify the need for counseling.</p> <p>Prepare for counseling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Select a suitable place.</li> <li>● Schedule the time.</li> <li>● Notify the subordinate well in advance.</li> <li>● Organize information.</li> <li>● Outline the components of the counseling session.</li> <li>● Plan counseling strategy.</li> <li>● Establish the right atmosphere.</li> </ul> <p>Conduct the counseling session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Open the session.</li> <li>● Discuss the issue.</li> <li>● Develop a plan of action (to include the leader's responsibilities).</li> <li>● Record and close the session.</li> </ul> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support plan of action implementation.</li> <li>● Assess the plan of action.</li> </ul>
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**Figure B-5. A summary of counseling**

## THE DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM

B-63. The Developmental Counseling Form (DA Form 4856) is designed to help Army leaders conduct and record counseling sessions. Figures B-6 and B-7 show a completed DA Form 4856 documenting the counseling of a young Soldier with financial problems. Although derogatory, it is still developmental counseling. Leaders must decide when counseling, additional training, rehabilitation, reassignment, or other developmental options have been exhausted. Figures B-8 and B-9 show a routine performance/professional growth counseling for a unit first sergeant. Figures B-10 and B-11 show a blank form with instructions on how to complete each block.

<b>DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM</b>			
For use of this form see FM 6-22; the proponent agency is TRADOC			
<b>DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974</b>			
<b>AUTHORITY:</b>	5 USC 301, Departmental Regulations; 10 USC 3013, Secretary of the Army and E.O. 9397 (SSN)		
<b>PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:</b>	To assist leaders in conducting and recording counseling data pertaining to subordinates.		
<b>ROUTINE USES:</b>	For subordinate leader development IAW FM 6-22. Leaders should use this form as necessary.		
<b>DISCLOSURE:</b>	Disclosure is voluntary.		
PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA			
Name (Last, First, MI)	Rank / Grade	Social Security No.	Date of Counseling
Jones, Andrew	PFC	123-45-6789	28 April 2006
Organization		Name and Title of Counselor	
2nd Platoon, B Battery, 1-1 ADA BN		SGT Mark Levy, Squad Leader	
PART II - BACKGROUND INFORMATION			
<b>Purpose of Counseling:</b> (Leader states the reason for the counseling, e.g. Performance/Professional or Event-Oriented counseling and includes the leaders facts and observations prior to the counseling):			
To inform PFC Jones of his responsibility to manage his financial affairs and the potential consequence of poor management. To help PFC Jones develop a plan of action to resolve his financial problems.			
Facts: The battery commander received reports from the Enlisted Club that PFC Jones had checks returned for insufficient funds. The Enlisted Club cashier has 2 checks for a total of \$200 that were returned by American Bank, NA.			
A total of \$240 is due to the club system for the amount of the checks and fees.			
PART III - SUMMARY OF COUNSELING			
<b>Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.</b>			
<b>Key Points of Discussion:</b>			
PFC Jones, late payments and bounced checks reflect a lack of responsibility and poor management of financial assets. You should know that passing bad checks is a punishable offence under the UCMJ and local law. The commander has been contacted and has the attention of the battery chain of command. The commander, first sergeant and platoon sergeant have begun to question your ability to manage your personal affairs. I also want to remind you that promotions and awards are based on more than just MOS related duties; Soldiers must act responsibly and professionally in all areas of their lives.			
Per conversation with PFC Jones, the following information was obtained:			
PFC Jones had cashed the checks to purchase food, pay his phone bill and send money home to assist his grandmother with her heating bills. PFC Jones stated he had miscalculated the amount of money in his checking account and will not be able to cover the checks until he gets paid at the end of April 2006. He also stated that warmer weather will reduce any further need to help with his grandmother's utilities. PFC Jones and I went to Army Community Services and they determined the following:			
PFC Jones monthly obligations: Car payment: \$330, Car insurance: \$138, Rent and utilities: \$400. Other credit cards/accounts: \$0 Monthly net pay: \$1232.63			
We discussed that the remaining \$364 should cover PFC Jones monthly living expenses. We also discussed that PFC Jones should start a savings account to draw from in emergencies. Although it is not wrong for him to help his grandmother, he needs to make sure that he is not putting his financial stability in jeopardy. He confirmed he wants to get his finances back on track and begin to put money aside in a savings account to prepare for future needs.			
OTHER INSTRUCTIONS			
This form will be destroyed upon: reassignment ( <i>other than rehabilitative transfers</i> ), separation at ETS, or upon retirement. For separation requirements and notification of loss of benefits/consequences see local directives and AR 635-200.			
DA FORM 4856, MAR 2006		EDITION OF JUN 99 IS OBSOLETE	

Figure B-6. Example of a developmental counseling form—event counseling

<p><b>Plan of Action:</b> <i>(Outlines actions that the subordinate will do after the counseling session to reach the agreed upon goal(s). The actions must be specific enough to modify or maintain the subordinate's behavior and include a specific time line for implementation and assessment (Part IV below):</i></p> <p>Based on our discussion, PFC Jones will be able to repay the dishonored checks at the Enlisted Club at the end of the month. In the future he will think through his decisions related to his economic needs. PFC Jones has contacted to Enlisted Club and the manager has agreed to give him until 2 May 2006 to redeem the checks. In the future he plans to put money in savings to assist his grandmother if the need arises. His long-term goal is to start a savings account and deposit \$50 a month.</p> <p>PFC Jones is also enrolled in the ACS check cashing and money management classes scheduled for 2 and 9 May 2006.</p> <p>Assessment Date: 28 July 2006</p>
<p><b>Session Closing:</b> <i>(The leader summarizes the key points of the session and checks if the subordinate understands the plan of action. The subordinate agrees/disagrees and provides remarks if appropriate):</i></p> <p>Individual counseled: <input type="checkbox"/> I agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree with the information above                  Individual counseled remarks:</p> <p>Signature of Individual Counseled: <u>Andrew Jones</u> Date: <u>28 April 2006</u></p>
<p><b>Leader Responsibilities:</b> <i>(Leader's responsibilities in implementing the plan of action):</i></p> <p>PFC Jones will visit the manager of the Enlisted Club and repay the \$240 for his bad checks. He will provide me a receipt showing the bill has been paid in full. PFC Jones will also provide me with a copy of his budget that ACS will help him develop during his financial management classes.                  PFC Jones financial situation will be a key topic in his May 2006 monthly performance counseling session.</p> <p>Signature of Counselor: <u>Mark Levy</u> Date: <u>28 April 2006</u></p>
<p><b>PART IV - ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN OF ACTION</b></p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> <i>(Did the plan of action achieve the desired results? This section is completed by both the leader and the individual counseled and provides useful information for follow-up counseling):</i></p> <p>To be completed during the assessment date in the plan of action.</p> <p>Counselor: _____ Individual Counseled: _____ Date of Assessment: _____</p> <p><b>Note: Both the counselor and the individual counseled should retain a record of the counseling.</b></p>

*REVERSE, DA FORM 4856, MAR 2006*

Figure B-7. Example of a developmental counseling form—event counseling (reverse)



<b>DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM</b>			
For use of this form see FM 6-22; the proponent agency is TRADOC			
<b>DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974</b>			
<b>AUTHORITY:</b>	5 USC 301, Departmental Regulations; 10 USC 3013, Secretary of the Army and E.O. 9397 (SSN)		
<b>PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:</b>	To assist leaders in conducting and recording counseling data pertaining to subordinates.		
<b>ROUTINE USES:</b>	For subordinate leader development IAW FM 6-22. Leaders should use this form as necessary.		
<b>DISCLOSURE:</b>	Disclosure is voluntary.		
<b>PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA</b>			
Name (Last, First, MI)	Rank / Grade	Social Security No.	Date of Counseling
Donalo, Steven	1SG	333-33-3333	12 June 2006
Organization	Name and Title of Counselor		
D Company, 3-95 <sup>th</sup> IN BN	CPT Ralph Pedersen, Company Commander		
<b>PART II - BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>			
<b>Purpose of Counseling:</b> (Leader states the reason for the counseling, e.g. Performance/Professional or Event-Oriented counseling and includes the leaders facts and observations prior to the counseling):			
To discuss duty performance for the period 9 March 2006 to 12 June 2006.			
To discuss short-range professional growth/plan for next year.			
Talk about long-range professional growth (2-5 years) goals.			
<b>PART III - SUMMARY OF COUNSELING</b>			
Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.			
<b>Key Points of Discussion:</b>			
Performance (sustain):			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasized safety, knowledge of demolitions, and tactical proficiency on the Platoon Live Fire Exercises.</li> <li>- Took charge of company defense during the last major field training exercise; outstanding integration and use of engineers, heavy weapons, and air defense artillery assets in a combined arms environment. Superb defense preparation and execution.</li> <li>- No dropped white-cycle taskings.</li> <li>- Good job coordinating with the battalion adjutant on legal and personnel issues.</li> <li>- Continue to take care of Soldiers; keep the commander abreast of problems.</li> <li>- Focused on subordinate NCO development; putting the right NCO in the right job.</li> </ul>			
Improve:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get NCOPDs on the calendar</li> <li>- Hold NCOs to standard on sergeants' time training.</li> </ul>			
<b>OTHER INSTRUCTIONS</b>			
This form will be destroyed upon: reassignment ( <i>other than rehabilitative transfers</i> ), separation at ETS, or upon retirement. For separation requirements and notification of loss of benefits/consequences see local directives and AR 635-200.			
DA FORM 4856, MAR 2006		EDITION OF JUN 99 IS OBSOLETE	

Figure B-8. Example of a developmental counseling form—performance/professional growth counseling



<b>DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM</b>			
For use of this form see FM 6-22; the proponent agency is TRADOC			
<b>DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974</b>			
<b>AUTHORITY:</b>	5 USC 301, Departmental Regulations; 10 USC 3013, Secretary of the Army and E.O. 9397 (SSN)		
<b>PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:</b>	To assist leaders in conducting and recording counseling data pertaining to subordinates.		
<b>ROUTINE USES:</b>	For subordinate leader development IAW FM 6-22. Leaders should use this form as necessary.		
<b>DISCLOSURE:</b>	Disclosure is voluntary.		
<b>PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA</b>			
Name (Last, First, MI)	Rank / Grade	Social Security No.	Date of Counseling
Organization		Name and Title of Counselor	
<b>PART II - BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>			
<p><b>Purpose of Counseling:</b> (Leader states the reason for the counseling, e.g. Performance/Professional or Event-Oriented counseling and includes the leaders facts and observations prior to the counseling):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">See Paragraph B-53 Open the Session</p> <p>The leader should annotate pertinent, specific, and objective facts and observations made. If applicable, the leader and subordinate start the counseling session by reviewing the status of the previous plan of action.</p>			
<b>PART III - SUMMARY OF COUNSELING</b>			
Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.			
<p><b>Key Points of Discussion:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">See paragraph B-54 and B-55 Discuss the Issues.</p> <p>The leader and subordinate should attempt to develop a mutual understanding of the issues. Both the leader and the subordinate should provide examples or cite specific observations to reduce the perception that either is unnecessarily biased or judgmental.</p>			
<b>OTHER INSTRUCTIONS</b>			
This form will be destroyed upon: reassignment ( <i>other than rehabilitative transfers</i> ), separation at ETS, or upon retirement. For separation requirements and notification of loss of benefits/consequences see local directives and AR 635-200.			
DA FORM 4856, MAR 2006		EDITION OF JUN 99 IS OBSOLETE	

Figure B-10. Guidelines on completing a developmental counseling form

<p><b>Plan of Action:</b> <i>(Outlines actions that the subordinate will do after the counseling session to reach the agreed upon goal(s). The actions must be specific enough to modify or maintain the subordinate's behavior and include a specific time line for implementation and assessment (Part IV below):</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">See paragraph B-56 Develop a Plan of Action</p> <p>The plan of action specifies what the subordinate must do to reach the goals set during the counseling session. The plan of action must be specific and should contain the outline, guideline(s), and time line that the subordinate follows. A specific and achievable plan of action sets the stage for successful subordinate development.</p>
<p><b>Session Closing:</b> <i>(The leader summarizes the key points of the session and checks if the subordinate understands the plan of action. The subordinate agrees/disagrees and provides remarks if appropriate):</i></p> <p>Individual counseled: <input type="checkbox"/> I agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree with the information above          Individual counseled remarks:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">See paragraph B-57 through B-59 Close the Session</p> <p>Signature of Individual Counseled: _____ Date: _____</p>
<p><b>Leader Responsibilities:</b> <i>(Leader's responsibilities in implementing the plan of action):</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">See paragraph B-60 Leader's Responsibilities</p> <p>To accomplish the plan of action, the leader must list the resources necessary and commit to providing them to the Soldier.</p> <p>Signature of Counselor: _____ Date: _____</p>
<b>PART IV - ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN OF ACTION</b>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> <i>(Did the plan of action achieve the desired results? This section is completed by both the leader and the individual counseled and provides useful information for follow-up counseling):</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">See paragraph B-61 Assess the Plan of Action</p> <p>The assessment of the plan of action provides useful information for future follow-up counseling. This block should be completed prior to the start of a follow-up counseling session. During an event-oriented counseling session, the counseling session is not complete until this block is completed.</p> <p>During performance/professional growth counseling, this block serves as the starting point for future counseling sessions. Leaders must remember to conduct this assessment based on resolution of the situation or the established time line discussed in the plan of action block above.</p> <p>Counselor: _____ Individual Counseled: _____ Date of Assessment: _____</p> <p><b>Note: Both the counselor and the individual counseled should retain a record of the counseling.</b></p>

REVERSE, DA FORM 4856, MAR 2006

**Figure B-11. Guidelines on completing a developmental counseling form (reverse)**