

DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING - NYGD 1326

PREFACE

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FOR THE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:



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**1. Purpose.** This publication sets forth format and procedures to govern the conduct and documentation of counseling as may be required for development or in the enforcement of other New York Guard directives.

**2. Application**

- a. Format and procedures established in this publication apply to all commands of the NYG.
- b. This publication is directive in nature. These formats, and procedures will be followed, except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.

**3. Scope.** This publication describes the conduct of event-oriented and performance/ professional growth counseling and includes guidance on notification procedures, documentation of counseling, follow-up counseling and disciplinary options and procedures.

**4. Basis.** This Directive is based on the provisions of;

- a. Appendix C, *Developmental Counseling*, from FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*.
- b. Supervisor's Handbook, Governor's Office of Employee Relations, Chapter 10: Correcting Unacceptable Employee Behavior, November 1988.

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## CHAPTER I

### OVERVIEW

1. Subordinate leadership development is one of the most important responsibilities of every NYG leader. Developing the leaders who will follow you should be one of your highest priorities. Your legacy and the NYG's future rests on the shoulders of those you prepare for greater responsibility.
2. Leadership development reviews are a means to focus on the development of tomorrow's leaders. Think of them as after action reviews (AAR) with a focus of making leaders more effective every day.
3. Just as training includes AARs and training strategies to fix shortcomings, leaders' development includes a review of performance and agreement on a strategy to build on strengths or methods to improve upon weaknesses. Leaders conduct reviews and create action plans during developmental counseling.
4. Leadership development reviews are a component of the broader concept of developmental counseling. Developmental counseling is subordinate-centered communication that results in an outline of actions necessary for subordinates to achieve individual and organizational goals and objectives. During developmental counseling, subordinates are not merely passive listeners. They are actively involved in the process.
5. Developmental counseling normally results in a plan of action that helps the subordinate achieve individual goals and objectives. Developmental counseling is a two-person effort. The leader's role is to assist a subordinate in identifying strengths and weaknesses, creating a plan of action, and then support the subordinate throughout the plan's implementation and assessment. The subordinate must be forthright in his/her commitment to improve and candid in his/her own assessment and goal setting.
6. Progressive Discipline: Good command relations require discipline to be administered in a progressive manner. The objective of progressive discipline is to correct unacceptable behavior at the earliest and lowest level. In attempting to correct unacceptable behavior the commander should usually follow the following steps:
  - a. Communicate your expectations to the service member .
  - b. Counsel the service member.
  - c. Summarize counseling session in writing.
  - d. Evaluate and follow-up to determine if performance has improved.
  - e. If performance has not improved, recommend formal disciplinary action.

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## CHAPTER II

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Commanders at all levels will follow counseling policies prior to disciplinary actions, as appropriate.

2. The G-1, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel and Administration will ensure documentation of counseling actions is complete prior to discharge orders being issued.

3. Leaders at all levels of Command will:

a. Leaders are responsible for developing their subordinates. Unit 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 any sports coach improves his team: by identifying weaknesses, setting goals, developing and implementing a plan 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.

b. The Developmental Counseling Form (NYG Form 1326, which is discussed at the end of this directive) provides a useful framework to prepare for almost any type of counseling session. It can assist leaders in mentally organizing issues and isolating important, relevant items to cover in the session.

c. Service members 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. However, to conduct effective counseling, leaders should develop a counseling style with the characteristics listed as follows.

(1) Purpose: Clearly define the purpose of the counseling.

(2) Flexibility: Fit the counseling style to the character of each subordinate and to the relationship desired.

(3) Respect: View subordinates as unique, complex individuals, each with their own sets of values, beliefs, and attitudes.

(4) Communication: Establish open, two-way communication with subordinates using spoken language, nonverbal actions, gestures, and body language. Effective counselors listen more than they speak.

(5) Support: Encourage subordinates through actions while guiding them through their problems.

(6) Motivation: Get every subordinate to actively participate in counseling and understand its value.

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## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

**1. THE LEADER AS A COUNSELOR.** Leaders must demonstrate certain qualities to be effective counselors. These qualities include respect for subordinates, self-awareness and cultural awareness, empathy, and credibility.

**2. RESPECT FOR SUBORDINATES.** Leaders show respect for subordinates when they 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.

#### **3. SELF AWARENESS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS**

a. Leaders must be fully aware of their 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 values and actions.

b. Cultural awareness is a mental attribute. Leaders 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. Leaders should not let unfamiliarity with cultural backgrounds hinder them in addressing cultural issues, especially if they generate concerns within the unit or hinder team-building. Cultural awareness enhances a leader's ability to display empathy.

**4. EMPATHY.** Empathy is the action of being understanding of and sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another person to the point that you can almost feel or experience them yourself. Leaders with empathy can put themselves in their subordinate's shoes. They can see a situation from the other person's perspective. By understanding the subordinate's position, the empathetic leader can help a subordinate develop a plan of action that fits the subordinate's personality and needs, one that works for the subordinate. If a leader does not fully comprehend the situation from the subordinate's point of view, the leader has less credibility and influence and the subordinate is less likely to commit to the agreed upon plan of action.

**5. CREDIBILITY.** Leaders achieve credibility by being honest and consistent in their statements and actions. Credible leaders use a straightforward style with their subordinates. They behave in a manner that subordinates respect and trust. Leaders earn credibility by repeatedly demonstrating their willingness to assist a subordinate and being consistent in what they say and do. Leaders who lack credibility with their subordinates will find it difficult to influence them.

#### **6. LEADER COUNSELING SKILLS**

a. One challenging aspect of counseling is selecting the proper approach to a specific situation. Effective counseling techniques must fit the situation, the leader's capability, and the subordinate's expectations. In some cases, a leader 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.

b. 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 will need in almost every situation include active listening, responding, and questioning.

## 7. ACTIVE LISTENING

a. During counseling, the leader must actively listen to the subordinate. When you are actively listening, you communicate verbally and nonverbally that you have 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:

- (1) **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.
- (2) **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.
- (3) **Head nods.** Occasionally nodding your head shows you are paying attention and encourages the subordinate to continue.
- (4) **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.
- (5) **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 is okay to continue talking, but a long silence can sometimes be distracting and make the subordinate feel uncomfortable.

b. 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 their priorities. Inconsistencies and gaps may indicate a subordinate's avoidance of the real issue. This confusion and uncertainty may suggest additional questions.

c. 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:

- (1) **Boredom**, drumming on the table, doodling, clicking a ballpoint pen, or resting the head in the palm of the hand.
- (2) **Self-confidence**, standing tall, leaning back with hands behind the head, and maintaining steady eye contact.
- (3) **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.
- (4) **Frustration**, rubbing eyes, pulling on an ear, taking short breaths, wringing the hands, or frequently changing total body position.
- (5) **Interest, friendliness, and openness**, moving toward the leader while sitting.
- (6) **Openness or anxiety**, sitting on the edge of the chair with arms uncrossed and hands open.

d. Consider these indicators carefully. Although each indicator may show something about the subordinate, do not 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.



**8. 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.

**9. QUESTIONING.** Although a necessary skill, questioning must be used with caution. Too many questions can aggravate the power differential between the leader and the 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 to require 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.

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

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

## 11. THE LEADER'S LIMITATIONS

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

b. These agencies can help leaders resolve problems. Although it is 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.

Activity	Description
Adjutant General	Provides personnel and administrative services support such as orders, & ID cards.
Chaplain	Provides spiritual and humanitarian counseling to Service Members.
Legal Assistance	Provides legal information or assistance on matters of contracts, citizenship, adoption, martial problems, taxes, wills, and powers of attorney.
Equal Opportunity Staff Officer	Provide assistance for matters involving discrimination in race, color, national origin, gender, and religion. Provide information on procedures for initiating complaints and resolving complaints informally.
Inspector General	Renders assistance to Service Members. Corrects injustices affecting individuals, and eliminates conditions determined to be detrimental to the efficiency, economy, morale, and reputation of the NYG.
244 <sup>th</sup> Medical Clinic	Renders assistance to Service Members. Provides guidance for weight control programs, exercise and diet advice.

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

**13. EVENT-ORIENTED COUNSELING**

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

- o Specific instances of superior or substandard performance.
- o Reception and integration counseling.
- o Crisis counseling.
- o Referral counseling.
- o Attendance counseling
- o Weight Control counseling
- o Promotion counseling.
- o Separation counseling.

b. Counseling for Specific Instances

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

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

(3) Leaders should counsel subordinates who do not meet the standard. If the subordinate's performance is unsatisfactory because of a lack of knowledge or ability, the leader and subordinate should develop a plan to improve the subordinate's skills. Corrective training may be required at times to ensure the subordinate knows and achieves the standard. Once the subordinate can achieve the standard, the leader should end the corrective training.

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

- Tell the subordinate the purpose of the counseling, what was expected, and how he failed to meet the standard.
- Address the specific unacceptable behavior or action, not the person's character.
- Tell the subordinate the effect of the behavior, actions, or performance on the rest of the unit.
- Actively listen to the subordinate's response.
- Remain unemotional.
- Teach the subordinate how to meet the standard.
- Be prepared to do some personal counseling since the lack of performance may be related to or the result of an unresolved personal problem.
- Explain to the subordinate what will be done to improve performance (plan of action). Identify your responsibilities in implementing the plan of action; continue to assess and follow-up on the subordinate's progress. Adjust the plan of action as necessary.

c. Reception and Integration Counseling

(1) Leaders must counsel new team members when they report in. This reception and integration counseling serves two purposes. First, it identifies and helps fix any problems or concerns that new members have, especially any issues resulting from the new duty assignment. Second, it lets them know the unit standards and how they fit into the team. It clarifies job titles and sends the message that the chain of command cares. Reception and integration counseling should begin immediately upon arrival so new team members can quickly become integrated into the organization.

- Unit standards.
- Chain of command.
- NCO support channel (who and how used).
- On and off duty conduct.
- Personnel/personal affairs/initial clothing issue.
- Unit history, organization, and mission.
- Soldier programs within the unit, such as soldier of the month/quarter/year.
- Off limits and danger areas.
- Other areas the individual should be aware of, as determined by the rater.

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

e. Referral Counseling. Referral counseling helps subordinates work through a personal situation and may or may not follow crisis counseling. Referral counseling may also act as preventative counseling before the situation becomes a problem. Usually, the leader assists the subordinate in identifying the problem and refers the subordinate to the appropriate resource, such as a chaplain, or Legal assistance.

f. Promotion Counseling. Leaders must conduct promotion counseling for all specialists and sergeants who are eligible for advancement but not recommended for promotion to the next higher grade.

g. Adverse Separation Counseling

(1) 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.

- (a) Insubordination. (State Military Law § 130.87)
- (b) Patterns of AWOL or non-attendance. (Officers: Military Law §78, Enlisted §94, NYG Directive 1379 and NYG Army Regulation 140-185)
- (c) Not meeting physical standards. (Officer: Military Law §75 Para. 2, Enlisted: Military Law §93 Para. 1, and NYGD 1308)

(2) Developmental counseling may not apply when a soldier has engaged in more serious acts of misconduct. In those situations, the leader should refer the matter to the commander and the servicing staff judge advocate. When the leader's rehabilitative efforts fail, counseling with a view towards separation fills an administrative prerequisite to many administrative discharges and serves as a final warning to the soldier to improve performance or face discharge. In many situations, it may be beneficial to involve the chain of command as soon as you determine that adverse separation counseling might be required. A unit first sergeant or commander should be the person who informs the soldier of the notification requirements outlined in NYGD 13.

#### 14. PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COUNSELING

##### a. Performance Counseling

(1) During performance counseling, the leader conducts a review of the subordinate's duty performance during a certain period. The leader and subordinate jointly establish performance objectives and standards for the next period. Rather than dwelling on the past, leaders should focus the session on the subordinate's strengths, areas needing improvement, and potential.

(2) Performance counseling is required for the officer, and noncommissioned officer evaluation systems. The Evaluation process requires periodic performance counseling as part of the Evaluation support form requirements. Mandatory, face-to-face performance counseling between the rater and the rated NCO is required under the NCO part of the Evaluation system.

(3) Counseling at the beginning of and during the evaluation period facilitates the subordinate's involvement in the evaluation process. Performance counseling communicates standards and is an opportunity for leaders to establish and clarify the expected values, attributes, skills, and actions. Part IVb (Leader Attributes/Skills/Actions) of the Support Form (NYG Form) serves as an excellent tool for leaders doing performance counseling.

(4) Leaders must ensure they have tied their expectations to performance objectives and appropriate standards. Leaders must establish standards that subordinates can work towards and must teach subordinates how to achieve the standard in order for further subordinate development.

##### b. Professional Growth Counseling

(1) Professional growth counseling includes planning for the accomplishment of individual and professional goals. A leader conducts this counseling to assist subordinates in achieving organizational and individual goals. During the counseling, the leader and subordinate conduct a review to identify and discuss the subordinate's strengths and weaknesses and create a plan of action to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This counseling is not normally event-driven.

(2) As part of professional growth counseling, a leader may choose to discuss and develop a "pathway to success" with the subordinate. This future-oriented counseling establishes near- and long-term goals and objectives. The discussion may include opportunities for civilian or military schooling, future duty assignments, special programs, and reenlistment options. Every person's needs are different, and leaders must apply specific courses of action tailored to each soldier.

(3) While these categories help leaders to organize and focus counseling sessions, they should not be viewed as separate, distinct, or exhaustive. For example, a counseling session that focuses on resolving a problem may also address improving duty performance. A session focused on performance may also include a discussion on opportunities for professional growth. Regardless of the topic of the counseling session, leaders should follow the same basic format to prepare for and conduct it.

**15. APPROACHES TO COUNSELING.** An effective leader approaches each subordinate as an individual. Three approaches to counseling include nondirective, directive, and combined. These approaches differ in the techniques used, but they all maintain the overall purpose and definition of counseling. The major difference is the degree to which the subordinate participates and interacts during the counseling session.

#### **16. NONDIRECTIVE**

a. The nondirective approach to counseling is preferred for most counseling sessions. Leaders use their experienced insight and judgment to assist subordinates in developing solutions. The leader partially structures this type of counseling by telling the subordinate about the counseling process and explaining what is expected.

b. During the counseling session, listen rather than make decisions or give advice. Clarify what is said. Cause the subordinate to bring out important points, so as to better understand the situation. When appropriate, summarize the discussion. Avoid providing solutions or rendering opinions; instead, maintain a focus on individual and organizational goals and objectives. Ensure the subordinate's plan of action supports those goals and objectives.

#### **17. DIRECTIVE**

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

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

#### **18. COMBINED**

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

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

#### **19. COUNSELING TECHNIQUES**

a. A leader may select from a variety of techniques when counseling subordinates. These counseling techniques, when appropriately used, cause subordinates to do things or improve upon their performance. A leader can use these methods during scheduled counseling sessions or while simply coaching a

subordinate. The counseling techniques used during nondirective or the combined approach to counseling include:

- **Suggesting alternatives.** The leader discusses alternative actions that the subordinate may take, but both the subordinate and the leader decide which course of action is most appropriate.
- **Recommending.** The leader recommends one course of action, but the decision to accept the recommended action is left to the subordinate.
- **Persuading.** The leader persuades the subordinate that a given course of action is best, but the subordinate makes the decision. Successful persuasion depends on the leader's credibility, the subordinate's willingness to listen, and their mutual trust.
- **Advising.** The leader advises the subordinate that a given course of action is best. This is the strongest form of influence not involving a command or threat.

b. Some techniques used during the directive approach to counseling include□

- **Corrective training.** The leader teaches and assists the subordinate in attaining and maintaining the standards. The subordinate completes corrective training when he attains the standard.
- **Commanding.** The leader orders the subordinate to take a given course of action in clear, exact words. The subordinate understands that he has been given a command and will face the consequences for failing to carry it out.

**20. THE COUNSELING PROCESS.** Effective leaders use the counseling process. It consists of four stages:

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

**21. IDENTIFY THE NEED FOR COUNSELING.** Quite often organizational policies, such as counseling associated with an evaluation or counseling required by command or unit policy, focus the session. However, a leader may 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.

**22. PREPARE FOR COUNSELING.**

a. 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.

b. Select a Suitable Place. Schedule counseling in an environment that minimizes distractions and is free from distracting sights and sounds.

c. **Schedule the Time.** When possible, counsel the 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.

d. **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.

e. **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 on as well as a plan of action with clear and obtainable goals.

f. **Outline the Components of the Counseling Session.** Using the information obtained, determine what to discuss during the counseling session. If you use an outline format, you can then note what prompted the counseling, what you aim to achieve, and what your role as a counselor is. You can also identify possible comments or questions that will help the counseling session remain subordinate-centered and help the subordinate progress through the various stages of the session. Although you never know exactly what the subordinate will say or do during counseling, a written outline helps to organize the session and greatly enhances the chance of positive results. (Figure 1 illustrates an example of a counseling outline prepared by a platoon leader about to conduct an initial NCOER counseling session with a platoon sergeant.)

g. **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.

#### h. Establish the Right Atmosphere

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

(2) 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.

<b>Type of counseling:</b>	Initial NCOER counseling for SFC Taylor, a recently promoted new arrival to the unit.
<b>Place and time:</b>	The platoon office, 1500 hours, 9 October.
<b>Time to notify the subordinate:</b>	Notify SFC Taylor one month in advance of the scheduled counseling session.
<b>Subordinate preparation:</b>	Have SFC Taylor put together a list of goals and objectives he would like to complete over the next 6 to 12 months.

<b>Counselor preparation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review the NCO Counseling Checklist/Record form.</li> <li>● Update or review SFC Taylor's duty description and fill out the rating chain and duty description on the working copy of the NCOER (Parts II and III).</li> <li>● Review each of the values/responsibilities in Part IV of the NCOER. Think how each applies to SFC Taylor and the platoon sergeant position.</li> <li>● Review the actions you consider necessary for a success or excellence in each value/responsibility.</li> <li>● Make notes in blank spaces in Part IV of the NCOER to help when counseling.</li> </ul>
<b>Role as counselor:</b>	<p>Help SFC Taylor to understand the expectations and standards associated with the platoon sergeant position. Assist SFC Taylor in developing the values, attributes, skills, and actions that will enable him to achieve his performance objectives, consistent with those of the platoon and company. Resolve any aspects of the job that are not clearly understood.</p>
<b>Session outline:</b>	<p>Complete an outline after the draft duty description on the NCOER, ideally at least two to three days prior to the actual counseling session.</p>
<b><u>Open the Session</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a relaxed environment. Explain that the more one discusses and understands the doctrinal values, attributes, skills, and actions, the easier it is to develop and incorporate them into an individual leadership style.</li> <li>● State the purpose of the counseling session. Explain that the initial counseling is based on leader actions (what SFC Taylor needs to do to be a successful platoon sergeant) and not on professional developmental needs (what SFC Taylor needs to do to develop further as an NCO).</li> <li>● Come to an agreement on the duty description, the meaning of each value/responsibility, and the standards for success and excellence for each value/responsibility. Explain that subsequent counseling will focus on SFC Taylor's developmental needs as well as how well SFC Taylor is meeting the jointly agreed upon performance objectives. Instruct SFC Taylor to perform a self-assessment during the next quarter to identify his developmental needs.</li> <li>● Ensure SFC Taylor knows the rating chain. Resolve any questions that SFC Taylor has about his job. Discuss the team relationship that exists between a platoon leader and a platoon sergeant and the importance of their two-way communication.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Discuss the Issue</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jointly review the duty description on the NCOER, including the maintenance, training, and taking care of Service Members responsibilities. Mention that the duty description can be revised as necessary. Highlight areas of special emphasis and appointed duties.</li> <li>● Discuss the meaning of each value/responsibility on the NCOER. Discuss the values, attributes, skills, and actions outlined in FM 22-100. Ask open-ended questions to see if SFC Taylor can relate these items to his role as a platoon sergeant.</li> <li>● Explain that even though the developmental tasks focus on the development of leader actions, character development forms the basis for leadership development. Character and actions cannot be viewed as separate; they are closely linked. In formulating the plan of action to accomplish major performance objectives, the proper values, attributes, and skills form the basis for the plan. As such, character development must be incorporated into the plan of action.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Assist in Developing a Plan of Action (During the Counseling Session)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask SFC Taylor to identify actions that will facilitate the accomplishment of the major performance objectives. Categorize each action into one of the values/responsibilities listed on the NCOER.</li> <li>● Discuss how each value/responsibility applies to the platoon sergeant position. Discuss specific examples of success and excellence in each value/responsibility block. Ask SFC Taylor for suggestions to make the goals more objective, specific, and measurable.</li> <li>● Ensure that SFC Taylor has at least one example of a success or excellence bullet listed under each value/responsibility.</li> <li>● Discuss SFC Taylor's promotion goals and ask him what he considers to be his strengths and weakness. Obtain a copy of the last two MSG board results and match his goals and objectives to these.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Close the Session</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Check SFC Taylor's understanding of the duty description and performance objectives.</li> <li>● Stress the importance of teamwork and two-way communication.</li> <li>● Ensure SFC Taylor understands that you expect him to assist in your development as a platoon leader. This means that both of you have roles as a teacher and coach.</li> <li>● Remind SFC Taylor to perform a self-assessment during the next quarter.</li> <li>● Set a tentative date during the next quarter for the routinely scheduled follow-up counseling.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Notes on Strategy</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitate the answering of questions that require responses.</li> <li>● Expect discomfort with the terms and the developmental process and respond in such a way that encourages participation throughout the counseling.</li> <li>● Do not overwhelm SFC Taylor with a mastery of doctrine and the leader development process.</li> <li>● View the initial counseling session as setting the precedent for open communications with a focus on leader development (both the counselor and the counseled).</li> </ul>

**Figure 1. Example of a Counseling Outline**

**23. CONDUCT THE COUNSELING SESSION**

a. Be flexible when conducting a counseling session. Often counseling for a specific incident occurs spontaneously as leaders encounter subordinates in their daily activities. Such counseling can occur in



the field, motor pool, barracks, or wherever subordinates perform their duties. Good leaders take advantage of naturally occurring events to provide subordinates with feedback.

b. Even when you have not 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.
- Discussing the issues.
- Developing the plan of action.
- Recording and Closing the session.

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

c. 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 with the subordinate.

d. Discuss the Issues

(1) The leader and 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

(2) Both the leader 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, the leader should make clear how the performance did not meet the standard. The conversation, which should be two-way, then addresses what the subordinate needs to do to meet the standard. It is important that the leader defines the issue as substandard performance and does not allow the subordinate to define the issue as an unreasonable standard unless the leader considers the standard negotiable or is willing to alter the conditions under which the standard must be met.

e. 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 the session. The plan of action must be specific: 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 will attend the map reading class with 1st Platoon. After the class, SGT 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 SGT Dixon, and then I will talk to you again and determine where and if you still need additional training." A specific and achievable plan of action sets the stage for successful development.

f. 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.

**24. RECORD COUNSELING**

a. Although requirements to record counseling sessions vary, the 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.

b. Additionally, NYG Directives require written records of counseling for certain personnel actions, such as a barring a soldier from reenlisting, processing a soldier for AWOL separation, or placing a soldier in the overweight program. When a soldier faces involuntary separation, the leader must take special care to maintain accurate counseling records. Documentation of substandard actions conveys a strong corrective message to the subordinate.

**25. FOLLOW UP**

a. Leader’s Responsibilities. The counseling process does not end with the counseling session. It continues through implementation of the plan of action and evaluation of results. After counseling, you must support subordinates while 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.

b. 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. The leader and 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.

<p>Leaders must demonstrate certain 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 certain 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 the influence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal bias.</li> <li>○ Rash judgments.</li> <li>○ Stereotyping.</li> <li>○ The loss of emotional control.</li> <li>○ Inflexible methods of counseling.</li> <li>○ Improper follow-up.</li> </ul>	<p>The Counseling Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the need for counseling.</li> <li>2. Prepare for counseling:             <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> </li> <li>3. Conduct the counseling session :             <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> </li> <li>4. Follow up.</li> </ol>
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**Figure 2. Summary of Major Counseling Process**

**26. SUMMARY.** This appendix has discussed 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. Figure 2 summarizes the major aspects of developmental counseling and the counseling process.

**27. THE DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM.** The Developmental Counseling Form helps a leader conduct and record a counseling session. Leaders in a soldier's chain decide when counseling, additional training, rehabilitation, reassignment, and any other developmental options have been exhausted. Appendix A shows a blank form with instructions on how to complete each block.

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**APPENDIX A**

<p><b>DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM</b>                  For use of this form, see NYGD 1326; the proponent agency is NYSG-J1</p>			
<p><b>DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974</b></p>			
<p><b>AUTHORITY:</b></p>	<p>5 USC 301</p>		
<p><b>PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:</b></p>	<p>To assist leaders in conducting and recording counseling data pertaining to subordinates.</p>		
<p><b>ROUTINE USES:</b></p>	<p>For subordinate leader development IAW NYGD 1326. Leaders use this form as necessary.</p>		
<p><b>DISCLOSURE:</b></p>	<p>Disclosure is voluntary.</p>		
<p><b>PART I – ADMINISTRATIVE DATA</b></p>			
<p>Name (Last, First, MI)  <i>Enter name of individual being counseled</i></p>	<p>Rank/Grade</p>	<p>NYG ID#</p>	<p>Date of Counseling</p>
<p>Organization  <i>Enter organization at level of counseling</i></p>	<p>Name and Title of Counselor</p>		
<p><b>PART II – BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b></p>			
<p><b>Purpose of Counseling:</b> <i>(Leader states the reason for the counseling, e.g., performance/professional growth or event-oriented counseling, and includes the leader's facts and observations prior to the counseling.)</i></p> <p><i>State the reason and detail. If performance or professional growth could be goals and objectives from Evaluation Support Form. If event, describe pounds over the Maximum Allowable Weight, or the number of drills missed over the last six months. Could be the nature and date of an insubordination event, mission failure, dates of impairment while on duty, or the like. Be as factual as possible. Include specific dates.</i></p>			
<p><b>PART III – SUMMARY OF COUNSELING</b>                  Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.</p>			
<p><b>Key Points of Discussion:</b></p> <p><i>If performance or professional growth could be goals and objectives from Evaluation Support Form, discuss each goal and what needs to be done and what the standard for measurement will be.</i></p> <p><i>If event, describe pounds over the Maximum Allowable Weight, and what the Directive requires, and how the individual can achieve the necessary reduction; or the number of drills missed over the last six months, what the Directive and State Law requires to maintain membership, how to mitigate attendance problems; or could be the nature and date of an insubordination event, mission failure, dates of impairment while on duty, or the like. Need to discuss what changes need to be made.</i></p>			
<p><b>OTHER INSTRUCTIONS</b>                  This form will be destroyed upon: reassignment, separation at ETS, or upon retirement.</p>			

**Plan of Action:** *(Outline 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 specified time line for implementation and assessment (Part IV below)*

*If performance or professional growth could be goals and objectives from Evaluation Support Form, discuss and outline what needs to be achieved by what time frame. If event, describe pounds over the Maximum Allowable Weight, or the number of drills missed over the last six months. Could be the nature and date of an insubordination event, mission failure, dates of impairment while on duty, or the like.*

**Session Closing:** *(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.)*

Individual Counseled: I \_\_\_ agree \_\_\_ disagree with the information above.

Individuals counseled remarks:

*Counseled individual indicates agreement or disagreement and adds any pertinent remarks.*

Signature of Individual Counseled: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Leader Responsibilities:** *(Leader responsibilities in implementing the plan of action.)*

*Leader indicates any actions or responsibilities agreed to such as assisting in getting outside assistance, training etc.*

Signature of Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART IV – ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN OF ACTION**

*Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.*

**Assessment:** *(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.)*

*Both Leader and individual counseled meet after a specified period and evaluate if the established goals are being met.*

Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Counseled \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Both the Counselor and the Individual Counseled should retain a record of the counseling**

REVERSE, NYG Form 1326, NOV 2015