

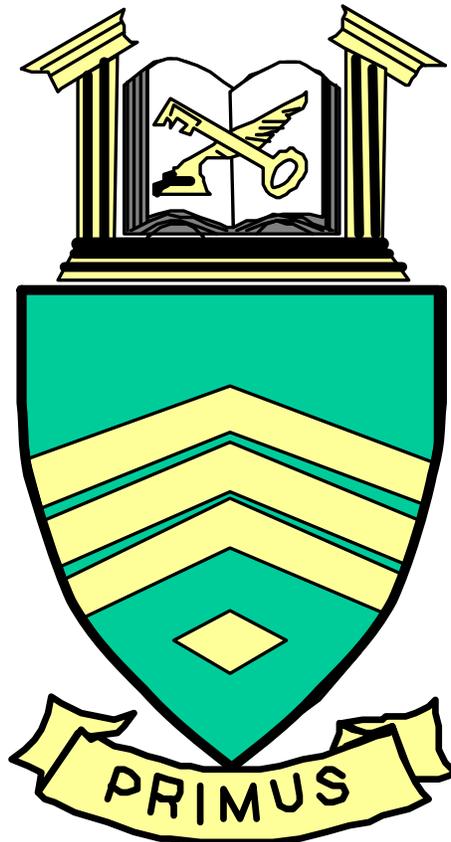
U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY (FSC-TATS)

L664

OCT 04

COUNSELING PH2

## STUDENT HANDOUT



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## Appendix C

### PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1

<b>Title</b>	PRODUCE A UNIT-COUNSELING PROGRAM						
<b>Lesson Number / Title</b>	L664 version 1 / COUNSELING						
<b>Introduction</b>	None						
<b>Motivator</b>	None						
<b>Terminal Learning Objective</b>	<p><b>NOTE:</b> The instructor should inform the students of the following Terminal Learning Objective covered by this practical exercise.</p> <p>At the completion of this lesson, you [the student] will:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;"><b>Action:</b></td> <td>Produce a unit-counseling program.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Conditions:</b></td> <td>As a first sergeant in a classroom environment given FM 22-100 and student handouts.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Standards:</b></td> <td>           Within 20 minutes, produced a unit-counseling program using individual solutions from the preresident Practical Exercise 3. Plan should address:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Modeling,</li> <li>• Education,</li> <li>• Leader involvement,</li> <li>• As well as any deficiencies noted in the assessment, and any strengths for sustainment,</li> </ul>           IAW FM 22-100.         </td> </tr> </table>	<b>Action:</b>	Produce a unit-counseling program.	<b>Conditions:</b>	As a first sergeant in a classroom environment given FM 22-100 and student handouts.	<b>Standards:</b>	Within 20 minutes, produced a unit-counseling program using individual solutions from the preresident Practical Exercise 3. Plan should address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Modeling,</li> <li>• Education,</li> <li>• Leader involvement,</li> <li>• As well as any deficiencies noted in the assessment, and any strengths for sustainment,</li> </ul> IAW FM 22-100.
<b>Action:</b>	Produce a unit-counseling program.						
<b>Conditions:</b>	As a first sergeant in a classroom environment given FM 22-100 and student handouts.						
<b>Standards:</b>	Within 20 minutes, produced a unit-counseling program using individual solutions from the preresident Practical Exercise 3. Plan should address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Modeling,</li> <li>• Education,</li> <li>• Leader involvement,</li> <li>• As well as any deficiencies noted in the assessment, and any strengths for sustainment,</li> </ul> IAW FM 22-100.						
<b>Safety Requirements</b>	None						
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Low						
<b>Environmental Considerations</b>	None						
<b>Evaluation</b>	None						
<b>Instructional Lead-In</b>	<p>In L664 Phase I, preresident lesson you were given three scenarios and required to assess that unit's counseling program. You assignment was to complete PE-3 and bring your solution to this class for discussion. We are now going to discuss your plan.</p>						

**Resource  
Requirements**

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**Instructor Materials:**

- TSP.

**Student Materials:**

- L664 Phase I, Practical Exercise 3
  - FM 22-100.
  - Student Handouts 2 and 3.
  - Pen or pencil and writing paper.
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**Special  
Instructions**

1. This practical exercise will give you the opportunity to discuss, surface questions, and acquire a deeper understanding of unit counseling programs. Ensure the students have the SH-2 and SH-3.
2. Divide the class into 3 or 4 groups.
3. VTT: Designate each site as one group.
4. Students may use white board or easel for their solutions.

You have 20 minutes to present and discuss, within your group, your individual solutions from L663 Phase I, Practical Exercise 3. You must come to a group consensus on one solution, select a spokesperson to brief your group's solution. The group spokesperson will have 5 minutes to brief. Your plan should address the deficiencies noted in the assessment as well as any strengths for sustainment. Additionally, you must specifically explain how you will use your strategies.

Your plan must address logical employment of any or all of the following:

- Role Modeling.
- Education.
- Leader involvement.

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**Procedures**

Requirement: Analyze Situation A from L664 Phase I, Practical Exercise 2. Develop a plan that will improve or sustain the unit-counseling program. Your plan must include:

1. An explanation of why the counseling program in Situation A needs improvement.
2. A description of how a good unit counseling program affects the organization.
3. An assessment of the unit-counseling program based on the information provided.
4. A specific plan describing measures to improve the unit-counseling program in the organization. The plan must address logical employment of any or all of the following:
  - role modeling.
  - education.
  - leader involvement.
5. The plan should address the deficiencies noted in the assessment as well as any strengths for sustainment. You must specifically explain how you will employ any or all of the above strategies.
6. A plan to assess the impact of the improvement measures described in 4 above.

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**Feedback  
Requirements**

None

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## Appendix D

### HANDOUTS FOR LESSON 1: L664 version 1

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This appendix contains the items listed in this table--

<b>Title/Synopsis</b>	<b>Pages</b>
SH-1, Advance Sheet	SH-1-1 and SH-1-2
SH-2, First Sergeant Job Guide	SH-2-1 thru SH-2-5
SH-3, L664 Phase I, Situation A from PE-2	SH-3-1 and SH-3-2

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# Student Handout 1

## Advance Sheet for L664

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**Lesson Hours** This lesson consists of a forty minute practical exercise.

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**Overview** None

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**Learning Objective** Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

<b>Action:</b>	Produce a unit-counseling program.
<b>Conditions:</b>	As a first sergeant in a classroom environment given FM 22-100 and student handouts.
<b>Standards:</b>	Within 20 minutes, produced a unit-counseling program using individual solutions from the preresident Practical Exercise 3. Plan should address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Role Modeling,</li><li>• Education,</li><li>• Leader involvement,</li><li>• As well as any deficiencies noted in the assessment, and any strengths for sustainment,</li></ul> IAW FM 22-100.

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**ELO A** Prepare a plan to improve or sustain a unit-counseling program.

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**Assignment** The student assignments for this lesson are:

Before class--

- Complete L664 Phase I, Practical Exercise 3.
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**Additional Subject Area Resources** None

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**Bring to Class** Practical Exercise 3 from L664 Phase I.  
FM 22-100.  
Student Handouts 1 thru 3.  
Pen or pencil and writing paper.

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**Note to Students**

It is your responsibility to do the homework prior to class. We expect you to come to class prepared and participate in the small group discussion by providing information you learned from your individual study, as well as your personal and observed experiences. Failure to study and read the assignments above will result in your inability to fully participate with the rest of the group. Not having your input affects the group's ability to fully discuss the information.

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## Student Handout 2

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This student handout contains 4 pages of extracted material compiled by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. Although not regulatory in nature, it contains valuable information for each First Sergeant in Assessing and Improving the unit's counseling program.

*First Sergeant Job Guide*

**Disclaimer:** The training developer downloaded the material from the Center for Army Leadership website. The text may contain passive voice, misspellings, grammatical errors, etc., and may not be in compliance with the Army Writing Style Program.

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## **The Unit Counseling Program**

Company level leaders must understand the effects of the unit counseling program on the organization. They must also ensure that all leaders within their organization understand who, when, and how to counsel. A unit-counseling program will only exist and sustain itself with strong leader involvement. Company level leaders must both set the example through their effective counseling of subordinates and assess and improve the counseling program within their units.

### **The Effects of Counseling on the Organization**

The primary purpose of counseling is subordinate development, yet the secondary effect of counseling greatly influences the unit as a whole. An effective counseling program strengthens the chain of command while providing opportunity for individual leader development.

**Strengthening the Chain of Command:** A strong chain of command is one where the flow of information is two-way. Not only should a chain of command pass information down, it should also carry information up.

Leaders frequently ask subordinates for feedback or input on decisions, yet subordinates who are not comfortable communicating openly with leaders will not provide honest input. An effective unit-counseling program establishes an atmosphere of open, two-way communication in the unit in which the subordinate's knowledge, attitudes, and opinions are respected. With this type of atmosphere, leaders will better understand and influence their subordinates.

The respect a leader demonstrates toward a subordinate in counseling will be reflected back to the leader, or returned to the leader. Effective counseling is correctly interpreted by subordinates, as an act of care and concern. Leaders who display this level of caring strengthen their ability to influence those they lead.

Counseling provides subordinates an excellent opportunity to seek clarification on policies, procedures, standards, and priorities. It also provides an opportunity for leaders to check for subordinate's understanding and perceptions of the same. An effective counseling program is a key tool in establishing and maintaining an effective leader development program within a unit.

**Opportunities for Leader Growth:** Counseling presents opportunities for leaders to learn about their effectiveness, as well as opportunities to gain an appreciation for the complexity and diversity of those they lead. Leaders should reflect on, and learn from, each counseling session. For example, if a subordinate is not performing to standard, a leader should attempt to determine whether there is a communication problem, training deficiency, or an associated resource or equipment problem. Perhaps the issue is not isolated to a single subordinate, but affects the performance of many in the unit. Through counseling, leaders will discover that what motivates one subordinate may not motivate another, etc. Counseling presents an excellent opportunity for leaders to more fully understand those they lead and the effectiveness of their own leadership.

## Assessing a Unit Counseling Program

Assessing a unit counseling program is more than simply determining whether or not leaders counsel their subordinates. It is a matter of determining whether or not leaders counsel at appropriate times and if they counsel effectively. In order to accurately assess the unit counseling program, leaders must determine the following:

- Do leaders counsel subordinates?
- Do leaders counsel in appropriate situations?
- Do leaders counsel effectively? For example, are the counseling sessions really developmental (creating a plan of action for further subordinate development) or are they evaluative (here's what you did and how well you did it)?

It is easy to assess a counseling program in a very superficial manner. The tendency is to give the counseling program a "GO" based on a very limited amount of information. For example, a leader might conclude that since most squad leaders counsel their soldiers monthly, the unit has an effective counseling program. This may be a false conclusion, as the information obtained does not address how the squad leaders counsel or if they counsel at appropriate times. Both of these points are important.

Leaders must address "who, how, and when" in assessing the unit counseling program. Although these three aspects of the assessment may seem simple, leaders cannot underestimate the complexity of the assessing process.

Given this complexity, a leader must not try to assess the counseling program as merely good or bad, but attempt to accurately determine the status of the program in several areas so that specific improvements may be made. A leader, who has not considered the meaning and complexity of counseling and how the counseling program is assessed, will have difficulty understanding and improving the unit-counseling program.

Performing the Assessment: At the company level, leaders attempt to gain information about if, when, and how well counseling occurs. The leader should query personnel of various ranks from different sections of the unit. The leader must pose questions appropriately in order to avoid "begging the right answer." For example, if the leader asks, "Do you counsel your soldiers?" the answer would surely be "Yes." A more effective approach is, "Tell me about the last time you counseled one of your soldiers..."

In addition to the comments listed above, leaders should review the current counseling program within their unit to ensure:

That counseling taking place is not solely for the reason of separating a soldier. The primary purpose of developmental counseling is to develop subordinates, not to separate them from the Army.

- That two way communication is taking place between the leader and the subordinate and that the soldiers are not just signing the counseling form because of an evaluation or unit monthly counseling requirement.
- That the counseling sessions are really developmental (creating a plan of action for further subordinate development) and they are not evaluative (here's what you did and how well you did it).
- That the counseling sessions are individualized and everyone in the squad/section (for example) does not receive the same counseling session.
- That the command emphasis on the unit counseling program and senior leaders are leading by example by conducting productive, developmental counseling sessions.

An assessment of the unit-counseling program is not an isolated action. For example, you

obtain information about the program during normal conversations with unit personnel. As you do with maintenance and training, you must continuously spot-check the effectiveness of your unit counseling program. The assessment cannot be limited to querying unit personnel. Part of the assessment should include counseling records and observing counseling sessions.

The leader may choose to vary the focus on the counseling program and tailor the assessment accordingly. For example, the leader may choose to focus on NCOER counseling for an identified time period. The following is an example of how a company level leader tailored the assessment instrument to assess NCOER counseling within a unit.

1. Do leaders counsel subordinates?
  - Do raters conduct initial and follow-up NCOER counseling?
2. Do leaders counsel in appropriate situations?

Do raters schedule counseling during the first 30 days of the rating period and at least quarterly thereafter?

- Is counseling conducted in a manner that encourages the subordinate to actively participate?
3. Do leaders counsel effectively?
    - Does the counseling look toward the future? i.e. develop a plan of action to improve future performance rather than simply reviewing past performance.
    - Does the counseling address the duty description, definitions of values/responsibilities and standards of success?
    - Is there a plan of action to focus the subordinate's actions after the session?
    - How does the subordinate participate in the session?
    - Is the leader's responsibilities in implementing the plan of action (time, resources, and training) clearly identified and agreed upon?
    - Is the follow-up counseling scheduled and does it actually take place?

Results of the Assessment: A leader cannot expect to give each category of the assessment instrument a purely negative or positive rating. The assessment may determine that counseling occurs more, or is more effective, in certain sections of the unit, or that the unit is very good at counseling junior soldiers while NCOs and officers rarely receive counseling. There may be ample records to support required counseling, but the effectiveness of the counseling may be lacking.

After a leader conducts an assessment, the leader should note the key findings of the assessment. Each unit counseling program will have strengths and weaknesses. Leaders must recognize and praise the positive aspects of the program and develop a plan of action to improve the weak areas.

### **Improve or Sustain a Unit Counseling Program**

Using the findings of the assessment, the company level leader must take action to improve the shortcomings of the counseling program. Improvement measures must be specific and tailored to address specific shortcomings. Leaders may use all or some of the following strategies in improving the unit counseling program.

- Role-Modeling. One of the most effective methods in improving counseling skills is to observe a skilled counselor. When leaders counsel they are "modeling" proper counseling for their subordinates. Most of us learned to counsel from our superiors' example, not from what we were taught or learned in a school or classroom environment. Leaders demonstrate effective counseling for their subordinates in both actual situations and staged in role-play demonstrations.
- Education. Many leaders are misguided or misinformed on counseling related issues. For example, some leaders do not think a leader should counsel subordinates unless

there is a policy that mandates counseling. Others may think that since the commander has implemented a system of monthly counseling for sergeants and below, it is not necessary to counsel soldiers on performance concerns which need improvement (or maintained) today. Other leaders may hold the perception that since a subordinate is performing to standard, there is not need for counseling and reserve counseling for substandard performers or problem situations. Leaders must be educated in all aspects of the unit counseling program to include who, how, and when to counsel.

There are several methods to educate unit leaders on the unit counseling program ranging from formal policy memorandums to informal verbal directives. Leaders should also consider conducting professional development classes within the unit. Utilizing on-post assets available, classes could be coordinated for:

- Effective writing skills
- Communication skills
- Legal aspects of counseling
- Proper use of the NCOER

**Leader Involvement:** Leaders support the counseling program by scheduling time for counseling. Successful counseling requires preparation by both the leader and subordinate. When possible, the leader should counsel the subordinate during the duty day. Counseling after duty hours may be rushed or perceived as unfavorable. Leaders also show support for the counseling programs by setting the example through proper counseling of their own subordinates.

Leaders should frequently talk about and encourage counseling. They should continually evaluate the counseling program by talking with their junior leaders and their subordinates. Effective counseling should be praised and ineffective counseling corrected. A leader's attitude concerning counseling pervades the unit. If leaders routinely address the importance of, and the need for counseling, they strengthen the chain of command and promote development throughout the organization.

## **Conclusion**

A company level leader is responsible for the unit-counseling program. An effective counseling program has a tremendous impact on the unit. It helps subordinates develop, strengthens the chain of command, and provides opportunities for counselors to improve their understanding of leadership. A company leader must: 1) understand the fundamentals of counseling, 2) perform informal assessments of counseling within the unit, and 3) improve the unit counseling program through role-modeling, education, and leader involvement. An effective unit counseling program is a dynamic system of skilled leaders helping their subordinates develop. It cannot be dictated with a policy memorandum or an evaluation system. It takes time, energy, and effort to develop and sustain an effective unit counseling program. Leaders who invest in developing unit counseling programs are investing in the future of their subordinates and of the unit.

### **Student Handout 3**

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This student handout contains Situation A from L664, Phase I, Practical Exercise 2, ASSESS THE UNIT'S COUNSELING PROGRAM.

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### **Situation A from L664, Phase I, Practical Exercise 2**

You are the new First Sergeant. It is the end of the month and counseling is due. Your unit just returned from a field training exercise. During the morning, the enlisted soldiers went about recovery while the NCOs and officers filled out counseling forms. After lunch, the NCOs and officers gave the counseling forms to each soldier and NCO and told them to sign if they concurred, or make an appointment if they non-concurred. You had never witnessed this sort of "mass counseling" before.

Before you become angry, you decide to ask a platoon sergeant if this is a normal occurrence. Her explanation,

"It's the battalion commander's policy to counsel soldiers monthly. There just isn't time to sit down and talk with each soldier. In this unit the mission comes first, and counseling is one of many things that get placed on the back burner. The current system is perfect; there is no need to back-date any counseling's, time is not wasted talking to the soldiers, and soldiers who want to talk, have the opportunity to do so even though getting in the appointment line is not the thing to do!"

After her explanation, one of the top mechanics walked by you looking upset. You approached him and asked him about his glum expression. His explanation,

"My squad leader just gave me my counseling form and I am not recommending you for promotion due to poor performance during the FTX. When I asked him what he was talking about, he said, he wasn't recommending anyone in the squad due to the low Operational Readiness (OR) rate. When I tried to explain that the deadlined vehicles were all awaiting parts and that there was nothing I could do about it, he told me to shut up and he is aware of everything that happens in the motor pool. He screamed at me and said, "Outstanding mechanics find ways to keep the vehicles up and you just don't get it! Mechanics with a little common sense and initiative will know how to take care of things."

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