

# Managing Difficult Conversations

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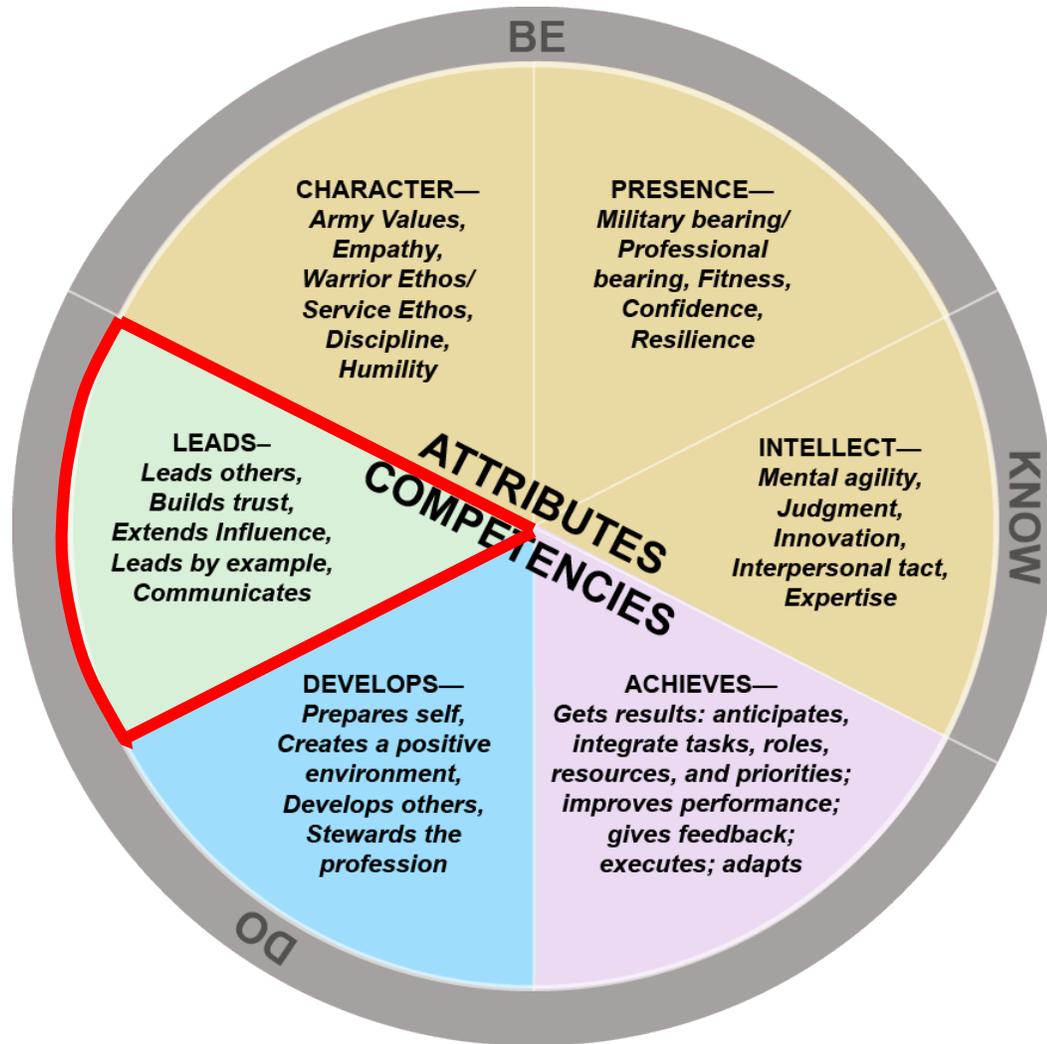
Leader Professional Development

United States Army

Center for Army Leadership



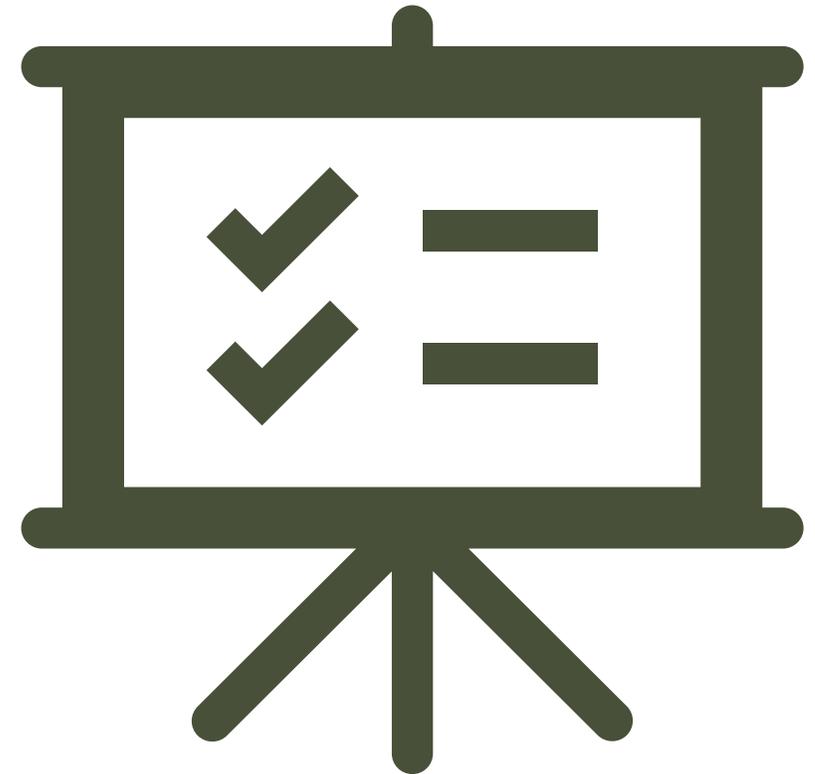
# Army Leadership Requirements Model (LRM)



- This LPD session focuses on the following competency:
  - Extends Influence
- Learn more about the LRM by reviewing:
  - ADP 6-22
    - Describes what right looks like for all leaders
  - FM 6-22
    - Teaches you how to develop as a leader

# Session Objectives

- Identify the importance of having difficult conversations.
- Discuss strategies for managing difficult conversations.





# The Importance of Having Difficult Conversations



# Discussion



- Consider a time when you had a difficult conversation. What made the conversation difficult? Was it the other person, your delivery, the situation, or a hard topic to discuss?

# Why Having Difficult Conversations Is Important

- Difficult conversations can help you:
  - Explore different perspectives
  - Find solutions
  - Maintain a respectful climate
  - Build trust
  - Maximize mission success



# When Difficult Conversations Are Likely to Occur

## With Subordinates

- Counseling a subordinate for poor performance
- Explaining why a subordinate did not have a good evaluation
- Explaining why a subordinate did not get a position they wanted

## With Peers

- Rebuilding trust after a competition with your peers gets out of hand
- Offering advice to peers on how to improve their performance
- Resolving disputes with peers that spill over from another group or event

## With Superiors

- Receiving guidance from a senior leader that you do not agree with
- Making a senior leader aware of the risks of different courses of action
- Making sure expectations for troops are realistic and using training mistakes as lessons learned
- Asking a senior leader why you received negative feedback



# Strategies for Managing Difficult Conversations



# Discussion



- Why is it important to address difficult issues sooner rather than later?

# Choosing How to Address a Situation

Things to consider:

Is a direct conversation the best approach?

How should you initiate the conversation?

Is this a sensitive issue that might be better addressed indirectly?

# Strategies for Managing Difficult Conversations

## Starting the Conversation

- Consider the setting
- Don't make assumptions
- Open from a neutral position
- Consider how the other person may react
- Adapt your approach to the individual

## During the Conversation

- Use a collaborative approach
- Consider body language
- Listen actively
- Consider their perspective
- Don't assign blame
- Speak tactfully
- Keep your message clear
- Keep the tone professional

## Closing the Conversation

- Problem solve
- Build consensus
- Follow through
- Confirm what was discussed

# Strategies for Starting the Conversation

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# Strategies for Closing the Conversation

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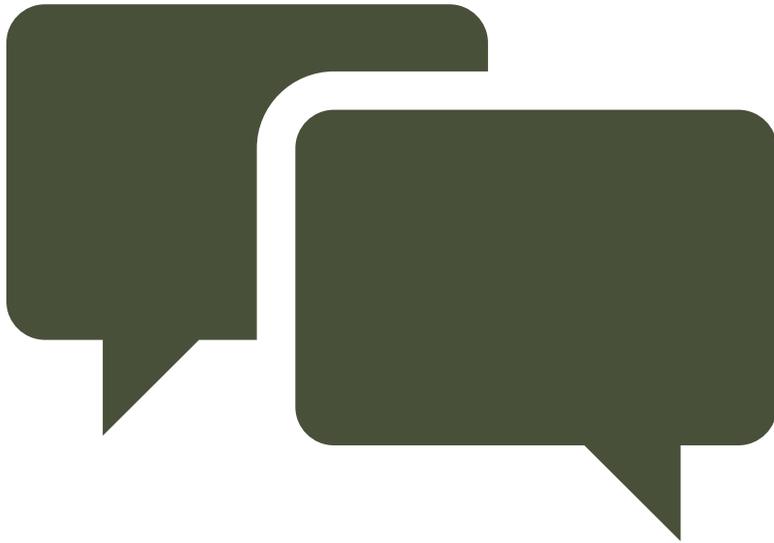
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- Consider the following situations:
  - A subordinate regularly distracts everyone from their work.
  - A peer makes jokes about another Soldier's religion.
  - A leader openly discusses a subordinate's performance with other subordinates.
  - A peer you offered advice to doesn't seem receptive during the conversation.
  - A subordinate appears anxious or upset at the beginning of a difficult conversation.
  - A subordinate continues to have performance issues several weeks after the conversation.
- What strategies could you use when responding to these situations? Consider strategies that have worked for you in the past or new strategies you would like to try.

# Want to Learn More?

<https://cal.army.mil>



## Doctrine

*Provides leader expectations*

- ADP 6-22
  - Paragraph 5-49
  - Paragraphs 5-57 and 5-61
  - Paragraph 6-33 and 6-34
  - Paragraph 9-6
  - Paragraph 10-27
- FM 6-22
  - Paragraph 4-69
  - Paragraph 4-80
  - Paragraph 4-81
  - Paragraph 4-98



## Self-paced Online Lessons

*Provide additional content and real-world examples/scenarios*

- Navigating Contentious Conversations

# After Action Review

- Complete the AAR form in your Participant Packet and return it to the facilitator.
  - The form allows you to provide feedback about this session.
  - Your feedback will be used to improve future deliveries of this session.

# Let's Connect

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