



## COUNSELING STATEMENT FACT SHEET



Army leaders counsel their subordinates. Counseling is a process used by leaders to review with a subordinate the subordinate's performance and/or potential. Counseling Soldiers teaches and assists the counseled Soldier to improve their performance. It is important for leaders to help Soldiers to become more capable, and prepared for current and future responsibilities.

There are different reasons to counsel Soldiers, such as promotion, performance, and event-oriented issues. The counseling is captured on the Department of Army (DA) Form 4856. The Soldier can add comments on the second page of DA Form 4856.

**Developmental Counseling:** is a subordinate-centered communication that outlines actions necessary for subordinates to achieve individual and organizational goals and objectives, begins with the reception/integration and/or initial counseling and is a continuous process.

**Event-oriented counseling:** involves a specific event or situation. This counseling may precede or follow events and is both positive and negative in nature (e.g., assistance, direction, conduct, progression, superior performance, substandard performance). Successful event-oriented counseling must be conducted as close to the event as possible. The common tendency is to identify what went wrong instead of right. Often, counseling efforts focus on identifying/documenting the poor performance or conduct. Leaders must be just as diligent and forthright in identifying/documenting positive performance/conduct as well. When a 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/conduct or face discharge. In most situations, it is beneficial to involve the chain of command as soon as you determine that adverse separation counseling may be required. Adverse separation counseling may involve informing the Soldier of the administrative actions available to the commander in the event substandard performance/conduct continues and of the consequences associated with those administrative actions (see AR 635-200).

The Soldier cannot be forced to sign or comment on DA Form 4856. However, if you disagree with the counseling, you should sign and add your comments. If you refuse to sign, the counseling statement can still be used. The leader will annotate that you have received the DA Form 4856 and refused to sign.

If the block does not provide enough space for your comments, you may write the statement on a separate paper and attach it to the counseling form. If you are not ready to write a statement, indicate on the form that you request 24 -48 hours to draft your comments. You should disagree with any substantial facts that are incorrect on the counseling statement, such as the content, plan of action, leader responsibilities, key points of discussion, or any mistakes that may be contained in the administrative portion.

Negative counseling statements are kept at your local command. When you PCS to your next duty station, the counseling file does not go with you - you will start with a clean slate at your new post.



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