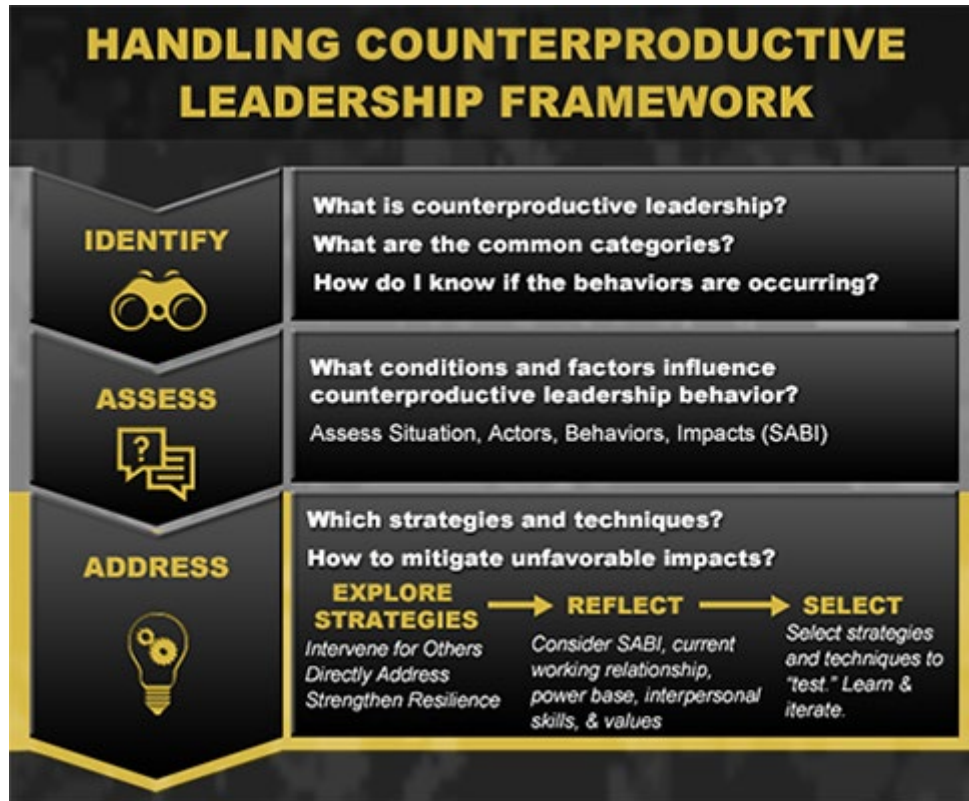


Handling Counterproductive Leadership

The infographic below provides a unifying “big picture” framework for how to identify, assess, and address counterproductive leadership.



ARMY VALUES

Counterproductive leadership behaviors violate the Army Values. The table below provides a description of each the seven Army Values as provided in ADP 6-22.

Value	Description
Loyalty	<p>Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other Soldiers.</p> <p>The first order of loyalty is to the Constitution and the ideals upon which it is based. One cannot remain loyal to the Constitution by being loyal to those who violate it. To create strong organizations, superiors, subordinates, and peers must embrace loyalty. One way that individuals demonstrate loyalty is by upholding all of the Army values. With those values as a foundation, loyalty is a two-way exchange: leaders earn loyalty and subordinates expect loyalty in return. Leaders earn subordinates’ loyalty by training them well, treating them fairly, and living the Army Values. Subordinates demonstrate loyalty by working hard for their leaders and being as good as they can be at their jobs. Loyalty and trust enable the successful day-to-day operations of all organizations.</p>
Duty	<p>Fulfill your obligations – always do your best.</p> <p>All Soldiers and DA Civilians strive to do their best. Duty extends beyond law, regulation, and orders. Army professionals exercise initiative when they fulfill the purpose, not merely the letter, of received orders. Leaders take responsibility for their actions and those of their subordinates; it is inherent in their duty to the larger</p>

Value	Description
	organization, the Army, and the Nation. Conscientious leaders and subordinates possess a sense of responsibility to apply their best efforts to accomplish the mission. This guides Soldiers and DA Civilians to do what is right to the best of their ability.
Respect	<p>Treat people as they should be treated.</p> <p>The Army Values reinforce that all people have dignity and worth and must be treated with respect. The Nation was founded on the ideal that all are created equal. In the Army, each is judged by the content of their character. Army leaders should consistently foster a climate that treats everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, creed, or religious belief. Fostering a positive climate begins with a leader's personal example. Leaders treat others, including adversaries, with respect.</p>
Selfless Service	<p>Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.</p> <p>Selfless service means doing what is right for the Nation, the Army, the organization, and subordinates. While the needs of the Army and the Nation should come first, selfless service does not imply leaders should neglect their families or themselves. Unselfish, humble leaders set themselves apart as teammates who are approachable, trustworthy, and open to follower input and advice. Selfless leaders aspire to attain goals for the greater good, beyond their own interests and benefits.</p>
Honor	<p>Live up to Army Values.</p> <p>Living honorably, in line with the Army Values, sets an example for every member of the organization and contributes to an organization's positive climate and morale. How leaders conduct themselves and meet their obligations to the mission, other people, and the organization defines them as people and leaders.</p>
Integrity	<p>Do what is right, legally and morally.</p> <p>Leaders of integrity consistently follow honorable principles. The Army relies on leaders who are honest in word and deed. Leaders of integrity do the right thing because their character permits nothing less. To instill the Army Values in others, leaders must demonstrate them. As an Army leader and a person of integrity, personal values should reinforce the Army Values.</p>
Personal Courage	<p>Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical and moral).</p> <p>Personal courage is not the absence of fear; it is the ability to put fear aside and do what is necessary or right. Personal courage takes two forms: physical and moral. Effective leaders demonstrate both. Physical courage requires overcoming fears of bodily harm and doing one's duty. It triggers bravery that allows a Soldier to take risks in combat in spite of the fear of injury or death. For leaders, mission accomplishment may demand risking their own lives or those of Soldiers and justly taking the lives of enemies.</p> <p>Moral courage is the willingness to stand firm on values, principles, and convictions. It enables all leaders to stand up for what they believe is right, regardless of the consequences. Leaders, who take full responsibility for their decisions and actions, even when things go wrong, display moral courage. Moral courage also expresses itself as candor—being frank, honest, and sincere with others. Carefully considered professional judgment offered to subordinates, peers, and superiors is an expression of personal courage.</p>

CATEGORIES OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

You can think about the different types of counterproductive leadership behaviors using the categories below. The categories can not only help you name the behavior but also help to inform your strategies for coping with or addressing the behavior.

Category	Definition	Examples
Abusive Behaviors	This category includes behaviors that involve a leader exceeding the boundaries of their authority by being abusive, cruel, or degrading of others. These behaviors are contrary to what is required for the moral, ethical, and legal discharge of their authority.	Bullying, using threats or intimidation, humiliating others, berating others for mistakes, creating conflict, ridiculing others because of the authority held, domineering, or retaliating for perceived slights or disagreements
Self-Serving Behaviors	This category includes behaviors that result from self-centered motivations on the part of the leader, where the leader acts in ways that seek primarily to accomplish their own goals and needs before those of others.	Displaying arrogance, lacking concern or empathy for others, taking credit for others' work, insisting on having their way, distorting information to favor own ideas, exaggerating accomplishments or abilities, putting own work and accomplishments ahead of others and the mission, displaying narcissistic tendencies, or exhibiting sense of entitlement
Erratic Behaviors	This category includes behaviors related to self-control or volatility that drive the leader to act erratically or unpredictably. The leader engages in behavior that deflects their problems onto others or acts on the perceived negative intent of others.	Blaming others, deflecting responsibility, losing one's temper at the slightest provocation, behaving inconsistently in words and actions, insecurity, paranoia, being unapproachable
Leadership Incompetence	This category includes ineffective leadership behaviors that result from a lack of experience or willful neglect. Incompetence can include failure to act or acting poorly. While incompetent leadership can arise from reasons unrelated to counterproductive leadership, it is included as a category as it is often associated with arrogant or abusive leaders who are not aware of their shortcomings and do not seek to correct their shortcomings. Conversely, some leaders lacking competence are aware of their shortcomings, which leads them to behave in counterproductive or negative ways to cover up their shortcomings or mistakes.	Unengaged leadership, being passive or reactionary, neglecting leadership responsibilities, displaying poor judgment, putting others at risk, poorly motivating others, withholding encouragement, failing to clearly communicate expectations, or refusing to listen to subordinates

Category	Definition	Examples
Corrupt Behaviors	This category includes behaviors that violate explicit Army standards, regulations, or policies. Violations may range from disrespect subject to administrative discipline to criminal actions subject to discharge or incarceration.	Showing little or no respect to others, insulting or belittling individuals, being condescending or talking down to others, dishonesty, misusing government resources and time, creating a hostile work environment, EEO/SHARP violations, or violating Section 3583, Title 10, United States Code, AR 600-100, or the Uniform Code of Military Justice

CONDUCTING AN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT

Reflect on the situation and use the SABI acronym and the questions under each factor to conduct your assessment of the situation. Consider the overall situation, recognizing that the elements of the SABI tool are interrelated.

Factors	Your Assessment
<p>Situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When do the behaviors occur?</i> • <i>What conditions provoke the behavior?</i> 	
<p>Actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What characteristics unique to this leader may be influencing the behaviors (e.g., their competence, past experiences, personality characteristics)?</i> • <i>What characteristics of the recipient(s) may be influencing the behaviors?</i> • <i>How am I (or the recipient) contributing to this situation? Is this situation more about me and any insecurities and failings that I have? Do I need to reframe how I look at it?</i> 	
<p>Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which behaviors? <i>What specific counterproductive leadership behaviors are being exhibited, if any? Are the specific behaviors contrary to positive leadership doctrine/practice?</i> • How frequent are the behaviors? • How severe? <i>How bad are the leader's behaviors? Bad enough that I should report or take action or just live with it? Have the behaviors crossed any formal boundaries (e.g., legal, regulatory, policy, rule, UCMJ code, ethical violation, moral principles)?</i> • Intention vs. perception mismatch? <i>How are the leader's subordinates perceiving their behaviors? How might the leader have intended his behavior to come across?</i> 	

Factors	Your Assessment
Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How are you or others being impacted by the behaviors (e.g., absenteeism, stress)?</i> • <i>How is the unit being impacted by the behaviors (e.g., lowered performance, conflict, eroded morale)?</i> • <i>Will they continue or get worse if nothing is done?</i> 	
Integrated Assessment	
Given my analysis of the individual factors within SABI, what hypotheses can I make about what may be going on?	

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING COUNTERPRODUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

In accordance with U.S. law and Army regulations, Army leaders are responsible for taking measures to safeguard the morale, physical well-being, and general welfare of their fellow officers, enlisted Soldiers, and Civilians. All Army professionals who witness counterproductive leadership behaviors have a responsibility to address them. However, there is no denying the fact that situations involving counterproductive leadership are complex. You know you have a responsibility to address them, but how do you do so in an effective and constructive way that does not lead to even more problems?

This session provides tools to help you identify and assess the behaviors, and then determine which strategies and techniques you can use in your situation. To help you succeed, you should:

- **Explore & Reflect:** Learn about different strategies and techniques. Reflect on how you might use them in the context of your situation. Identify potential risks.
- **Select & Commit:** Hypothesize which techniques are most likely to be effective and commit to testing them in small ways to manage risk.
- **Test & Learn:** Define how you will test each technique in order to manage risk and maximize learning. Plan to be vigilant for signs of escalation or worsening of the leader's mood or behaviors during your interactions. Define success. Run your test and learn from it.

Intervene for Others Strategy

In some situations, you may witness others being subjected to counterproductive leadership. In these situations, intervening on their behalf is a strategy you can use to handle the broader situation and assist those individuals involved. Note:

- Techniques within the *Intervene for Others* strategy are focused on helping the recipient of counterproductive leadership behaviors; they do not attempt to change the leader's behavior and therefore are not a long-term solution. See the *Directly Address* strategy for techniques that can be used to do so.
- Intervening on behalf of others presents a risk that can backfire and end up increasing or broadening of the abusive behavior. Fully assess the situation using the Situation-Actors-Behaviors-Impacts (SABI) tool presented in the Assess lesson to help you consider potential risks and how to handle them.

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
Refocus or redirect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Move the leader's attention away from the recipient of the counterproductive leadership:</i> To distract the leader, focus their attention on another topic. • <i>Provide an exit to help individual escape:</i> Consider how you can help the individual remove himself or herself from a situation where he or she is being subjected to counterproductive leadership or stop the situation/meeting altogether. You might also consider having others leave the room so that the behavior can be addressed directly and immediately.
Buffer or protect other individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attend or rearrange meetings.</i> Meetings are often venues where leaders may exhibit counterproductive leadership as they are viewed by a group, can be stressful, and may include specific triggers for certain leaders. Offer to attend meetings with the leader in place of or along with your subordinates or peers. Your presence may help to prevent certain behaviors from occurring and will also allow you to step in and take action if you see there needs to be a cooling-off period between the leader and someone else. If you or your subordinate arranged the meetings, you could consider canceling them and addressing the meeting topics in other ways (e.g., individual conversations, emails, memos). • <i>Limit solo interactions or exposure to others.</i> Buffer the effects of counterproductive leadership by limiting the solo interactions and exposure that other individuals have with the given leader. By limiting interactions or exposure, you decrease the chances of the leader targeting the individual and if you're present, you can step in and redirect the situation if any counterproductive interactions with the leader occur. • <i>Shield and protect your staff.</i> This may mean taking the blame to prevent the targeted individual from feeling the "wrath" of the leader or deflecting the attack by stating that you will look into the issue further and attempting to move the discussion back to productive areas. This tactic can help lessen the negative impacts that others feel in the moment. • <i>Talk to the leader to help redirect the team's energy on the task or work.</i> Discuss how to more effectively accomplish tasks and do the work, rather than focusing on emotions or the people involved. Review the situation with the leader. If a certain behavior may have triggered the leader's behavior, reframe it in a positive or constructive way, such as the fact that a subordinate's mistake was a learning experience for him/her.
Provide support to affected individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reach out to affected individuals.</i> Actively reach out to talk to the affected individuals. Letting individuals know they are not alone may seem like a small gesture, but it can go a long way in these situations when individuals may be feeling isolated or alone. Remind the individuals of their positive contributions and give him or her space, time, and latitude to cope and recover. Acknowledge his or her feelings and stress; affirm that the emotions and stress he or she is feeling is to be expected given a challenging situation. Talk about ways to cope. • <i>Listen and build up their confidence.</i> People who experience counterproductive leadership may feel "beaten down" and may question themselves and their competence. Talk to these individuals, ask questions, and genuinely listen to their responses. Remind them of their strengths and all the positive work they're doing. • <i>Brainstorm ways to handle, cope, and prevent behaviors.</i> Engage in problem-solving and brainstorming with your peers to figure out ways to handle the

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
	counterproductive leadership, prevent it from occurring in the future, and cope with it in the meantime.

Directly Address Strategy

Directly addressing counterproductive leadership is a strategy you can use to help modify a leader's behavior. As you learned in the Identify and Assess lessons and in the beginning of this lesson, there are many factors that make directly addressing these behaviors challenging. You've learned about tools, like the categories of counterproductive leadership and the Situation-Actors-Behaviors-Impacts (SABI) tool that will help you identify and assess these behaviors when they occur to help you determine if and how to take action.

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
Set boundaries	<p>Setting clear boundaries or limits of what you consider “acceptable” or “unacceptable” behavior is critical when addressing leaders who use counterproductive leadership. Setting such boundaries is important because it allows you to separate yourself from verbal or physical abuse you may be receiving. Once you've identified your boundaries, it's important to hold firm and be consistent with the limits you set. Here are the steps to consider in setting boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Set boundaries:</i> As an Army professional, you have the right to be treated with respect. Consider the Army value of Respect and what respect means to you. Some leaders may demonstrate behaviors that fall in a “grey area” between respect and outright disrespect. Decide what behaviors fall outside the Army's definition of respect and what behaviors in the “grey area” you will not accept or tolerate. • <i>Decide whether to make boundaries explicit.</i> Depending on your situation, you may choose to make your boundary explicit to the leader. Or you may choose NOT to directly state when your boundary has been crossed; you can instead treat the boundary as an internal condition that you use to guide how you react and conduct yourself (e.g., mentally distancing yourself, focusing on task-related thoughts, dismissing/not responding to the leader, changing the subject, emphasizing the positive). • <i>Determine How to Enforce Your Boundaries.</i> Situations where your boundaries are crossed can often be emotional and stressful, and having your response prepared can help you react in a more productive and thoughtful manner. Responses may include breaking from the situation (e.g., physically or mentally distancing yourself from the leader), indirectly confronting (e.g., changing the subject during the conversation, call the attention of bystanders to the inappropriate actions of the leader afterwards), or directly confront (e.g., stating that you will not accept specific behaviors).
De-escalate a negative exchange	<p>Counterproductive leadership situations often result in intense emotions that escalate over time. To counteract this, you can use various strategies to interrupt and refocus the discussion to the work that needs to be done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hit the “pause” button.</i> Slow down the exchange by explicitly making a statement that redirects the conversation or just pausing and changing delivery and speaking more concisely. • <i>Use open-ended questions to prompt the leader to reflect.</i> Questioning allows you to explore assertions made by the leader, as well as your own assumptions about their intent. Questioning can also redirect any contentious

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
	<p>discussion back to a common purpose, rather than focusing on disagreement or fault-finding.</p>
<p>Report to others</p>	<p>What to report to others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may encounter behavior that is so severe that you need to report it immediately. To determine if this is the case, consider the frequency, severity, and impact of the behaviors you documented in the Assess lesson using the Situation-Actors-Behaviors-Impacts (SABI) tool. Is this behavior in violation of the UCMJ? Is it a severe case of cruelty or maltreatment, sexual misconduct, or discriminatory behavior? If you answered yes to these questions, then you should immediately report the incidents. • In other situations, you may have tried to address the behavior via other strategies, and the behaviors still aren't changing. In that situation, you may also consider reporting the concerns to others. <p>How to report to others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Escalate to more senior leaders.</i> This may involve enlisting informal help from senior leaders inside or outside your unit by way of using open door policies, making an office call, or talking to them before or after PT. This is particularly useful if you think the leader's behavior is unintentional and/or is not malicious and hypothesize that they may benefit from support from above in helping to change their behavior. In cases where the situation is more serious or you have not been successful with other techniques, consider using the chain of command and talking to your superior or your superior's superior. • <i>Use formal channels.</i> You can use the following formal channels: Inspector General (IG) Complaint, Commander's Inquiry and/or 15-6 Investigation, Equal Opportunity Complaint, and/or Article 138 Complaint.

Strengthen Resilience Strategy

Negative physical, emotional, and behavioral responses are natural and automatic responses to being subjected to threatening actions, like counterproductive leadership, directly or indirectly. As you learned in the Assess lesson, being a recipient of these behaviors can increase tension, anxiety, stress, exhaustion, vulnerability to illness, and it can decrease concentration. It can also lead to a feeling of shame, helplessness, insecurity, and resignation. People who witness these behaviors can also experience negative emotions like this. Refer to the categories of well-being and the associated techniques within each to help you strengthen your resilience in these challenging circumstances.

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
<p>Maintain your emotional well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recognize and regulate your emotions in the moment.</i> Situations where you are subjected to counterproductive leadership and feel threatened can trigger our body's natural "fight or flight" response. When faced with danger or a threat, the body responds by physically preparing the body to either fight off the attack or flee by increasing your heart rate, breathing, adrenaline levels, etc. However, this hard-wired reaction can interfere with your ability to respond to situations rationally and logically. Our "fight" tendencies make us respond in these situations by seeking to protect ourselves. While protecting ourselves may be appropriate, doing so when emotions are high is not likely to result in a productive outcome. When you feel your emotions getting in the way of your ability to think logically and rationally, give yourself space, either physically or mentally. Take deep breaths to slow down your body's

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
	<p>automatic response to anger and to decrease your heart rate. Lower your shoulders away from your ears and try to relax your body. Speak at a normal pitch and pace, demonstrating that you are in control of yourself. Fight the urge to show your emotions physically via facial expressions, squirming in your chair, or other indications that you are upset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lean on your support system.</i> Stressful times may leave you tired and feeling like withdrawing, but it is even more critical to engage with others to help you cope. Everyone’s support system is different and unique to them; it may include others in your workplace (like peers) or individuals outside of it, like a trusted confidante, mentor, friends, or close family members. Forming strong bonds with your <i>peers</i> can help you all better tolerate and address the situation. Your support system can help you express your emotions and process your experiences, provide perspective, discuss options for addressing the situation, and help you “check” your thinking and assumptions. • <i>Strengthen your support system.</i> If you feel your current support system needs some strengthening, then reach out to others who you may have lost touch with. Get involved in professional or social or hobby organizations or volunteer in your community to build connections with people you can later learn to trust and lean on. • <i>Seek formal mental health support.</i> Review the following resources for more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/veterans/ ○ http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/managing-stress • <i>Emotionally detach.</i> Consistently remind yourself to not take it personally, that the counterproductive leadership is likely more about the leader and the challenges they are facing than about you. Practice separating yourself from the situation. Refuse to let the leader’s words and actions negatively affect your well-being. Instead, try to understand the leader’s perspective and actions from a logical standpoint, not an emotional one. Avoid ruminating or continuously dwelling on the situation; this can lead to depression and burnout. If you find yourself falling into this pattern, set a time limit for how long you can think about the situation before letting it go, distract yourself with other tasks, or use the other techniques in this section to help you move forward.
<p>Maintain your mental well-being</p>	<p>Your mental well-being refers to how you’re thinking about and processing information and coping with your situation. During times of stress, we sometimes fall into negative patterns of thinking and processing that can worsen an already stressful situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use positive affirmations.</i> Experiencing counterproductive leadership can lead you to question your abilities and feel less competent or insecure. To restore your confidence, use affirmations, or positive self-talk, to build positive mental habits. • <i>Review past accomplishments.</i> Reflect on your accomplishments to boost your self-confidence. Review positive performance feedback you’ve received from others, educational accomplishments, career successes, and times you overcame challenging situations. Remain confident in the fact that you are where you are in your career because you have the experience, education, and training to successfully complete your responsibilities.

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Get a reality check from others.</i> Get a “reality check” from others who may have observed a given situation as well as people outside the situation (e.g., significant others, friends, or family). Question your thoughts and assumptions about the situation in order to determine the facts and “truth”; separate the facts from your emotions. • <i>Continue to learn and grow.</i> Continue to learn and grow as a leader in your field to help build your confidence and competence. Take classes, read articles and books, and talk with experienced leaders to increase your knowledge and feelings of competence. • <i>Find the “silver lining.”</i> You are experiencing an extremely stressful and difficult situation. Although difficult, try to use the situation as an opportunity to learn about yourself, others, and your organization. Reframe the issue in your mind by reflecting internally and/or with others in your social support system.
Maintain your physical well-being	<p>Your physical well-being is a critical component of your overall well-being. We're sometimes tempted to neglect it when under stress. Ironically, though, doing so can actually worsen the situation. Consider the following to boost resilience in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exercise.</i> Physical activity and exercise are effective ways to relieve stress. This helps relax your mind and increases your body's endorphins, which are our “feel-good” neurotransmitters. Simply taking a walk during a stressful period can help you feel calmer, more alert, and more positive. Having a consistent exercise routine is also useful for helping to stave off the consequences of stress on the body. • <i>Practice yoga, meditation, or mindfulness.</i> Relaxation techniques like yoga, meditation, and mindfulness can have physical as well as mental benefits. Along with the physical benefits of strength and flexibility, these techniques help relieve stress, calm and declutter your mind, and help you to become more focused. • <i>Get enough sleep.</i> The life of a Soldier and Army civilian makes it difficult to get enough sleep. However, sleep is essential for achieving your best self – physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sleep allows our bodies and brains to recharge and recover. Stressful situations can also disrupt sleep patterns or cause insomnia, making it difficult to get a good night sleep. Not getting enough sleep can affect your memory, judgment, mood, weight, emotions, concentration, and many more bodily functions. Getting optimal sleep starts with learning and practicing good sleep habits.
Maintain your spiritual well-being	<p>During stressful times, it can be helpful to remember your values and spirituality. Spirituality helps you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Connect to the world.</i> The more connected you feel to your purpose or the world, the less alone you will feel. This can lead to a valuable inner peace during this stressful time. • <i>Release control.</i> When you feel part of a greater whole, you may realize that you aren't responsible for everything that happens in life. You can share the burden of tough times while recognizing how fortunate you are in other areas of your life. • <i>Connect with others.</i> Whether you find spirituality in a church, mosque, or synagogue, in your family, or in nature walks with a friend, sharing your beliefs and practicing your faith with others can help build relationships. For instance, talk to a chaplain. Chaplains can provide advice and guidance on

Technique	Tactics to Consider When Implementing This Technique
	<p>how to manage difficult work situations, and how to compartmentalize your work and home life.</p>
<p>Protect your contribution to the mission</p>	<p>Remember that you're a professional who seeks to do your best and uphold the Army values. Therefore, it's important that you consider how to ensure you can best contribute to the mission regardless of the counterproductive leadership you're experiencing or witnessing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do your duty.</i> Doing your duty means continuing to put forth your best effort, even in challenging circumstances. Come to meetings prepared. Anticipate what you might be asked and have quick, direct answers that will satisfy your leader. Speak confidently and logically. • <i>Document your work and exchanges.</i> Document all exchanges between you and the leader by saving emails, taking meeting notes or noting orders, and/or having a witness present (e.g., a peer or mentor). Document your work by keeping daily logs of your work efforts. If you are directed to change direction, clarify expectations (in writing) and obtain written directions from the leader or others involved when possible. • <i>Consider confidentiality.</i> Be cautious about what you share and how and when you do so. For instance, consider when you want to put something in writing versus when you might not want to do so. Do not assume that others, particularly the leader in question, will maintain your confidentiality. Assume that information will be disclosed and decide what you should reveal accordingly. Recognize that this technique does not mean you should "hoard" information or intentionally withhold it from those who need it. Withholding information, especially if done improperly or with ill-intentions, could erode morale and decrease productivity. Instead, it means you should be intentional with how you share sensitive information. • <i>Be honorable in your conduct.</i> You want to maintain your reputation as a principled, ethical, and "above bar" Soldier. Therefore, do not share gossip, rumors, or questionable judgment. Take time to consider the credibility of the source of information before you share or disseminate it with others. The "rumor mill" is often damaging to unit climates and can quickly get out of hand. Whether it is the counterproductive behavior of a leader, an adverse action occurring in the unit, or speculation about changes to the mission, resist any temptation to engage in behavior that undermines your honorable conduct. • <i>Consider requests from the leader before agreeing.</i> In some cases, the leader may make a request of you that you are not sure is in the best interest of you, your unit, and the Army. While you must follow direct orders that do not violate a regulation, there may be other situations where you have more discretion on whether to comply or not. For instance, a leader could ask you to do something that is outside the scope of your duties and that benefits the leader without necessarily benefitting the unit's mission. Document your decision to accept or deny the request in writing.

INFORMING YOUR PATH FORWARD

Assess Current Relationships, Power, and Skills

Regardless of the specifics of your situation and the behaviors being addressed, there are some factors that you should reflect on that will help you determine the best approach in your particular situation. These factors are listed below.

Factors to Consider	Description	Implications for Risk Level, How, & When You Address Behaviors	Notional Rating Scale	Rating Explanation
General working relationship quality	<i>Consider whether your working relationship with the individual is strong, okay but not strong, or weak. Reflect on your experiences working with this individual to date and any feedback they have provided to you in making your assessment.</i>	<p>The type of relationship that you have will affect the strategy that you use to address the behavior.</p> <p>For example, if you have a positive working relationship, consider more direct methods of addressing the behavior like providing direct feedback. However, if you have a less positive working relationship with the superior, consider more indirect methods of addressing the behavior like involving another person the superior trusts.</p>	1 – weak 3 – okay 5 – strong	
Current working relationship quality	<i>Recognize that working relationship quality is not static. It may vary over time and differ depending on current projects or workload. Given this, what is the state of your relationship over the past 1-2 weeks?</i>	If your current working relationship is weaker than usual, then consider less direct methods of addressing the behavior for the time being until your working relationship improves or conditions change.	1 – weak 3 – okay 5 – strong	
Strength of your current interpersonal skills	<i>Consider the current state of your interpersonal skills. By interpersonal skills, we mean skills around delivering difficult feedback, using tact, setting boundaries, being assertive, handling and defusing conflict, and dealing</i>	<p>If your interpersonal skills are weaker, consider what you can do to enhance these skills prior to taking action. Then, return and complete this assessment again.</p> <p>If your interpersonal skills are stronger, you are well positioned to</p>	1 – my interpersonal skills are weak and/or I lack confidence in them 3 – my interpersonal skills are fine but not stellar	

Factors to Consider	Description	Implications for Risk Level, How, & When You Address Behaviors	Notional Rating Scale	Rating Explanation
	<i>with rationalizations and pushback.</i>	address these behaviors using any of the strategies provided. Be sure your judgment of the strength of your interpersonal skills is based on external feedback and not solely on your own evaluation of your skills.	5 – I have strong interpersonal skills based on feedback received from others and am confident in them	

Reflect on Values

Factors to Consider	Explanation	Implications for Risk Level, How, & When You Address Behaviors	Your Notes
Personal values	<i>What do you value as an individual? How do those values impact the choice you make in addressing the situation? Do you value work-life balance? Work success at all costs? Doing the best that you can given hard circumstances?</i>	Addressing these behaviors, particularly in your superiors, can be risky because of the potential backlash that you may receive. However, as an Army leader, you are charged with upholding the Army’s mission and values. Remember that, as stated in FM 6-22, Army leadership is “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization. ” Ultimately, this decision is up to you—what Army do you want to be a part of? What legacy do you want to leave? Do not let your fear of risk dictate how you address the behavior—do what the situation demands to best address the behaviors.	
Army Values	<i>What do you value as an Army professional? As a leader? Remind yourself of the Army values and the oath you took to uphold them.</i>		

HANDLING RETALIATION

Despite taking measures to mitigate unfavorable impacts when addressing counterproductive leadership, you may still experience retaliation. Refer to AD 2014-20 (Prohibition of Retaliation against Soldiers for Reporting a Criminal Offense) and AD 2015-16 (Command Engagement to Prevent Retaliation) for in-depth coverage of how to handle retaliation. Retaliation may take the following forms:

- **Military Whistleblower Reprisal.** Taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, for making, preparing to make, or being perceived as making or preparing to make a protected communication. You should address this behavior with the IG.
- **Ostracism.** Excluding from social acceptance, privilege, or friendship a victim or other member of the Armed Forces because: (a) the individual reported a criminal offense, or (b) the individual was believed to have reported a criminal offense; and (c) the ostracism was motivated by the intent to discourage reporting of a criminal offense or otherwise to discourage the due administration of justice. If this occurs, consult the Command's Staff Judge Advocate (SJA).
- **Maltreatment:** Acts of cruelty, oppression, or maltreatment committed against a victim, an alleged victim, or another member of the Armed Forces by peers or other persons because the individual reported a criminal offense or was believed to have reported a criminal offense. If this occurs, consult the Command SJA.

RESOURCES LIST

The following resources are designed to further your understanding of counterproductive leadership and how to handle it. The resources on this list are in a variety of information formats: articles, pamphlets, books, and online full-text materials. Articles are hyperlinked via their titles.

General Resources

Articles

- [3 Ways Senior Leaders Create a Toxic Culture](#). Harvard Business Review (2018)
- [5 Reasons We Tolerate Bullying Leaders](#). Psychology Today (2017)
- [How to Work with Toxic Colleagues](#). Harvard Business Review OnPoint Magazine (2016)
- [Some Bosses Live in a Fool's Paradise](#). Harvard Business Review (2010)
- [Tips for Handling a Toxic Co-Worker](#). New York Times (2016)

Books

- *Bad Apples: How to Manage Difficult Employees, Encourage Good Ones to Stay, and Boost Productivity*. Brette Mcwhorter Sember and Terrence J Sember (2010)
- *Good Boss, Bad Boss: How to be the Best and Learn From the Worst*. Sutton, R.I. (2010)
- *Employee Well-being Support: A Workplace Resource*. (2008) John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- *The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One that Isn't*. Robert I. Sutton (2010)
- *Coping with Toxic Managers, Subordinates, and Other Difficult People*. Roy H. Lubit (2004).
- *The Allure Of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians-and How We Can Survive Them*. Jean Lipman-Blumen (2005)
- *Is Silence Killing your Company?* Leslie Perlow and Stephanie Williams, Harvard Business Review (2003)

Websites & Army Resources

- [Army Leader Development Improvement Guide](#)
- [Army FM 6-22, Leader Development](#)
- [Workplace Bullying Institute](#)

Intervene for Others Strategy Resources

Articles

- [7 Things to Say when a Conversation Turns Negative](#). Harvard Business Review (2016)
- [9 Signs that you are the Co-Worker Everyone Vents to](#). New York Magazine. (2016)
- [Want to Decrease your Stress at Work? Encourage your Coworkers](#). Forbes Magazine. (2016)
- [Helping a Coworker Who's Stressed Out](#). Harvard Business Review (2015)

Books

- *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*. Ronald Riggio, Ira Chaleff, & Jean Lipman-Blumen (2008)

Websites & Army Resources

- [The Art of Asking Questions](#). Center for Army Leadership Website

DIRECTLY ADDRESS Strategy Resources

Articles

- [How to Handle a Colleague Who's a Jerk when the Boss isn't Around](#). Harvard Business Review (2016)
- [6 Tips for Leading Through Conflict in the Workplace](#). Center for Creative Leadership (2023)
- [Problem Employees: Identify and Manage Them Before They Impact Your Business and Career](#). Center for Creative Leadership (2018)

Books

- *Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior*. Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler, & David Maxfield (2013)
- *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High*. Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, & Al Switzler, (2012)
- *How to Deal with a Boss Who Behaves Unpredictably*. Carolyn O'Hara (2016)
- *How to Deal with a Bullying Boss*. Jacquelyn Smith (2013)
- *Just Listen: Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone*. Mark Goulston & Keith Ferrazzi. (2009)
- *Where to Draw the Line: How to Set Healthy Boundaries Every Day*. Anne Katherine (2000)

Websites & Army Resources

- [Managing Difficult Behavior](#). Center for Army Leadership Website
- [Navigating Contentious Conversations](#). Center for Army Leadership Website
- [Seeking and Delivering Face-to-Face Feedback](#). Center for Army Leadership Website
- [Active Listening](#). U.S. State Department

Strengthen Resilience Strategy Resources

Articles

- [12 Ways to Eliminate Stress at Work](#). Forbes Magazine (2013)
- [How to Handle Stress in the Moment](#). Harvard Business Review (2014)
- [Under Pressure: Your Brain on Conflict](#). Psychology Today (2011)
- [6 Ways to Stress Less at Work](#). Psych Central (2016)

Books

- *How Resilience Works*. Diane Couto (2002)
- *Yoga for Warriors: Basic Training in Strength, Resilience, and Peace of Mind*. Beryl Bender Birch (2014)
- *The Sleep Revolution*. Arianna Huffington (2016)

Websites & Army Resources

- [Coping with Stress at Work](#). American Psychological Association
- [Stress Management](#). Mayo Clinic
- *Manage Stress: Strengthen Your Support Network*. American Psychological Association
- AR 600-63, *Army Health Promotion*

Handle Retaliation Resources

- AD 2014-20, *Prohibition of Retaliation against Soldiers for Reporting a Criminal Offense*
- AD 2015-16, *Command Engagement to Prevent Retaliation*
- [Disciplinary Best Practices & Advisory Guidelines Under the No Fear Act](#). Office of Personnel Management (2008)