



AUXILIARY LEADERSHIP COACHING GUIDE



March 2019

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Auxiliary Leadership Coaching Guide

Purpose

This document is designed to give Auxiliarists a framework for a formal program of leadership coaching. It will:

- Recognize the foundational theories of coaching,
- Differentiate coaching from *mentoring*,
- Differentiate coaching from *counseling*,
- Review the peer coaching process,
- Instruct how to facilitate both *commitment* and *review* discussions,
- Instruct how to handle postponed contacts.

Recognizing that all members of the Auxiliary are leaders, this guide will refer to the person being coached as the “Leader.”

What is a Coach?

Coaches are great listeners who prompt the Leaders they work with to explore greater levels of inquiry, detail, and actions that lead to improved performance and greater intrinsic buy-in. Coaches:

- Are focused and centered;
- Silence their inner voice;
- Stay curious;
- Ask open-ended questions;
- Use their intuition and listen for what *isn't* said;
- Strive to ask questions that move the Leader to their best future.

Coaching Process

The coaching process has four steps:

1. Establish a foundation
2. Promote dialogue
3. Plan for action
4. Follow through



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Continued... At each of these steps, a coach has different actions to take in order to move their Leader forward. When establishing a foundation, the goal is to create rapport and identify the problem or issue from the Leader's point of view. The promoting dialogue step is characterized by using intuitive listening, validating the member's thoughts, feelings, and actions, and asking them learning questions. During the plan for action, set achievable goals and deadlines, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones. Finally, follow-through on these plans. Make sure that you have discussed ongoing support and accountability.

Theoretical Foundations

This coaching model is based upon several motivational and learning theories, including:

- Intrinsic motivation theory
- Positive reinforcement theory
- Transfer theory
- Instructional systems design theory
- Organizational learning theory
- Human performance technology

Intrinsic Motivation Theory

The Leader has *autonomy* and determines how the skill they selected will be transferred to their workplace. They receive *informational praise* to help improve their performance.

Positive Reinforcement Theory

Leaders receive both *specific* and *immediate* praise. Praise should be specific in that it is linked directly to skills and skill application. Praise should also be given as soon as possible following successful application of the skill.

Transfer Theory

The coach will confirm and support the Leader's *intent* to transfer a skill from theoretical knowledge to real-world application. This skill transfer must be *relevant* to the Leader's real-world challenges. The coach will guide the Leader through creating a Transfer Action Plan for each skill to be applied.

Instructional Systems Design Theory

Tools to facilitate skill transfer will be "*chunked*" into units that take no more than 15 minutes to read/review/absorb. Each skill must be stated in *measurable* terms, complete with success criteria for each application event.

Organizational Learning Theory

The Leader is encouraged to share their *lessons learned*, reflecting on what worked and what did not. They should also share any new tools that they created during skill application that might benefit others, contributing to the *shared knowledge* of the Auxiliary.

Human Performance

Throughout skill transfer, work to *uncover barriers* that may prevent it. These might be the Leader's environment, skill level, or some other factor

Technology standing in the way of success. Additionally, employ *proactive mitigation* of these barriers, recognizing that the Leader ultimately has the answers. Continue to inquire as to what barriers may be and what countermeasures may be used to mitigate them before they become insurmountable.

Coach vs. Mentor Mentoring and coaching are fundamentally different processes despite frequently being grouped together.

In Mentoring:

- Mentors offer advice grounded in expertise and experience.
- Mentors are sought by the mentee due to their expertise or experience in an area of interest to the mentee.
- Next sessions are scheduled according to the availability of both mentoring partners or may not be scheduled at all (leaving it to the mentee to contact their mentor when they have a challenge or need advice).
- Mentors help their mentee set goals for the overall experience, but these may shift over time.
- The start date of a mentoring relationship is clear, but the end may be open and fluid to accommodate the mentee needs or mentor's schedule.

In Coaching:

- Coaches do not tell the Leader what to do nor dictate advice or suggestions. Coaches encourage Leaders to find their own answers through introspection and discussion.
- Coaches can be (and frequently are) peers to the Leader they are coaching.
- Next sessions are scheduled to occur as close as possible after the Leader has applied their skill.
- Coaches stay focused on the specific skills the Leader has selected to apply at work.
- The Coach has only four contacts with the Leader, each with a specific outcome and timeframe. The final contact is a defined end-point in the process.

Coach vs. Counselor Coaches should not become counselors or therapists. While many excellent Leaders also receive counselling, it is simply out of the scope for a coach.

Counseling:

- Involves therapy and focuses on issues of healing and resolving issues of the past.
- Includes advising, such as to get through anxiety, depression, or another issue impacting emotional health.

Coaching:

- Begins in the present, focuses on the future, and discusses the past only to discover what is blocking the Leader from moving forward.
- Should not include advising except under very special circumstances, and only after permission to advise has been granted by the Leader.

Signs that more than Coaching is Needed

People's lives are complex, and sometimes you discover that an issue that appeared to be suitable for coaching in reality needs support that falls outside the scope of a coach. Some signs of this may be:

- Continuously bringing up interpersonal or relationship issues, like arguments with a significant other, a divorce, separation, or break up, verbal abuse, domestic violence, etc.
- Descriptions of dysfunctional behavior, like inability to get out of bed, feeling overwhelmed, or thoughts of self-harm, etc.
- Recent traumatic experience, like the death of someone close to them, etc.

If you suspect that the Leader needs support that is outside the realm of coaching, remind them of your role and limitations as a coach. *Do not* attempt to counsel them, even if you have the ability or professional experience to do so; your role in that moment is as a Coach and counseling a Leader changes that relationship. While the Leader should not be abandoned, both parties must recognize that certain issues are beyond the scope of a coaching relationship and that appropriate help should be sought.



Coaching Process

The coaching process consists of four structured contacts with the Leader.

- The first contact consists of the Leader selecting which of their chosen leadership areas to do first, then defining their commitment for this area.
- In the second and third contacts, review how the previous commitment was applied, and define the next.
- For the fourth and final contact, review how the previous commitment was applied, acknowledge the Leader's accomplishments, and wrap-up the coaching relationship.

Coaching Pre-Work

Before beginning the coaching process, the Leader should identify three leadership areas in which they want to grow. They should refer to the [Coast Guard’s Leadership Competencies](#) when selecting these. They should ensure that their Coach has a copy of their selected areas prior to the first coaching contact.

Once the Coach has received and reviewed the three intended areas, they should schedule a time, date, and place for the first conversation. If meeting by phone, be sure to agree on who will initiate the call. Decide in advance what the process will be for rescheduling, cancellation, or no-show. Be sure to send a confirmation email including all the agreed-on logistics.

Commitment Discussion

A commitment discussion happens any time a Leader is making a new commitment to apply a skill. This will be the primary focus of the first contact and will be in combination with a review discussion for the second and third contacts. Commitment discussions have five parts (six for the first conversation):

1. Build Trust (first conversation only)
2. Assess Motivation
3. Clarify Focus
4. Assess Degree of Change
5. Set up for Success
6. Housekeeping

A job aid for commitment discussions is attached as Appendix I.

Build Trust

Before the first contact, review the Leader’s proposed commitments, biography, and any training materials related to their leadership areas. Be sure to allow at least 10 minutes for introductions and clarify the confidentiality of discussions. A good rule of thumb is to listen 90% of the time and ask open-ended questions (“what,” “when,” “where,” “how,” “what if...”) for the other 10%.

Assess Motivation

Explore current challenges in the Leader’s Auxiliary service or workplace and look for Synergy between current challenges and identified commitments. Identify what the “best outcome” will be. The goal of coaching is not to *resolve* the challenge *per se*, but rather to take a positive step and generate momentum towards ultimate resolution.

Clarify focus

Make the Leader’s commitment measurable and include specific criteria to define success. Name who will be involved, the quality or frequency of the event, and when it will occur. Also discuss how soon the review discussion / follow-up will happen.

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Assess Degree of Change	<p>Discuss how “new” this commitment is. It may be the first time that the Leader is applying this skill, or they may have been trying something similar and this is a new variation on the theme. Perhaps they are restarting something they used to do or are increasing the frequency of something they are already doing. The goal, ultimately, is for the Leader to articulate how applying this commitment grows them.</p> <p>If the Leader states that they are only “refreshing” old skills, try to introduce more challenge. Commitments should always be ways to grow.</p>
Set up for Success	<p>Ensure that the Leader is set up for success. Express confidence in their ability to be successful in their commitment and organize your next call such that you can review how it went (and give positive reinforcement) as close to event as possible. Additionally, review the “chunking” of the commitment and whether any additional tools are needed.</p>
<i>Chunking</i>	<p>Review whether the commitment is “chunked” appropriate. Is it so large that any number of variables should derail it? Are there significant barriers in its way?</p> <p>Be proactive in addressing barriers and scope issues. It is completely appropriate to scale-down an overly ambitious commitment – major changes are achieved easiest through consistent, incremental growth.</p>
<i>Supplemental Tools</i>	<p>The Leader may need or want access to supplementary leadership tools to help them in their commitment. Excellent resources can be found in materials from the Auxiliary Leadership and Management School (AUXLAMs), Coast Guard Performance Improvement Guide, or on the Leadership Development Program website.</p>
Housekeeping	<p>After the conversation, send an email with a summary of what you discussed and the time and date of your next contact. If you are meeting by phone, be sure to specify who is calling whom.</p>
Review Discussions	<p>A review discussion should happen any time a commitment has been completed. It will be part of the second and third contacts (along with a commitment discussion), and the focus of the fourth. All review discussions have five parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Confirm implementation2. Actionability and Efficacy3. Expectations vs. Result4. Housekeeping5. Transition
Confirm Implementation	<p>Before starting your meeting, review the summary from the previous commitment discussion to refresh your memory. Ask the Leader to share</p>

what happened when they acted on their commitment. Was there anything unexpected or did the commitment change somehow? Remember to listen 90% of the time and ask open-ended questions for the remainder.

Actionability and Efficacy

Review for the Leader's ability to follow through on their commitment. Ask how it stretched their leadership, what would have happened if they'd done nothing, and what they might do differently. What went right? What was a pleasant surprise? If the Leader has completed any leadership schools, ask about any specific skills they used – by naming the skill, you are enhancing retention!

If they were unable to complete it, focus back on the fact that it is the Leader's program. Ask what they want to do going forward, and what their top priority is for the upcoming *immediate* future. Could the commitment be refreshed or rephrased to blend with their immediate priority? Remind the Leader that commitments can change if needed.

Expectations vs. Result

Recall what was "new" from the previous commitment discussion and reflect on how it played out. Was there something else "new" to the commitment that the Leader hadn't anticipated? Thinking about applying the skill in future, what might still feel unexplored or uncomfortable?

Housekeeping

Just as with the commitment discussion, send an email with a summary of what you discussed. This can be combined with the summary for the commitment portion of contacts two and three.

Transition

For the second and third coaching contacts, now is the point to transition from a *review* discussion to a *commitment* discussion. No particular segue is necessary, but the change should be made clear to both of you.

If this is the fourth and final contact, then transition to a closure. Congratulate the Leader on completing their commitments and review their achievements. Reflect on what has been learned, what new skills the Leader tried, and the value they gained from the experience. Make next steps clear (like any future contact between Coach and Leader, the Leader's path ahead, etc.).

Postponing a Contact

Regular contacts are critical to the Leader's success in the coaching process. There are times that the Leader's life becomes busier than anticipated and a session needs to be postponed. This is normal, however the coach should be alert for if this becomes a pattern. If it does, consider re-scoping the commitment so the Leader can blend it into their normal activities more readily, or alter it altogether.

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For most postponements, it will be appropriate to reschedule within three days of the original appointment, and certainly no longer than five. Resend the Leader their commitment to help maintain (or regain) focus on it. Most importantly, emphasize that these appointments are an important part of the coaching process, and while postponements are understandable, outright *cancellations* should be avoided at all reasonable costs.



APPENDIX I: COMMITMENT DISCUSSION JOB AID

Steps	Possible Coach Questions	Comments
1. Build Trust	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about what your primary focuses in the Auxiliary are? 2. How busy are you on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being free time all the time and 10 being completely swamped? 	
2. Assess Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about your current work priorities or challenges. 2. How do the 3 Leadership Areas you selected align with your current work priorities or challenges? 3. Would you like to change any of your 3 Leadership Areas to better align with your current work priorities or challenges? 	
3. Clarify Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which of your leadership areas would you like to work on? 2. Why is this what you've chosen? 3. Tell me about how a commitment that addresses this area would improve things? 	
4. Assess Degree of Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will you apply this Leadership Area? What is the COMMITMENT (ACTION) you will take? When? With whom? What do you hope to achieve? 2. How is this commitment NEW for you? 3. How is this commitment CHALLENGING YOU to stretch your current leadership skills? 	
5. Set up for Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your commitment is something that you should be able to do within 3 days to 10 days maximum. Does your commitment fit this timeframe? 2. What could prevent you from 	

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	<p>taking this Commitment? What is the likelihood this inhibitor could happen? If likelihood is high, how can you recalibrate your commitment to be more easily achieved given your current environment?</p> <p>3. Do you have everything you need to take this action? If you need additional skill content, I can get this for you.</p> <p>4. When will you apply this action, with whom, where, and what are your desired outcomes? How will you measure success?</p>	
<p>6. Housekeeping</p>	<p>1. So, by (DATE, TIME) you will (ACTION), did I get that right?</p> <p>2. Since you plan to do this by (DATE, TIME), can we talk soon afterwards so it's fresh in your mind?</p> <p>3. So, we will talk (DATE, TIME) to review (ACTION).</p> <p>4. I will send you an email with your action commitment</p>	

APPENDIX II: REVIEW DISCUSSION JOB AID

Steps	Possible Coach Questions	Comments
1. Confirm Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about how you followed through on your commitment. 2. Walk me through the actions you took. 	
2. Actionability and Efficacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was new for you? What was different? 2. How did you challenge yourself? Stretch yourself? 3. How was this Commitment a reflection of the Leadership Area you selected? 	
3. Expectations vs. Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were you expecting to accomplish? Did you accomplish it? 2. What didn't go to plan? 3. What is your intent regarding this Leadership Area (commitment/skill) moving forward? 4. What advice would you give other Leaders who want to apply this Leadership Area? 5. What helped you most when applying this commitment? 	
4. Housekeeping	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I'll email you a summary of what we talked about. 	
5. Transition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IF COMMITMENT - Go to the Commitment Section of this booklet and repeat those steps. 2. If ACKNOWLEDGEMENT for Completion of Coaching Program, discuss the value gained. 	

APPENDIX III: LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

Leader Name:	Phone Number:	Email address:
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Commitment #1

What you will do differently when you return to your unit? (be specific)
Why is this important to you?
Which leadership tools will you use?

Commitment #2

What you will do differently when you return to your unit? (be specific)
Why is this important to you?
Which leadership tools will you use?

Commitment #3

What you will do differently when you return to your unit? (be specific)
Why is this important to you?
Which leadership tools will you use?

What other commitments do you plan to make to develop your leadership? These can be small adjustments and new habits that you intend to do. You will not need to be coached on these items and there's no minimum or maximum number we're looking for.

What I Plan to do:	Related leadership tool