

**TRAINING LEADERS** *of* **CADETS**  
INTERMEDIATE COURSE  
**LESSON PLAN**

### 2.3 Progressive Discipline

- VERSION:** October 2021 *please verify this is the latest version by visiting [gocivilairpatrol.com/TLC](http://gocivilairpatrol.com/TLC)*
- DURATION:** 70 minutes approximately, and subtopic times shown in margins below are also approximate
- INSTRUCTOR:** A master-rated cadet programs officer or highly experienced CC or CDC is suggested
- KEY QUESTION:** Can discipline be a learning experience? What are some examples of progressive discipline?
- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Discuss the idea that discipline is a character-building tool
  2. Describe how to use Transformational Leadership when delivering a disciplinary intervention
  3. Describe the continuum of disciplinary interventions in CAP
  4. Give examples of possible options for soft, medium, heavy, and final interventions
  5. Identify instances of disciplinary interventions when parents must be informed
- SIMPLE OUTLINE:**
1. Welcome & Starter
  2. Developing Character
  3. The Adolescent Brain
  4. Applying Transformational Leadership
  5. CAP Is a Soft Place to Fail
  6. Interim Summary
  7. Progressive Discipline
  8. Stage 1: Soft Intervention or Mentoring
  9. Stage 2: Moderate Interventions
  10. Stages 3/4: Heavy/Final Interventions
  11. Exercise
  12. Summary & Final Thought
- CLASS ACTIVITIES:** Group discussion, followed by an activity where given various scenarios of cadet misconduct, the student identifies what lessons the offending cadet needs to learn and the student proposes consequences / solutions for each scenario
- EQUIPMENT:** Exercise handout for each student (in the Student Packet)  
Copies of exercise "Answer Key", one for each student
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## Welcome & Starter

1 min

In CAP, discipline must be used as a tool for character development, to help cadets develop self-control and a generalized respect for others. Discipline without moral education is merely crowd control — managing behavior without teaching morality.



In CAP we follow the Core Values and the Cadet oath. These are the expectations we have as an organization for each individual. We don't expect cadets to be perfect in all these areas, they are, of course, youth who are still developing. Part of our job as role models and mentors of cadets is to guide them towards embodying these virtues.

Cadets are taught in their Leadership Curriculum that a strong leader requires good character and a strong moral compass. Part of helping them develop these things is to help them to see when they are outside the lines of these values, and to offer assistance to guide them back. This includes discipline. Upholding these values sometimes includes enacting consequences for being outside the values of the organization.

For the next hour we will discuss how to enact a progressive discipline model that will help redirect negative behavior into a positive learning experience that will both hold cadets accountable for their actions and guide them towards better decisions in the future, ultimately becoming a leader of integrity and strong moral character.



## Developing Character

3 min

Let's take a moment to dissect our Core Values and the cadet Oath to really get to the heart of the virtues we are trying to instill in cadets.

**Q1: Can someone define a Virtue for us?**

**A1:** A virtue is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. In other words, it is a behavior that shows high moral standards: doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong.

**Q2: So what are some virtues we are trying to instill in cadets? Feel free to read between the lines a little bit here, or to think about our character forums.**

**A2:** *Answers may vary, but could include:*

- |                   |                            |                     |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Integrity</i>  | <i>Focus</i>               | <i>Self-control</i> |
| <i>Honor</i>      | <i>Perseverance</i>        | <i>Resilience</i>   |
| <i>Respect</i>    | <i>Empathy</i>             | <i>Humility</i>     |
| <i>Excellence</i> | <i>Service Before Self</i> |                     |
| <i>Discipline</i> | <i>Moral Reasoning</i>     |                     |

**Transition.** To have our teenage cadets possess all of these traits of high moral character is a lofty goal. But with the right guidance our cadets can get there.

A lot goes into developing character; a lot of learning is required. It's not easy to have great character, but it is possible.



## The Adolescent Brain

3 min

In order to help cadets get there, we have to understand where they are starting. As we mentioned several times already, teens are still developing. Their brains go through huge changes during the teen years.

\* National Institutes of Mental Health, "The Teen Brain: Still Under Construction." Washington: NIH Publication No. 11-4929, 2011.

From the scientists: "A clue to the degree of change taking place in the teen brain came from studies in which scientists did brain scans of children as they grew from early childhood through age 20. The scans revealed unexpectedly late changes in the volume of gray matter, which forms the thin, folding outer layer or cortex of the brain. The cortex is where the processes of thought and memory are based.

"One interpretation of all these findings is that in teens, the parts of the brain involved in emotional responses are fully online, or even more active than in adults, while the parts of the brain involved in keeping emotional, impulsive responses in check are still reaching maturity. Such a changing balance might provide clues to a youthful appetite for novelty, and a tendency to act on impulse—without regard for risk."\*

### Q3: What does this mean for CAP Cadet Programs Officers?

**A3:** There are biological reasons that explain why young people to stumble, make mistakes and struggle to live up to their potential.

This reality suggests that the mentor's role is not necessarily to dole-out lots of punishment, but to help the young person learn to manage their behaviors and to advance their moral development one step at a time.



## Applying Transformational Leadership

9 min

As we learned in our Transformational Leadership lesson, ordering people around using an authoritarian style is not what we want to see for a cadet's long-term growth.

Researchers have lots of data demonstrating that drilling moral values into unwilling subjects doesn't work because our *knowing* the rules isn't good enough; cadet's need to embody the core moral values. They must actively *want* to hold and display those traits. Offering a reward to display them will only go so far, and, as we know, this type of transactional leadership style is not successful in transforming cadets.

We want youth to grow to be caring and considerate people ready to lead in a fast-paced, diverse society filled with all kinds of immoral distractions. We want adults to challenge cadets to think critically and to reflect on their choices and actions. We want seniors to be good role models and encourage older cadets to be role models for the newcomers. We want to help cadets bridge the empathy gap so they make decisions informed by how their individual actions affect others.



## Intentional Interventions

When thinking about discipline and enacting a consequence or intervention, we want the cadet to grow and learn from it. That's the whole point. As an adult guiding the process, we need to take a moment to reflect on the full situation and determine HOW we want the cadet to grow and WHAT we want them to learn through this process. Once we determine the actual lesson we want a cadet to learn, then we can select an intervention that would best accomplish that.

To understand the full situation at hand, you will need to resist the temptation to jump to a conclusion about why the cadet has acted a certain way. Instead, ask a few questions. The cadet may be disrespecting his superiors, and that needs to stop, yes, but getting to the actual route cause of the behavior will help us be more successful in directing that cadet.

### Q4: Why might a cadet be disrespecting his superior officer?

A4: *Give a moment for a few answers and then go through each of the following.*

- General poor attitude
- Superior is being a bully, and disrespecting the cadet regularly, the cadet has had enough
- Maybe the cadet is having trouble with drill and a superior (without realizing it) has embarrassed him and now the cadet is responding to his embarrassment with snarky comments and putdowns (*Use this as the reason in this scenario*)

The underlying reason will direct us to the intervention that will work the best. We need to have an idea of how we want the cadet to grow and learn, we need to be intentional about the intervention so that we can direct the cadet towards learning that specific lesson.

In this example we know, on the surface that we want to cadet to act respectfully towards his superiors. And we might also see the need for a tutor in drill.

### Q5: But what is the real underlying problem here?

A5: The cadet is struggling to deal with his embarrassment appropriately.

Our mentoring can now focus on building those skills, which will deal with this problem, as well as likely eliminate other future problems.

**Transition:** OK so let's talk about consequences. What do we do with the information we have gathered?



## Logical Consequences

Natural consequences are outcomes that happen as a result of behavior that are not planned or controlled. For example, if Cadet Smith is being disrespectful and impeding the aerospace class, the cadets may not want him to be part of his group during the kickball game. A leader did not plan or control this consequence, but it happened naturally.

Logical consequences, on the other hand, are controlled by the leader. When selecting an intervention and a consequence it's important that they be reasonable and related to the transgression, therefore teaching cadet skills that they will need to be successful later on in life. Logical consequences need to be related, respectful, and reasonable.

**Mini-Scenario.** We're near the end of a successful encampment. Cadet cadre have pranked the students, putting shaving cream in their shoes and on their pillows. You're the commandant, and the cadre is now standing before you.

**Q6: What would be an inappropriate consequence? Perhaps something that is authoritarian in style, and not natural, logical or part of a transformational strategy. What's the wrong things to do here?**

**A6:** Give them a long chewing out: "You guys broke a bunch of rules. You will be punished."

**Q7: What do you think the cadets are learning from that type of punishment?**

**A7:** Don't do that again. Or at least don't get caught. But not much beyond that. They will know that the behavior was unacceptable, but have you really discussed why?

**Q8: What would be a better approach? What's the transformational approach, with a logical consequence?**

**A8:** "You guys worked hard all week to motivate cadets to live their Core Values. Now ask yourselves, what did your pranks show them?"

**Q9: What's a good example of a logical consequence, and what might the cadet learn from that?**

**A9:** A logical consequence may be to clean up the shaving cream and to formally apologize to the students for their misjudgment.

The cadets will learn how to accept responsibility for their actions and to vocalize to their followers when they were wrong. This is a great opportunity to learn and practice humility.

**Q10: What is a good example of a misaligned consequence? One that isn't related to the transgression. And what are they learning from that consequence?**

**A10:** A misaligned consequence could be that the cadets have to skip the end of encampment social. This is not something that is related to the transgression, and again, it is a bit harsh for the situation.

The cadets likely aren't learning much more than "next year don't do pranks."

**Emphasis Item:** Again, it's important that cadets are learning from their mistakes, so the consequence should be related, respectful, and reasonable.



## CAP is a Safe Place to Fail

2 min

Using the transformational approach with a logical consequence helps to foster an atmosphere that CAP is a “safe place to fail”.

**Q11:** What does it mean to say that cadets should find CAP a “safe place to fail.”

**A11:** *Responses can vary. Some suggestions include:*

- We need a system of progressive discipline that doesn’t punish cadets severely for minor errors of judgment. They need the opportunity to get back up after a fall, learn from their mistake and try again.
- Cadets have responsibilities in leading their program, but generally speaking they won’t “break” anything irreparable. They operate in a controlled environment with lots of adult supervision, regulatory guidance, curriculum, and doctrine.
- Short of criminal activity, we’re not a “one mistake and you’re out” program.

## Interim Summary

1 min

Every cadet in our program is still developing physiologically. Their brains are still developing, they are still learning to control their impulses and their emotions. They are still in the process of learning and developing a personal moral code.

As we all do, when we learn, cadets will make mistakes, and need guidance. The mentoring and feedback lesson we had earlier today illustrated this. Ultimately all of these concepts that we are learning today work together.

If we think of discipline as mentoring for a strong personal moral code, we should be coming at it from the appropriate angle.

For whatever reason, negative behavior may rear its ugly head, and as adults, it’s our job to manage it appropriately and in a way that is constructive, rather than harmful.

**Transition:** So, we’ve just laid a foundation to help us understand the attitude in which we should be approaching discipline and where the cadets are in moral development, so let’s discuss the practical stages of disciplining youth to help them develop into morally strong people.



## Progressive Discipline

1 min

Progressive Discipline is exactly what it sounds like. It progresses incrementally through a set of actions that get more corrective as they go along. It's important to follow the process unless there is an unusual circumstance that warrants skipping a stage.

If used correctly, in most cases the outcome will be successfully redirecting the negative behavior and helping that cadet develop self-discipline and an internal compass that helps him display positive core values.

Again, the purpose of these stages is to help the cadet be successful, not to punish for misconduct. Punishment is a transactional leadership tool. We are here to help transform cadets; to help them develop integrity, and humility, to learn from their own mistakes and to grow from them to be better leaders.

In CAP's progressive discipline model there are four stages of disciplinary interactions to help redirect cadets' behavior and to help them learn and grow from the experience.



### Stage 1: Soft Interventions or Mentoring

8 min

Soft Interventions are the pieces we discussed in the Mentoring and Feedback lesson. Adult leaders, and cadet staff, should be mentoring cadets on a regular basis. As such these soft interventions will be happening as a routine part of the program.

Within the discipline system, perhaps about 90% of your interventions will be soft. Examples of soft interventions are shown on the slide and your handout.

- When implementing soft interventions, it's important to help the cadet reflect on and tie the behavior to a Core Value or character trait that isn't being displayed at the moment.
  - Its not enough to just let them know the behavior isn't right, they need to understand why, and how they can do better in the future.
  - If we can tie it to a Core Value then it becomes relevant, and not just an arbitrary rule we have imposed over them
- In the vast majority of instances, a soft intervention or two will do the trick. Generally, cadets do want to do well in the program, they want to avoid negative consequences and they want to maintain full access to CAP programs and activities. (True, you'll encounter a cadet or two who is reluctantly participating due to parental pressure.)
- With soft interventions, those matters are handled on-the-spot and informally. They are handled privately whenever possible.
- The cadet chain of command can take the lead with soft interventions, and senior staff should work through the cadet chain whenever reasonably possible.
- A cadet might receive multiple soft interventions in a row; there's no requirement that a "second offense" ratchet-up to a moderate intervention.

## Parent Involvement

- At this point it's not necessary to get the parent involved, however if a cadet has repeated soft interventions or mentoring in the same area and it seems likely that it will progress into a moderate intervention, having a casual conversation with the parent at this point is prudent.
- It's always best if we are forthcoming with parents when their cadets are struggling. If the problem escalates further, in most cases, the parent will receive the news better if the conversation has already begun at a lower level and they are already aware of a problem.
- In this situation the best approach is to have a quick conversation with the parent and the cadet at pickup after a meeting or activity. The conversation should be causal, and approached as an informative discussion:
  - "I wanted to let you know that Sam is having some issues with respecting his superiors. We've had a few conversations about it, and I thought it was time to loop you in.
  - "Tonight's specific incident was..."
  - Often the parent will want to hear from the cadet, and since you are standing there, their inclination to lie or misdirect the parent is less. If they do leave out a key piece of information in the scenario, then it's your opportunity to lay out the facts.
  - Lots of times this conversation will fix the problem entirely, other times you'll see from the parenting style why the cadet is struggling with discipline.
- Now the parent is informed and if the behavior continues the parent and cadet won't be blindsided if a moderate intervention is applied. It should be expected.

### **Q12: What are some examples of areas where a soft intervention would be used?**

**A12:** *Answers may vary, but typically include situations such as:*

Cadet disrespecting peers	Uniform is not up to standards
Poor Listener	Unprepared
Inappropriate language	Not following directions
Innocent roughhousing	Failing to complete an assigned task
Poor attitude	

You'll notice that these align with the Leadership Expectations on the Super Chart. We should always be mentoring cadets to meet these Leadership Expectations.



## Stage 2: Moderate Interventions

9 min

Moderate interventions are firmer and require documentation. Examples of moderate interventions are shown on the slide and your handout.

- Moderate interventions are appropriate when soft interventions have not succeeded; we have mentored but we are not seeing improvement.
- Moderate interventions cannot be handled on-the-spot because they involve documenting the problem with a memo, and taking the cadet aside for a private discussion in a semi-formal “called to the office” setting.
  - Moderate interventions should be somewhat formal so the cadet is well-aware that they have entered the discipline system and that the situation has escalated to a more serious level.
    - We want cadets to understand that they need to take the mentoring more seriously than they have been, and that we do need to see a change in the behavior.
  - Again this intervention is meant to redirect behavior, therefore a plan of action needs to be developed so that the cadet can improve and grow from this experience.
  - While not required, this could be a good place to use the CAPF 60-90 series to create a written plan for positive development.
- Senior involvement is necessary with moderate interventions, but cadet staff can (and should) still be involved.

### Skipping Stage 1

- There may be certain incidents where gentle mentoring and light correction may not be appropriate for the infraction and therefore you would skip stage 1 and go directly to a Moderate Intervention.

### Parent Involvement

At this point it is required to get the parent involved. The cadet has a documented intervention, and the parent must be made aware.

The CAPR 60-1, 3.5.2 requires adult leaders, at a minimum, to inform a parent verbally. During this discussion, you may reference any documentation that was completed, letting the parent know the cadet has a copy. Continue to reiterate that we are here to help the cadet work through this issue and to grow. Having casually informed the parent prior to this level will help this stage go smoother.

**Q13: What type of scenarios might we use moderate interventions for:**

**A13:** *Answers may vary, but typically include offenses that harm other people, but also where soft interventions haven't helped*

- Cadet officer swearing repeatedly
- Leaving the activity without consent
- Fist fighting (first offense)
- Stealing
- Anything we want to have documentation of discussing
- Where soft interventions haven't helped



### Cadet Reset Agreement

An optional tool available to help repair a cadet's relationship with the unit is CAPF 60-97, Cadet Reset Agreement.

When a cadet is struggling and would benefit from some time away from CAP, the Cadet Reset Agreement would help facilitate that temporary separation. Cadets, parents, and unit leadership enter the agreement voluntarily. The agreement is designed to offer a cadet some space to reflect on their own behavior, to work on some personal goals outlined in the agreement, and to take some space away from CAP to create a "fresh start" when the cadet returns. When the goals of the Reset Agreement have been met by the cadet, the staff will put the transgression in the past and allow the cadet a fresh start. Cadet will make mistakes, but it is unfair to hold them over their head for an extended period of time, especially when the cadet has worked to resolve the issue.

While the agreement triggers a period of voluntary inactivity for the cadet, use of the optional tool is not an adverse membership action. The Reset Agreement should be used as a tool to help guide the cadet back onto the right path. If used, the completed form should be filed in the cadet's personnel record for 1 year and then destroyed.

Sometimes interrupting the flow of something breaks its momentum, and can be helpful to get on a new path. The agreement is really about resetting and starting fresh.



- Because these interventions are so rare, you want to hesitate before reaching for these powerful tools. Accordingly, you should first confer with other seniors in your squadron, plus reach out to the DCP and/or wing commander.
- Perhaps 3% of all disciplinary interventions will involve heavy and public-facing consequences, and less than 1% of all disciplinary interventions will result in membership termination.

### Egregious Conduct

On rare occasions a cadet may do something so severe that it warrants jumping right to a Heavy or Final Intervention.

**Q14: What would be an example of that type of misconduct? And which intervention would you use heavy or final and why?**

**A14:** *Allow for answers, but anything along the lines of severe behavior including:*

- Sending or exchanging sexual text messages sexting
- Selling drugs to other cadets
- Physically attacking another cadet or senior member
- Bringing a firearm to an activity
- Repeated behavior in the moderate intervention category.

**Q15: What are some other scenarios where we might end up at a Heavy intervention, even after we've progressed through Soft and Moderate stages.**

**A15:** *Allow for answers, but anything where behavior has gone unchanged after mentoring, soft and moderate interventions, including:*

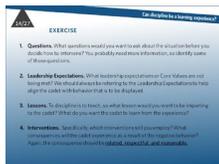
- Endless disrespect
- Cadet in a leadership role continues to fail to complete assigned tasks
- Anything where we have seen no change after the soft interventions and the medium interventions, and we've given plenty of time to meet the expectation

### Parent Involvement

Anytime you use a heavy or final intervention you must inform the parent in writing (CAPR 60-1, 3.5.3). The best practice would be to have a conversation with the parent, that day, before the cadet heads home (or on the phone if the parent isn't picking the cadet up) and then follow up with an e-mail. It would be poor parent relations to only send an e-mail without first attempting to have a conversation with the parent. Its not going to go over well.

Commanders will record heavy and final disciplinary interventions via a memo to the cadet and parents, with a copy placed in the cadet's personnel file. (CAPR 60-1, 3.5.3)

**Transition.** Now let's do an exercise where we try to apply the system of progressive discipline to realistic instances of misconduct you might see in the field.



## Exercise

20 min

In your Student Packet are hypothetical disciplinary problems, that are based on real life incidents that squadrons deal with. For each problem, you have four tasks.

1. **Questions.** What questions would you want to ask about the situation before you decide how to intervene? You probably need more information, so identify some of those questions.
2. **Leadership Expectations.** What leadership expectations or Core Values are not being met? We should always be refereeing to the Leadership Expectations to help align the cadet with behavior that is to be displayed.
3. **Lessons.** To discipline is to teach, so what lesson would you want to be imparting to the cadet? What do you want the cadet to learn from the experience?
4. **Interventions.** Specifically, which interventions will you employ? What consequences will the cadet experience as a result of the negative behavior? Again, the consequence should be related, respectful, and reasonable.

Read your assigned hypotheticals, think about your questions, lessons, and consequences, and then be ready to explain your answer to the group.

*You may want to have half the class do the odds, half the evens. Students should work with a partner.*



## Answer Key

*Before showing the answer slides have the group share about what they came up with.*

*The "answers" shown on the slides are merely suggestions. Reasonable people may disagree on specific tactics, but their alternative ideas should at least be of the same degree (soft, medium, heavy, final) as the intervention suggested in the slides.*

*Copies of the "answer key" should be handed out at the end of the class.*





## Summary & Final

2 min

Character development and progressive discipline go hand-in-hand.

We're teaching cadets good habits, helping them choose the right acts for the right reasons.

We are "for" the cadet. We're not the cadet's adversary. We're not out to "get" the cadet.

Whenever we intervene on a disciplinary matter, we want to use caring methods. It's not enough to make cadets smart about moral reasoning; we need to provide them with caring relationships so they, in turn, become caring leaders themselves.

Finally, when disciplinary matters arise, we'll use a sliding scale approach, selecting "soft" interventions most of the time, and choosing moderate interventions occasionally, and being very hesitant about reaching for heavy or final interventions.

## Final Thought

Our final thought comes from one of America's all-time great educators, Mister Rogers.

"I think of discipline as the continual, everyday process of helping a child learn self-discipline."

That perspective is consistent with CAP's approach to progressive discipline.