



Command Sgt. Maj. Rory L. Malloy discusses corrective training with two NCOs at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, at Fort Bliss, Texas. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Stadel)

From the CSM: Correction should train, not humiliate

By Command Sgt. Maj. Rory L. Malloy

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As members of the Army profession, we have been entrusted to defend our nation's borders, interests and ideals. As noncommissioned officers, we have been entrusted to lead Soldiers, to train them, to teach them to be professionals.

That trust is given to us by our Soldiers, their families and their loved ones. They trust that we will use our authority to make our Soldiers better — to build them up, not tear them down. One of the tools we're given to accomplish this is corrective training.

Corrective training is an invaluable way for NCOs to enforce standards and hold Soldiers accountable. However, when applied incorrectly, corrective training can cross the line and lead to humiliation, punishment

or even hazing. And when leaders cross that line, their actions can become worse than the shortcomings they were trying to correct.

Army Regulation 600-20 is clear that "training, instruction, or correction given to a Soldier to correct deficiencies must be directly related to the deficiency. It must be oriented to improving the Soldier's performance in his or her problem area. ... Such measures assume the nature of training or instruction, not punishment." And AR 600-20 notes, "Care should be taken at all levels of command to ensure that training and instruction are not used in an oppressive manner to evade the procedural safeguards applying to imposing nonjudicial punishment."

Punishment is strictly the realm of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Corrective training is intended to correct a deficiency or shortcoming, never to punish.

If a Soldier shows up to formation late, corrective training is in order. Making the Soldier wear a clock around his or her neck for a week is not corrective training. It's humiliating. So what should an NCO do? Requiring the Soldier to arrive in formation 10 minutes earlier than his or her peers until the supervisor feels the Soldier has overcome this deficiency would be acceptable corrective training.

If a Soldier arrives to work and he hasn't shaved properly, having him conduct a "shaving class" in formation, in which he puts on shaving cream and shaves in front of his peers, isn't corrective training — it's humiliating, it's unprofessional and it could be considered hazing. However, his NCO could have that Soldier arrive 30 minutes early and shave in the latrine under the supervision of the NCO. In that case, it's clear the action is intended to ensure the Soldier knows how to shave properly. It takes place in private. It's not intended to harass, humiliate or haze. If a supervisor believes his or her whole platoon has a problem with shaving properly, he or she might conduct a class to correct the issue, but the intention

should never be to humiliate or punish.

Small research projects about a shortcoming or incorrect action can also be valuable corrective training. They engage and inform Soldiers in the importance of proper behavior and professionalism. For instance, that Soldier who was late might be required to research the backward planning model of the Army and explain why Soldiers need to be in place on time and how important an individual's punctuality can be to the entire group.

Physical training is sometimes warranted. If a Soldier is goofing off in formation and he or she has been warned once or twice, an NCO might require that Soldier to do pushups to get him or her focused and back on task. A few pushups are OK. One hundred are not.

Our nation, our leaders and our Soldiers have entrusted us with a great deal of authority to enforce Army standards. If we abuse our authority, as we do when we don't use corrective training as it's intended, then we might lose that authority. And that would be detrimental to the good order and discipline of the force and diminish the power of the noncommissioned officer to do what's right. ■

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