

# Leadership Coaching at ADFA Overview

## Transcript

### Appearing

In order of appearance:

1. MAJ David Stephens

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### Transcript details

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MAJ David Stephens

Welcome to this next, video in the tutorial series. And during this, tutorial, I want to give you a broad overview of the program. Now, we'll have covered much of this during the compulsory training that you would have done as part of your induction into the program. But it's helpful to have a reminder of some of these key points as you think about how you're going to engage with your coaching counterparts here at ADFA.

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MAJ David Stephens

Now, ADFA is a very unique environment, as you know. We've got trainees that are here for three, sometimes four years, depending on their degree stream. And it's a great opportunity for them to work on their character, leadership and ethics, and think about how they going to approach these different parts of their leadership as they work towards graduation

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MAJ David Stephens

and to begin their services, junior officers in the different services. So it's a unique opportunity and a great opportunity for us as coaches to be able to help guide them in this process. Now one of the best resources that you have as a leadership coach is, of course, the coaching SOP and I encourage you to have a look at that.

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MAJ David Stephens



There's some great resources there. It covers... there's templates for some of the different engagements that you might be having. There is some surveys that you might like to think about using either before you actually start engaging with your coaching counterpart, or even as you come towards the end of your period of engaging with your coaching counterpart.

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MAJ David Stephens

And it talks about things like, what is the difference between coaching and mentoring? And this is probably where I really want to kick it off in terms of, again, getting us thinking about what it means to be a leadership coach on the program. Now we're asking you very deliberately to be a coach, not a mentor, not a counselor, not a psych.

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MAJ David Stephens

And it's this approach to learning, and coaching that we really want those who are leadership coaches on the program to adopt. What does this mean? It means that you're going to be engaging with your coaching counterparts by asking really good questions. I know the temptation. It's often one of the biggest temptations for our leadership coaches who have a world of different experiences.

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MAJ David Stephens

Many of you have been on deployments, you've been in a range of different roles, and many of you have been through ADFA or other training institutions. And it's often very tempting to be able to say, "Look, if I was you, I would do this," or "When I was at ADFA, this is what we did." But probably the biggest challenge is to stop sort of trying to leap in and inject yourself in the process, but rather just to ask really good questions and encourage your coaching counterpart to reflect on where they're at, what matters to them, and solutions that are actually really meaningful for them.

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MAJ David Stephens

And so, in that sense, you're, you're really a guide. You're helping them to reflect, to think about their strengths and their values, and to come up with their own solutions to many of these problems. In this series we do some deep dives there with some other sections. If you're interested in learning more about the difference between coaching and mentoring, we've got a number of our senior coaches that talk about that



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MAJ David Stephens

and as I've mentioned, it's also covered in our SOPs. Now, as you're aware, the big picture, the program, consists of up to six engagements with your coaching counterpart. That's what we're asking, so six is the ideal, you know, so anywhere between 6 and 7 would be okay. But ideally, you should be aiming for those six sessions over the course of the year.

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MAJ David Stephens

Those sessions can be anywhere between, you know, sort of two to sort of four weeks apart, maybe a little longer depending on program commitments and everything else that's going on both here at ADFA, and in your workplace. But meeting regularly and being consistent with that is really important if you want to make this program a success for your coaching counterparts. Another thing to think about is how you first engage with your coaching counterpart.

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MAJ David Stephens

So once you're matched up and you've done all your mandatory training and including doing the Induction part of the course and your level one and two Working with Youth Safety training, then you'll be allocated a training officer to engage with. You'll be sent the details, and the expectation is that you're the one that will reach out to them in the first instance.

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MAJ David Stephens

Now, please be aware, that while all trainee officers do have access to the Defense Protected Network emails, they have to log in separately and often they won't see those messages straight away. The best way to engage with your coaching counterpart is through a text message or ideally Signal. Reach out to them and set up your first meeting

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MAJ David Stephens

that way. Now, the first meeting that you have with your coaching counterpart will be here at ADFA. And there's a number of reasons for that. We really want to make sure that when you're engaging with your coaching counterpart, that they're comfortable. It can often be quite intimidating for some of these young trainee officers who are meeting with, often quite senior, people.



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MAJ David Stephens

And so building that rapport and having that first meeting at a place that they're comfortable with, that can be really important. So when you set that up come out to ADFA make it the coffee shop, there's rooms upstairs, you could meet in the library or even just outside at one of the tables. If you need any ideas on where to do that, then please reach out to the CLE team and we can help you there as well.

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MAJ David Stephens

Now, of course, that first meeting is really important. After that, however, you can think more broadly about where you might meet, with your, coaching counterpart. It doesn't have to be at ADFA. It might be at a café down at the Campbell Shops. You might like to take them down to the war memorial café or somewhere else.

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MAJ David Stephens

But please keep in mind it should be always in a in a semipublic space. Don't invite them back to your house. Those principles of working with youth and keeping them safe need to be front of mind, especially as we're dealing with, the young men and women at ADFA. Once you've started engaging with your coaching counterparts, the one thing that you do need to do is to get them and yourself to sign the coaching agreement.

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MAJ David Stephens

Now, this is a really useful reminder about what are some of the key things to do with the coaching program. It covers things like confidentiality, which is a key principle, and you need to reinforce that. There's a reason that we don't use internal squadron staff as part of the coaching program. We want the trainee officers to feel really comfortable with who they're meeting with, that they're outside of their squadron hierarchy so that what they're talking about can remain confidential.

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MAJ David Stephens

And obviously there's mandatory reporting requirements, you know, threat of harm to self or others and those things that are part of that agreement, and you can outline those as you're working through. That agreement also helps to keep both you and them accountable for



agreeing to meet up and committing to the program. So make sure you sign that and pass that back through the CLE team so that we know that you've kicked off with the program.

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MAJ David Stephens

Another key question that we're often asked is, when we're meeting how do we address each other? What do we wear? Things like that. So some practical tips there. You know, building rapport is key to this program. If you approach it as a senior officer trying to mentor, you know, a junior person then you will not have success as a coach.

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MAJ David Stephens

You need to try to break down some of those barriers. If you're comfortable, and this is my approach, I asked coaching counterpart in that environment to call me by my first name, rather than using any sort of rank. And if they're comfortable with that, if you're comfortable with that, then, I'd recommend that's a great way to try to break down those barriers.

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MAJ David Stephens

Also, not wearing uniform, is a good way to try to reduce some of those barriers. If it's possible for you to do so also, you know, not taking them to, I don't know, some where that they might feel a bit out of place, like you know, the Russell Café or somewhere like that.

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MAJ David Stephens

Unless there's a specific reason for you to do that, just think about how your surroundings, how you're engaging and directing with them will either help to build that rapport or work against that. And so that is key. Another reminder that as you're engaging with these young people, the approach that we take as part of the character, leadership and ethics team here at ADFA, it's very much doctrine led.

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MAJ David Stephens

And there are some key doctrine out there, including the leadership, the character, and the ethics doctrine, that form the basis of how we approach our lessons around leadership, ethics and character development. So take courage you to really be across those key bits of doctrine



as they're really helpful ways is to build some of those themes as you're having conversations with your coaching counterpart around, say, leadership - for example.

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MAJ David Stephens

So you could draw on the doctrine to talk about, you know, what is leadership? What's the you know, what's the purpose of leadership, what are some of the key principles of leadership? And you can draw on the doctrine as you're having those conversations with your coaching counterparts. So that's really important. Now we also provide a number of different tools and resources for you as you work through the program.

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MAJ David Stephens

I've already mentioned the SOP, there's the manager training you will have received. You also have access to a coach mentor, and their role is to really support you in your journey, in your coaching journey, especially if you haven't had any, you know, formal trainings beyond what we provide as part of, this program. They can be really useful.

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MAJ David Stephens

because if you've got questions, if you've got queries, if something comes up that that just doesn't gel with you during a conversation with your coaching counterpart, then use them, they're a resource, reach out to them. They're there to support you, as you go through your coaching journey. Likewise, myself and the CLE team are here to answer any questions you have or help you with anything that, you might be struggling with as part of this program, including if you are, and not getting any responses, for example, from your coaching counterpart, reach out to us.

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MAJ David Stephens

We'd much prefer after a week or so that you reach out to us and then we can, you know, make some inquiries and it could be that your training officer had to go on emergency leave or something else has come up. We can, you know, talk to a divisional officer or someone else and provide some perspective.

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MAJ David Stephens



Much prefer you've reached out early, rather than waiting sort of a month or more before you, sort of say, hey, what's going on? The other thing is, of course, sometimes, for whatever reason, it just won't work. You know, there's, some sort of clash or it's you just don't think this is the right fit for you in terms of your coaching counterpart or something.

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MAJ David Stephens

maybe something else has come up in your life. That means that you can't keep the time and resources that you need to, to make this work. Once again, please come out. please reach out to us. we're more than happy to, move things around to reallocate coaches and coaching counterparts. It happens every year, so it's not unusual.

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MAJ David Stephens

We'd much prefer you reach out to us and let us know, if you're circumstances have changed so that we can manage that in a way that benefits everybody as you work through the program. Throughout the year, we'll also provide some professional development opportunities. We'll have some online webinars where we might talk about different aspects of coaching, to give you the opportunity to develop your skills.

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MAJ David Stephens

Because at the end of the day, we hope that this will not just only benefit your coaching counterparts, but that you'll be able to take something away from this program as well, that you'll be able to develop your skills as a coach, that you will be able to develop your self-reflective practices and that you'll be able to, not just engage with the program, but really embrace it and take away some of the key lessons of what it means to be an effective coach in the modern ADF.

