Leadership Skills

This course explores leadership skills as they apply to telecommunicators and 9-1-1 Call Centers. Learners examine leadership as a learned skill that can develop through training, experience, and practice. The course emphasizes that telecommunicators can demonstrate leadership regardless of formal rank or supervisory authority by influencing callers, co-workers, and emergency responders. Topics include leadership and followership, sources of power, leadership versus management, leadership styles, values-based leadership, effective leadership traits, communication, conflict resolution, credibility, empathy, and proactive leadership within the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the role of leadership in the PSAP and describe how telecommunicators function as leaders during routine and critical incidents.
2. Differentiate among legitimate, expert, and referent power and explain how each can influence others.
3. Compare the responsibilities of leaders and followers and distinguish leadership from management.
4. Differentiate among autocratic, free-rein, human resources, and democratic leadership styles and determine when each may be appropriate.
5. Apply effective leadership traits, communication techniques, coaching practices, conflict-resolution strategies, and proactive leadership principles in the PSAP.

Module 1: Foundations of Leadership

This module introduces leadership as a learned skill that develops through training, experience, and practice. Learners examine how telecommunicators exercise leadership even without formal supervisory authority and explore the importance of vision, influence, leaders, followers, and the Three C's—Courtesy, Confidence, and Concern. The module also introduces legitimate, expert, and referent power and demonstrates how these forms of power apply to telecommunicators.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define leadership and explain why it is considered a learned skill.
2. Explain the relationship between leaders, followers, vision, and organizational success.
3. Describe how telecommunicators demonstrate leadership with callers, co-workers, and responders.
4. Differentiate among legitimate, expert, and referent power.
5. Apply Courtesy, Confidence, and Concern when interacting with callers and others in the PSAP.

Content/Activities

- What Is Leadership?
- Leadership Vision and the Three C's
- Power and Leadership
- Legitimate Power
- Expert Power
- Referent Power
- Telecommunicator Leadership Roles

Module 2: Leaders and Followers

This module examines the complementary roles of leaders and followers. Learners explore a leader's responsibility for the people who accomplish organizational work and consider the importance of planning, training, anticipating problems, and trusting others to perform assigned responsibilities. The module also emphasizes that successful followers demonstrate initiative, creativity, independence, and the ability to recognize when circumstances require them to lead.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain a leader's responsibility for the people who accomplish organizational objectives.
2. Describe the importance of planning, training, trust, and anticipation in effective leadership.
3. Identify characteristics of effective followers.
4. Explain why leaders must sometimes assume the role of follower.
5. Apply leader and follower roles appropriately during PSAP operations and critical incidents.

Content/Activities

- Responsibilities of Leaders
- Planning, Training, and Anticipating Problems
- Leadership in the PSAP
- Leadership During Critical Incidents
- Characteristics of Effective Followers
- Transitioning Between Leader and Follower Roles
- Call-Center Leadership Video

Module 3: Leadership vs. Management

This module distinguishes leadership from management within public safety organizations. Learners examine how leaders establish direction and identify the steps required to achieve a vision, while managers and supervisors convert those directions into actionable plans by coordinating employees, time frames, and resources.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Differentiate leadership responsibilities from management responsibilities.
2. Explain how leaders establish organizational direction and vision.
3. Describe how managers and supervisors convert direction into actionable plans.
4. Explain the relationship among leadership, supervision, resources, and organizational goals.

Content/Activities

- Leadership and Organizational Direction
- Management and Action Planning
- Supervisory Responsibilities in the PSAP
- Time Frames and Resource Management
- Leadership and Management Comparison

Module 4: Leadership Styles

This module explores four broad leadership styles based on the leader's level of concern for tasks and people. Learners examine autocratic, free-rein, human resources, and democratic leadership and consider the advantages, limitations, and appropriate use of each style. Emphasis is placed on adapting leadership behavior to the needs of the situation and the follower.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Differentiate among autocratic, free-rein, human resources, and democratic leadership styles.
2. Compare each leadership style based on its concern for tasks and people.
3. Explain circumstances in which an autocratic approach may be necessary for safety or rapid decision-making.
4. Describe how democratic leadership encourages participation while maintaining leader accountability.
5. Select an appropriate leadership style based on the follower, task, and situation.

Content/Activities

- Autocratic Leadership
- Free-Rein/Laissez-Faire Leadership
- Human Resources Leadership
- Democratic Leadership
- Situational Application of Leadership Styles
- Leadership Style Scenarios
- Knowledge Check 1

Module 5: Values-Based Leadership Perspective

This module introduces values-based leadership and emphasizes trust as an essential component of effective leadership. Through the Leadership Perspective video, learners examine self-reflection, balanced perspective, true self-confidence, and humility and consider how leadership depends more on relationships and influence than organizational charts or formal titles.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of trust in effective leadership.
2. Identify the four principles of values-based leadership.
3. Explain the role of self-reflection in leadership development.
4. Describe how balanced perspective, self-confidence, and humility influence leadership behavior.
5. Explain why leadership depends on relationships and influence rather than title alone.

Content/Activities

- Leadership Perspective Video
- Trust and Leadership
- Self-Reflection
- Balanced Perspective
- True Self-Confidence
- Humility
- Leadership Through Relationships

Module 6: Traits of Effective Leaders

This module examines ten traits associated with effective leadership and connects those traits to the daily work of telecommunicators. Learners explore verbal and nonverbal communication, passion and commitment, positive attitude, role modeling, counseling and coaching, knowledge, conflict resolution, credibility, and empathy. Emphasis is placed on integrating these traits rather than applying them in isolation.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify the ten leadership traits presented in the course and explain how they work together.
2. Apply effective verbal, nonverbal, and active-listening techniques in PSAP interactions.
3. Demonstrate leadership through passion, commitment, positive attitude, and role-model behavior.
4. Apply coaching, knowledge-sharing, and conflict-resolution practices to support co-workers and organizational goals.
5. Explain how credibility, consistency, and empathy build trust between leaders and followers.

Content/Activities

- Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Passion and Commitment
- Positive Attitude
- Role Model and Command Presence
- Counseling and Coaching
- Knowledge and Knowledge Sharing
- Conflict Resolution
- Credibility and Empathy

Module 7: Proactive Leadership

This module focuses on the leader's responsibility to anticipate problems and take preventive action before minor concerns escalate. Learners examine three areas in which proactive leadership can reduce problematic behavior in the call center: hiring practices, continuing education, and stress management. The module emphasizes selecting and developing quality employees, providing ongoing learning opportunities, empowering staff to apply new skills, and recognizing early signs of workplace stress.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of proactive leadership in preventing workplace problems from escalating.
2. Describe how effective hiring and orientation practices contribute to a strong PSAP workforce.
3. Explain the role of continuing education in employee growth, motivation, and organizational improvement.
4. Describe how leaders can empower employees to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills.
5. Identify proactive approaches to recognizing and addressing employee stress.

Content/Activities

- Proactive Leadership
- Hiring Practices
- Employee Orientation and Training
- Continuing Education
- Employee Empowerment
- Stress Management
- Knowledge Check 2

Module 8: Leadership Skills Integration and Course Completion

This concluding module reinforces the major concepts presented throughout the course and challenges learners to integrate leadership behaviors into their everyday responsibilities. Learners reflect on how leadership can be demonstrated on every call and during interactions with peers, supervisors, and responders, regardless of formal rank or title.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Integrate leadership principles into routine and critical PSAP operations.
2. Select appropriate sources of power and leadership styles based on situational needs.
3. Demonstrate communication, empathy, credibility, and professionalism when influencing others.
4. Apply proactive leadership practices to support continuous improvement within the PSAP.
5. Recognize opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership regardless of formal position.

Content/Activities

- Review of Leadership Principles
- Leadership Roles in the PSAP
- Application of Leadership Traits
- Situational Leadership Review
- Personal Leadership Reflection
- Course Knowledge Review
- Course Completion

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser