

# Interpersonal Dimension

The objective of this dimension is to help leaders develop the knowledge and skills to influence people to accomplish the mission. Leaders need to develop multiple skills—none more important than interpersonal—to be successful in today’s Air Force. A commonly used definition of *interpersonal* is “being, related to, and involving relations between persons.” The interpersonal process, as presented in this dimension, addresses the communicator, the message, the medium, the receiver, and feedback. The Interpersonal Dimension, then, is people-oriented, rather than mission-oriented like the Organizational Dimension. The effective leader must be able to work with people and influence them to accomplish the mission. Effective leaders depend on their ability to understand and apply the concepts, principles, practices, attitudes, and skills of “human-to-human” interaction addressed in this dimension.

The articles in this dimension focus on four aspects of interpersonal relations. The first section addresses leadership theories and styles. As a leader, you need a basic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different leadership styles available and the impact they have on followers. Additionally, a self-analysis exercise is provided to help you identify your leadership style.

The second section focuses on understanding how to motivate people and how to use this knowledge to build cohesive and productive teams. The leader understands and meets the expectations and needs of team members. Principles and the unique relationship between the officer and NCO are analyzed.

The third section focuses on another significant aspect of interpersonal relations—communication. The authors of these articles believe that communication is an essential leadership skill. The articles discuss common problems in the communication process and methods to improve communication.

The last section relates to creating an environment that fosters constructive feedback, creativity, and doing the right thing. The leader sets the tone for everything that is done and should create an environment of honest feedback and dissent within the limits of military standards of discipline and obedience. This section also addresses the need to nurture creativity and to develop people capable of thinking independently, using their own initiative.

