

What is Leadership?



By: *Destini Baldwin*

Congratulations to the Junior Council and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Focus Group Coordination Team on receiving a Meritorious Team Commendation from Vice Admiral M.K. Brown for their Junior Council Report: SAPR Focus Group Results! The article gave profound insight and awareness to sexual assault prevention and could not have been done without the incredible leadership from Lieutenant Commander Dan Rodgers, AMT1 Darrel Linders, and the rest of the Junior Council. Ten focus groups from all around the country were created and framed the intriguing discussion on sexual assault prevention. Being receptive to different perspectives and opinions can make a team flourish and unite. Discussions create awareness, education, and camaraderie amongst peers.

Leadership is not being afraid to take risks and saying what is on your mind. These discussions were a platform for O3 and E6 members down to express how they felt. The report stated, "Because we don't hear about the cases, we don't know how big the problem is." It was vital insight like this that may have been overlooked without this report. The Junior Council was able to put people in comfortable environments to be vulnerable enough to speak up. You never know where speaking up will get you, and it can truly make a difference. We should all be encouraged to be aware, speak up, and most of all leaders. Being able to teach and act as a role model is leadership. Sometimes people will *not* take the next step until they see someone they respect do it. Leaders teach well enough to pass the baton to the next person in line.

Another noticeable trait of leadership from this honor is letting your team lead the way. Nelson Mandela said it well, "It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front." Allowing the people behind you to lead, gives them more confidence and shows you care for their best interest. Being able to give others the opportunities to shine shows the power of being a team player; it gives everyone within the team the chance to be, and feel like a leader. The Coast Guard motto is "Semper Paratus" meaning always ready, and the participants in the report were definitely ready. Opportunities come unexpectedly and leaders must always be ready no matter what comes their way. Standing your ground with morale, even when suddenly put on the spot, exhibits a courageous leader. So to the Junior Council, SAPR focus group, and every single participant, thank you for your commendable leadership and readiness!

Leadership Competencies Addressed: *Influencing Others, Taking Care of People, Decision Making and Problem Solving*