

A guide to giving effective feedback

Focus on behaviour

- Separate *behaviour* (what was observed) from *interpretation* (what you deduced)

Make this distinction in your head but also use it to construct your sentences in your feedback.

If you interpret, make the interpretation tentative:

eg "When I saw your hands round the patient's throat (behaviour), I wondered if you were angry (interpretation)?"

- Separate behaviour from the person

Most of us take criticism better if it is not personal:

Maybe what I did was not good – but it doesn't mean I'm no good.

Make sure the person you are giving feedback to can see this distinction.

Illustrate your comments

Make sure the person receiving the feedback knows what you are talking about. As well a label, give an example.

Some people respond better to abstract concepts, others like concrete examples.

- **P**oint

- **I**llustration

"I'd like you to share options" (**P**oint)

"Why not ask the patient with backache whether they want analgesics or physiotherapy?" (**I**llustration)

Qualities of good feedback (Silverman et al.)

Good feedback is:

- Non-judgmental
- Specific
- Directed towards behaviour rather than personally
- Checked with the recipient
- Problem - solving
- A suggestion rather than prescriptive

Some examples:

Evaluative or judgmental	Descriptive
The beginning was awful, you just seemed to ignore her	At the start you were looking at the notes, which prevented eye contact.
The beginning was excellent, great stuff	At the beginning you gave her your full attention and never lost eye contact - your facial expression registered your interest in what she was saying.

Useful feedback can include both observation and interpretation, but clearly separates one from the other:

eg I **saw** you look at your watch and **thought** you might be bored

I saw him talking with his hand over his mouth and **wondered** if he was lying.

Some structures for giving feedback

The feedback sandwich

What is seen as criticism is felt more strongly and is longer-lasting than what is perceived as praise. A 'feedback sandwich' is perceived by the receiver as balanced, and ends on a positive note:

- Something positive you observed
- A suggestion for improvement
- Another positive point, or a positive summary

SET-GO (Silverman et al.)

Group members base feedback on

- What I **S**aw
Descriptive, specific, non-judgmental
- What **E**lse did you see?
What happened next - descriptive

The learner is then invited to reflect him- or herself, and to problem-solve:

- What do you **T**hink?

The facilitator then invites the whole group to problem-solve:

- What **G**oal are we trying to achieve?
An outcome-based approach
- Any **O**ffers of how we should get there?
Suggestions and alternatives – to be rehearsed if possible

Pendleton's rules

- Briefly clarify matters of fact, if needed
- The learner goes first and discusses what went well
- The teacher/facilitator discusses what went well
- The learner describes what could be done differently and makes suggestions for change
- The teacher/facilitator identifies what could be done differently and gives options for change
- The teacher/facilitator may end with a summary of what was said.

Reflective feedback (Deana Midmer)

- Experiencing: the learner experiences the event as it unfolds.
- Publishing: Learners are asked for specific details about their observation of the event, without editing or analysing their response. "What did you see? Hear?"
- Analysing: Learners disclose their personal reactions to what they saw and heard. "How do you feel about it?" "What were your gut reactions?" "How did it strike you?"
- Generalising: Learners generalise about the event. "What in this experience applies to the real world?" "What in the real world applies to this experience?"
- Applying: Learners reflect on applications of the learning event to current or future situations. "How will you apply this as a doctor?" "What will you now do?"