

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback is a skill which with practice has the potential to improve relationships, increase productivity and create a supportive and nurturing learning environment.

Unfortunately, the idea of giving or receiving feedback usually fills us with dread when we remember previous experiences of poorly delivered feedback, when we have been left feeling demoralised.

The purpose of feedback is to stimulate self-improvement and growth and when delivered correctly with good intent can lead to advanced skill and performance.

Receiving positive feedback is as important as feedback for improvement. Positive feedback acknowledges our skills, affirms our efforts have been noticed and motivates us to excel.

Regular Feedback

Regular feedback when offered, simply and informally creates a nurturing environment where people feel open to receiving and giving feedback. We then recognise feedback as a positive step to improvement rather than a daunting performance review.

Offering feedback when a task has been positive and highlighting the skills that a student has demonstrated will make them open to other feedback.

Regular informal feedback allows people to understand their level of performance so during supervisions, formal feedback is not shocking, emotionally charged or difficult.

Feedback

- **1. Timely**

Feedback should be timely when information needs to be given about a task, event, or performance. The facts of the event are fresh in people's memory, and this enhances reflection and improvement. However, if the

situation has been emotional, it may be better to wait until people can discuss the event with clear perspective.

- **2. Location, Location, Location**

We all enjoy being in a crowd when receiving acclamation and praise but can feel intimidated, stressed, and judged if the feedback is anything less than perfect.

Find a comfortable location where you won't be interrupted or overheard.

- **3. Ask their opinion first**

How did you feel about your performance in that task?

The student's answer will give you an understanding of their perception of their performance and will help you individualise your feedback to their needs.

- **4. Fair and balanced**

We offer feedback to stimulate improvement and professional growth so be fair and balanced when offering feedback. It is best to only discuss one or two issues during feedback, so the student remains focused and not overwhelmed.

- **5. The Sandwich**

We naturally associate comments on our performance with our personal worth, so it is good practice to start with a positive comment to place students at ease and end with a positive comment to reduce anxiety and feelings of worthlessness.

Sometimes, depending on your delivery or their personality, the student only hears the positive comments, so a good technique is to have them summarise the information in their own words.

- **6. Be specific**

Offer feedback from your perspective. Use the word I instead of you. ie. I noticed that... when observing the students' performance. Be specific, factual, focused on the issues and use examples from practice. Never exaggerate the facts to make a point as this invalidates the feedback.

- **7. Implications**

Explain the implications or potential outcomes of the issues that you have observed. This helps create an understanding and validates the information

- **8. Talk to each other**

When you offer feedback think of it as a discussion about performance and not delivering a performance review.

Actively listen. Ask the student their perspective so they feel that the feedback is constructive, they are a part of the process and therefore more likely to accept ownership of their improvement and growth.