

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback is an essential skill in many different situations, however people often feel uncomfortable giving feedback.

Giving feedback is about providing information after a specific information and is designed to help the person develop and improve. Feedback should only be given to help people understand where they have done well, where they could improve and develop or to reinforce certain standards or processes.

There are different types of feedback:

- **Positive** – this is generally given to recognise someone for their contribution or to praise someone. It may be given to tell someone they have done a good job in a particular situation, or it could be given to tell someone they look good or something suits them. It makes people feel good and can be motivating.
- **Constructive** – given in situations where someone can learn something from what they have done and how they can improve. It should be given to help someone develop and not to criticise or put someone else down
- **Negative** – this is destructive and should never be given. Negative feedback is finding fault with someone's behaviour or performance without offering a constructive element on how they can develop. It demotivates people and there is no value in giving negative feedback, except to make the giver feel good
- **Informative** – providing information based on fact and personal observation of how someone has performed

Feedback should be balanced between constructive and positive. Too much constructive feedback can leave an individual feeling demotivated.

The “Feedback Sandwich” is one technique for giving feedback. The idea is that the bread on either side are positive and the sandwich filling is the constructive. You start with a positive, move onto the constructive and end with a positive.

Rules of Giving Feedback

- Give feedback as soon as possible after a situation or incident, whilst it is still fresh in the mind
- Care about what you say and how you say it
- Be clear, concise and specific and always give examples
- Focus on the positive and be constructive and objective
- Balance positive and constructive feedback
- Use positive language and positive body language
- Focus on present and future – not the past
- Explore alternatives sometimes using your own experience of what works for you, share ideas and look for way forward together
- Involve the individual in their feedback by asking questions and listening
- Always summarise at the end to confirm the feedback and any agreed action

Activity

For each of the following scenarios, consider the feedback you would give	
You have been observing a third year student do an ECG. Although technically they did well, they did not explain to the patient and forgot to ask them to remove their bra.	
You observe a colleague who is rude to a patient. How would you address this?	
You notice that a new HCA is not performing observations correctly as they are not finding the radial pulse. How would you address this?	