

'Spotlight on' series

Providing effective feedback

Supportive and constructive feedback is essential for the professional development of all healthcare professionals, including but not limited to resident doctors. Here we share some top tips to help you provide effective feedback.

1 Make feedback a two-way conversation



Signpost that you are going to give feedback, explain why you are doing so and ask for the person's perspective first.

Listen more than you talk and ask clarifying questions.

Consider using a structured method, such as Pendleton's model¹, to guide the conversation.

2 Ensure feedback is a regular occurrence



Promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement through regular ongoing feedback.

Make feedback part of institutional culture, establishing expectations that regular feedback is part of the learning process regardless of level of seniority.

3 Focus on specific, observable behaviours



Base feedback on direct observation.

Address the action, not the person's character, without judgement.

Explain the impact – ie the result of the behaviour.

Consider using the Situation-Behaviour-Impact model² to guide you.

4 Consider the time, place and environment

Deliver feedback as soon as possible after the event for the greatest impact.

Consider delivering positive feedback in public, to reinforce good behaviours.

Deliver negative feedback in private to avoid embarrassment and the person feeling uncomfortable.



5 Balance positive and constructive feedback

Acknowledge what the person is doing well to reinforce productive behaviours.

Consider a ratio of three positive interactions for every one negative, which research suggests can improve performance.

Use the 'feedback sandwich'³ cautiously, as people may focus on one part and miss the other.



6 Pay attention to non-verbal communication



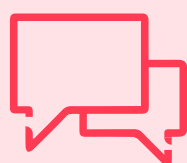
Consider that negative feedback accompanied by positive emotional signals can mean recipients feel better about their performance and are more likely to be able to make positive changes.

Show empathy, which will increase the recipient's interest and enthusiasm for accepting and using the feedback.

7 Facilitate acceptance

Consider using the emotions, content and outcome (ECO) model to facilitate acceptance of feedback:

- **Explore the emotional reaction to feedback**
- **Clarify the specific content of the feedback**
- **Confirm the learning and development needs**, and coach the creation of an outcomes plan.



8 Conclude with an action plan

Provide concrete actionable suggestions for improvement and work together to provide solutions.

Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals for improvement.



9 Offer support and follow-up

Let them know you are there to help them improve and check in to see how they're doing.

Reflect on your own performance after each session to allow for development of your feedback skills.



References and useful links

¹Feedback in the clinical setting, Burgess et al. BMC Medical Education 2020, 20(Suppl 2):460

²Situation-Behaviour-Impact model: <https://untools.co/situation-behavior-impact/>

³The feedback sandwich: <https://www.radicalcandor.com/blog/feedback-sandwich-praise-criticism>

Twelve tips for giving feedback effectively in the clinical environment. Ramai S and Krackov SK. Medical Teaching 2012, 34:787
BMA Reading List – Providing and receiving feedback: <https://www.bma.org.uk/media/7462/reading-list-providing-and-receiving-feedback.pdf>