Giving the Gift of Feedback

A toolkit for helping supervisors give feedback

What is important about giving feedback?

Feedback is an act of care. Imagine a culture where feedback, even critical feedback, was considered a gift—an act of care and support— rather than punishment. Where feedback was always expected, welcomed and practiced with skill and humility on all sides.

Moving toward a culture that views feedback as a gift means not pretending that feedback is easy but rather that it is a skill to practice intentionally and together in shared responsibility.

The Basic Assumption

Basic assumption: Everyone is intelligent, has a unique point of view, and cares about doing their best

Additional assumption: Everyone is interested and tired or overwhelmed, rather than disinterested and at full capacity

Remember: Feedback is Not Mistreatment

Feedback is one of our top categories for exemplary teacher recognitions.

Learners are looking for feedback. They are more likely to report teachers who do not give feedback for "neglect" than teachers who do for "verbal abuse" or mistreatment.

WHAT MAKES FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK?
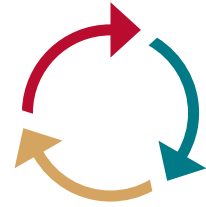
Think of a time when you received (or witnessed) constructive feedback that was **helpful**. What were some of the qualities of this feedback that made it helpful?

Think of a time when you received (or witnessed) constructive feedback that was **NOT helpful**. What were some of the qualities of that feedback?

According to an analysis of 3,000+ iTeach recognitions, here are the qualities of effective feedback that learners described:

Timely

Objective

Specific

Balanced

Relevant

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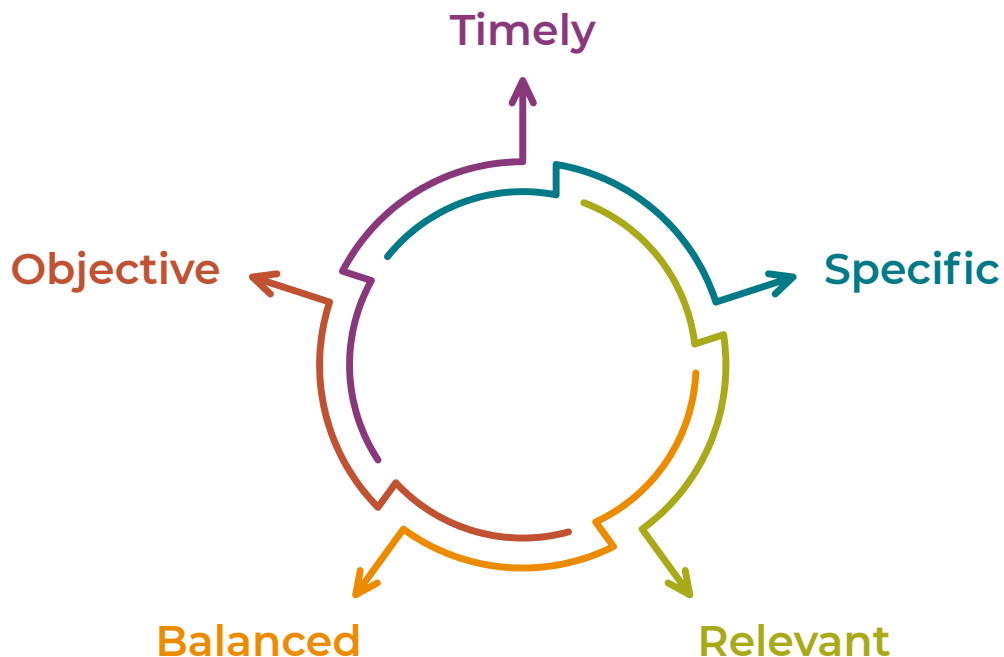
Before you give feedback, be sure to

SET THE SCENE

Check in with your own intentions. Why is this feedback important. When is this feedback important? How urgent of a concern is this? Make sure you are communicating the appropriate level of urgency to them.

Ground in your relationship remembering you are gifting them feedback.

Give the feedback in a **quiet, private space** without distractions. If this is not possible for all feedback, ensure this is the case for serious, more summative feedback.

Allow enough time to engage in a discussion that isn't rushed. Consider their workload -- would it serve them best to hear this at the end of their shift so they don't have to snap back into work mode? At the beginning when they're less tired?

Prepare in advance what you are going to say, and what evidence or examples you will give to them to help them understand.

Let the person know you would like to have a conversation in which you are going to give them feedback. **Ask them for a time that is good for them.** They might pick now, or they might need a few days to organize their thoughts and their schedule.

Prepare to listen and pivot if they share something with you that you weren't expecting.

Offer them the chance to respond at a later time, if they need to digest the feedback before they can offer their own thoughts.

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THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FEEDBACK

Formative

⊳ Given along the way

⊳ You can act on it

⊳ You can demonstrate growth

⊳ Often not written down

⊳ "Next time, try writing it like this"

⊳ "I'd like to see this improve in the next week"

Summative

⊳ Given at the end

⊳ A summary of your performance

⊳ No opportunity to demonstrate growth until the next summative feedback

⊳ Often a written evaluation or grade

⊳ "The student is effective at performing statistical regression analysis"

Things to Keep in Mind for **Summative** Feedback

- The qualities of effective feedback from page 2
- **Nothing on a summative evaluation should be a surprise!**
- Do NOT comment on clothing, hair, personal identities, etc.
- Remember how important these documents are

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THE COST OF INACTION

There can certainly be negative consequences from giving feedback, such as:

⊖ **Bad feelings**   ⊖ **Awkwardness**   ⊖ **Lack of trust**

However, always remember to factor in the cost of inaction. What bad things could or will happen if you do not give this feedback?

⊖ **To students or trainees**   ⊖ **To staff or faculty**   ⊖ **To the broader department**

LEO has many examples of times when failure to provide feedback has **serious** negative consequences. Consider these examples:

➡ You receive a complaint about a member of your staff. You don't think they'll respond well to feedback, so you don't give it. A few months later, you hear another similar concern. When you talk to the staff member about it, they say, "Well, no one ever raised a concern before!" and you're not sure how to respond.

➡ A student raises concerns about unfair expectations. You don't take action, and then a year later, you hear that your area has a reputation for not responding to concerns. It's so widespread that it impacts your ability to recruit and retain trainees.

➡ A resident is not performing up to standards but you decide not to give them honest formative feedback out of fear of being reported to LEO. When it comes time for the summative evaluation, you write honestly about their clinical deficits. The learner comes to you later, very concerned that none of this was brought up to them so that they could work to improve during their rotation.

TWO MODELS FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

Feedback with Good Judgment and ART Loops

Most feedback starts with questions:

> How do you think that went?

> Could you walk me through your thought process?

> What was successful and what do you think you need to improve?

> What did you notice?

Consider using this modified version of
Feedback with Good Judgment:

1 Inquiry

How do you think that went?

2 Observation

During the meeting, I saw you _____

3 Advocacy

I recommend _____
In the future, I would like to see you _____
It's important for you to know _____

ART Loops*

If you walk away after you give feedback, you can't be sure the person has heard and understood what you meant to communicate. You may have used terms they aren't familiar with, or they were anxious about receiving feedback so they missed an important point.

In order to ensure the feedback is heard and understood, and that you were clear, use an ART Loop before you finish the formative feedback session.

1 Ask
them for a summary of the feedback

2 Respond
to their summary by affirming

3 Tell
additional points or feedback as needed

Summative feedback should always be in writing or followed up with a written summary, so an ART Loop is not required. **Formative feedback,** however, is often provided on the go, so there are a lot of opportunities for the recipient to miss things or for you to accidentally misspeak.

Try always using an ART Loop for formative feedback!

*adapted from Healthcare Centered Communication

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