



Health Workforce Initiative

Hi-Touch Healthcare: The Critical Six Soft Skills

Grab-N-Go Independent Training Module:

Effectively Giving and Receiving Feedback

HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Effectively Giving and Receiving Feedback

Grab-N-Go Independent Training Module

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Effectively Giving and Receiving Feedback

Background Information

The philosopher William James once said, “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated,” and the Greek philosopher and historian Xenophon stated “The sweetest of all sounds is praise.”ⁱ This is especially true in the world of healthcare. Feedback can be defined as information about one’s performance or behavior that leads to action or development of the desired performance or behavior. Most individuals honestly want to know how they are doing. They also want to know if something could be done more effectively or if boundaries are overstepped.ⁱⁱ Giving and receiving feedback in one’s place of employment is a necessary part of anyone’s day. Feedback is much more than just telling someone how s/he performed or s/he is “doing” something; maximizing feedback is a way to develop a supportive working culture.ⁱⁱⁱ In the health care environment, feedback can be given or received by a supervisor, manager, peer, or even a patient or his/her family. The feedback involves two participants: the provider of the feedback and the recipient. Both individuals have important roles to play in this process. In the healthcare setting, the participants are usually the healthcare provider and the patient. How the patient perceives the reception and impact of his/her feedback often determines the HCAHPS scores the patient gives. This patient feedback is then directly linked to reimbursement.

An important part of any healthcare worker’s responsibility is to give and receive critical feedback. This feedback can help healthcare workers to better treat pain, help identify needed interventions more quickly, and even save lives. At the same time, effective delivery of feedback is essential. Even positive, healthy relationships can bring about disagreements, hostility, embarrassment, and a variety of other feelings and emotions. It is important, therefore, that individuals



know how to give and receive constructive feedback.^{iv} Without feedback, mistakes can go uncorrected, good performance may not be reinforced, and clinical competence cannot be substantiated. On the other hand, if feedback is done well, the capacity for reflection is enhanced, the individual doesn't feel judged, and lifelong professional development will occur.^v

Ende (1983) describes seven principles of effective feedback^{vi}

1. Goals of teacher and learner are aligned
2. Is well timed and expected
3. Is based on first hand observation
4. Is limited in quantity and remediable behavior
5. Is phrased in descriptive, non-evaluative language
6. Deals with specific performance
7. Deals with decisions and actions rather than intentions or interpretations

In the past, feedback was encouraged to be provided using the “sandwich” technique: give praise first, followed by criticism, and then finally more praise. The new theory is to: ask, tell, then ask again. First, ask the learner to assess his/her own performance and begin the conversation. At that time, assess the level of insight about the situation. The next step is the tell phase. Tell them what you observed, including both positive and corrective elements and rationale for those reasons. Included in this step is the formulation of well-defined mutual goals and action plan. The final stage is to ask again. Ask about the recipient's understanding of the situation and come up with mutual strategies for improvement.^{vii} In healthcare settings, the final stage of asking the patient assures his/her understanding and comprehension which, in turn, leads to patient satisfaction.

Providing and receiving feedback is an important tool in the healthcare environment because if a patient feels heard then there are better patient outcomes. This module will focus on theories of effective feedback as well as methods for giving and receiving feedback.



Training



Goal: To help participants understand the purpose of feedback and learn new strategies for how to effectively give as well as receive feedback.

WIIFM: What's in it for me? The ability to give feedback in a manner that is able to be received by the recipient is an effective tool in any profession, but it is especially important in the healthcare setting. In the healthcare setting, patient's pain, recovery, and sometimes even their lives are at stake. In addition, the ability to receive feedback and incorporate it without becoming defensive promotes growth and a better skilled workforce.



Materials Provided:

1. Effectively Giving and Receiving Feedback Module PowerPoint
2. Activity #1: Find the Ball Activity
3. Activity #2: Discussion of Feedback in Healthcare
4. Activity #3: The In-Law Scenario
5. "In-Law Scenario" handout
6. Activity #4: Sparkling Moments
7. "Sparkling Moments" handout



Directions for the Trainer: Activity preparation information is included in this document and/or within the PowerPoint presentation notes. Each PowerPoint slide, as appropriate, includes detailed explanations and instructions for the trainer. *As with all Grab-N-Go Modules, you can use it all for a more detailed training, or simply use one or two of the many activities—a la carte style*



ACTIVITY #1

Find the Ball Activity



Goal: To allow participants to see four distinct types of feedback applied in the same situation. This activity should demonstrate that a lack of feedback or just positive feedback is not beneficial.



Materials Needed (quantities vary by group size)

- PowerPoint slides 5 - 8
- 1 golf ball



Procedures:

1. Ask for four volunteers from the group.
2. Inform them that, one at a time, they will be called back into the room to search for a golf ball.
3. Ask them to leave the room.
4. Coach the remaining participants about their role in this activity –
 - a. **Silent Feedback:** when volunteer #1 enters the room, the participants are to remain completely silent and motionless.
 - b. **Negative Feedback:** (*Trainer warning: this situation gets kind of raw or awkward so know your group and step in if needed.*) When volunteer #2 enters the room, all participants should give negative feedback, no matter how close or far away the searcher is from the ball. Again, be sensitive to the group dynamics, but encourage them to use this strategy in order to learn about feedback. Instruct them to give the kind of negative feedback that they might hear back in the workplace when someone is dissatisfied (in other words, use the type of gossipy side conversations or body language that they have seen/heard in the workplace). Participants should NOT respond to any requests for direction or assistance (except with derision).
 - c. **Positive Feedback:** when volunteer #3 enters the room, all participants should give positive *but non-specific* feedback (e.g., "attaboy," "way to go," "I really like how you get after it," etc.), no matter how close or far away the searcher is from the ball. Participants should NOT respond to any requests for direction or assistance (except with further exclamations of "you can do it" or "we have faith in you").



ACTIVITY #1

Find the Ball Activity

- d. **Specific Feedback:** when volunteer #4 enters the room, participants should provide specific hints and suggestions for finding the ball, without giving it away. They should respond to yes/no questions.
5. Be sure to move to slide number 7 before bringing the first participant in the room so that they do not see the instructions on slide number 6.
6. Hide the golf ball. Invite the participants in one at a time. Each volunteer receives the prescribed feedback noted above.
 - a. **Silent:** For volunteer #1, hide the golf ball in a not-too-difficult location within the room. Allow 2-3 minutes for the search.
 - b. **Negative:** For volunteer #2, choose a more difficult spot. Allow 2-3 minutes for the search.
 - c. **Positive but general:** For volunteer #3, choose an even more difficult spot. Allow 2-3 minutes for the search.
 - d. **Specific:** for volunteer #4, choose the most difficult spot thus far. Allow 2-3 minutes for the search.
7. Bring the four volunteers back, debrief, and discuss the following questions:
 - a. How did you feel while looking for the ball?
 - b. What did you think/feel as a result of the feedback you received?
 - c. How did the feedback you received affect your performance?
 - d. How did the feedback you received affect how you felt about the individuals giving the feedback?
 - e. If this was the type of feedback you received every day, how would you feel?
 - f. Reflect on work place experiences-- what type of feedback have you experienced at work?



ACTIVITY #2

Feedback in Healthcare Discussion



Goal: To determine how giving feedback requires special attention and consideration.



Materials Needed:

- PowerPoint slides #13 – 14



Procedures:

1. Have the participants divide into small groups of three to four participants.
2. Instruct the small groups to compile a list of factors based on the question on slide 14.
3. Have the groups brainstorm for 5 minutes.
4. Question on slide 14: What factors about the healthcare setting need to be considered when giving feedback?
5. After the small group discussion, bring the group back together and allow the groups to share the ideas that they generated.
6. Possible ideas may include –
 - a. *Presence of patients: The healthcare worker giving feedback must not embarrass the healthcare worker receiving feedback in front of a patient. At the same time, the health care worker should not do anything that will endanger the health or well-being of the patient. This means that sometimes feedback is held back until the two can talk in private; in other cases, feedback must be given immediately in a diplomatic, supportive, yet honest way.*
 - b. How we give feedback: What we say, how we say it, when we say it—is critical to whether the feedback is effective and achieves the intended effect.
 - c. HIPAA: Make sure that when giving feedback that you are aware of your surroundings so as to not break HIPAA.



ACTIVITY #3

The In-Law Scenario



Goal: To demonstrate that there are ways to give very negative feedback with a positive result.



Materials Needed:

- PowerPoint slides #19 – 20
- Three hard copies of the “In-Law Scenario” handout



Procedures:

1. Ask for three volunteers to read the scenario to the large group—one person will read the “Narrator” section, one person will read the “Mother-in-Law” statements and the third volunteer will read the “Daughter” parts of the scenario.
2. After the scenario is completed, display slide 20 with the following questions:
 - a. What did you observe?
 - b. Was the mother-in-law honest?
 - c. Overall was the interaction positive or negative?
 - d. Did the mother-in-law offend the daughter-in-law?
3. Allow some discussion as the questions are explored.
4. Point out that the mother-in-law was honest yet gentle and careful in how she chose her words.
5. Point out that overall the exchange was positive and that had the mother-in-law chosen different words, the interaction could have become very negative.
6. This role play is a humorous way of demonstrating that there are many different ways to communicate, and that our choice of words and how we say something can have a huge impact on whether or not the interaction is positive and effective.



ACTIVITY #3

The In-Law Scenario



Narrator – The mother-in-law is eating a *terrible* dish that her new daughter-in-law cooked for her.

Daughter-in-law – How do you like dinner?

Mother-in-law - (Non-verbally makes a face as if it is the worst thing she has ever tasted.) The plates are lovely. The food is a little saltier than I prefer, but it is very warm.

Daughter-in-law – It's a brand new recipe. Don't you love the hint of oregano?

Mother-in-law – I love the onions and the chopped zucchini, but oregano is a little strong.



ACTIVITY #4

Sparkling Moments



Goal: To allow participants to provide a look into outstanding moments in their own behavior and interactions and understand why those moments were outstanding.



Materials Needed:

- PowerPoint slide #25
- One copy of the “Sparkling Moments” handout for each participant
- Writing utensil and paper for each participant



Procedures:

1. Break into pairs – one partner is A and the other is B.
2. Give each participant a copy of the “Sparkling Moments” handout.
3. Give participants a couple of minutes to read through the discussion prompts.
4. Begin the “discussion phase.”
5. Allow 3-5 minutes for Partner A to guide the discussion based on the prompts on the handout. Remind Partner A to take notes.
6. Switch Roles.
7. Allow 3-5 minutes for Partner B to guide discussion based on the prompts on the handout. Remind Partner B to take notes.
8. Reflect—explain that each person will provide feedback to their partner. Give participants a few minutes to reflect on their notes.
9. Begin the “feedback phase.”
10. Allow 3-5 minutes for Partner A to provide feedback as described on the handout.
11. Switch Roles.
12. Allow 3-5 minutes for Partner B to provide feedback as described on the handout.



DISCUSSION PHASE

Partner A:

As you go through the discussion process, listen carefully to what partner B says and take notes about what the descriptions reveal about the speaker's qualities, skills, and abilities. You will want to provide specific feedback that references statements and observable mannerisms.

1. Ask partner B to describe a sparkling moment during the past month at work – a time when you were at your best!
2. Ask partner B follow-up questions: What was it about that moment that made it sparkle for you? What were you doing? What would others have noticed about you at that moment?



SWAP ROLES—Partner B will guide the conversation.

Partner B:

As you go through the discussion process, listen carefully to what partner B says and take notes about what the descriptions reveal about the speaker's qualities, skills, and abilities. You will want to provide specific feedback that references statements and observable mannerisms.

1. Ask partner A to describe a sparkling moment during the past month at work – a time when you were at your best!
2. Ask partner A follow-up questions: What was it about that moment that made it sparkle for you? What were you doing? What would others have noticed about you at that moment?

REFLECTION—BOTH PARTICIPANTS REVIEW YOUR NOTES AND FORM CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE OTHER PERSON'S QUALITIES, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES.



FEEDBACK PHASE

Partner A:

1. Identify two strengths of partner B.
2. Share your perception of his/her strengths using a format like – “Based on what you said, it seems that a strength for you might be” with partner B.
3. Ask partner B – “If these qualities were to play an ever greater part role in your life at work, what would you notice? Anything else?”
4. Ask partner B - What do you think your colleagues might notice?



SWITCH ROLES SO THAT PARTNER B GUIDES THE DISCUSSION.

Partner B:

1. Identify two strengths of partner A.
2. Share your perception of his/her strengths using a format like – “Based on what you said, it seems that a strength for you might be” with partner A.
3. Ask partner A – “If these qualities were to play an ever greater part role in your life at work, what would you notice? Anything else?”
4. Ask partner A - What do you think your colleagues might notice?



ⁱ Langford, B. (2005). *The Etiquette Edge: The Unspoken Rules for Business Success*. Amacom: New York.

ⁱⁱ Mehay, R. (n.d.). Giving and Receiving Feedback. Retrieved from <http://slideplayer.com/slide/800528/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Fowler, J. (2011). *British Journal of Nursing*. 20(14).

^{iv} Hacker, C. A., (2003). Maintaining Positive Relationships When Giving and Receiving Critical Feedback. *Information Systems Management*. Fall 2003, 77-79.

^v Konopasek, L. (n.d.). Columbia University website: reteach.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/mod4/Mod4_Feedback.ppt

^{vi} Endes, J. (1983). Feedback in Clinical Medical Education. *JAMA*. 250: 777-781.

^{vii} First Steps Training and Development. (2016). Retrieved from: http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_findballfeedback.htm