2.   Elements of effective feedback

Effective feedback is dynamic, interactive and can improve performance and motivation. Supervisors might have concerns that giving feedback is time consuming, repetitious, difficult when performance is poor, and could potentially cause tension in the supervisory relationship. The tips below will help supervisors to make the feedback effective.

Giving feedback

Tips to increase the usefulness of feedback include:

- **Frequent** - Feedback should be given regularly
- **Timely** – Ideally, feedback should be given close to the time of observation rather than later
- **Appropriate** – Feedback should be matched to the learners expected level of skill / knowledge
- **Behaviour specific** – Feedback is given about the observed behaviour rather than the person

BAD: *If you weren't so lazy you would have been prepared for the ward round*

GOOD: *"The ward round took longer than usual because you were under-prepared."*

- **Balanced** – Feedback should include both positive and corrective components
- **Interactive** – Feedback should be an interactive exchange between teacher and learner
- **Constructive** – Feedback should include solutions for areas of weakness and the learner should be involved in negotiating an action plan for ongoing learning and follow-up

BAD: *Your performance is poor*

GOOD: *Your time management skills will require some improvement before the next review. Would you agree to keeping a diary of your acitivities so that we can see where your time goes and how you might be able to prioritise more effectively"*

- **Labelled** – Ensure your learner understands that you're giving feedback by labelling it. Otherwise the message may be lost. (eg. Can I give you some feedback?)
- **Appropriate setting** – Positive feedback is effective when highlighted in the presence of patients or peers, but corrective feedback should be given in a more private setting

Other factors to consider when giving feedback:

Non-verbal cues – <u>Be</u> aware of the non-verbal behaviour that the feedback recipient might exhibit, such as nervousness, fear, anger, withdrawal etc. When giving feedback it's important to be aware of your own non-verbal behaviour that could send negative cues to the feedback recipient, such as anxiety, disappointment, anger, frustration etc.

Avoid giving feedback if either you or the feedback recipient are in a state of emotional turmoil – the outcome will not be successful!

Ensure your message is clear – State exactly what you mean. If you are not clear / explicit then the feedback recipient may overlook or misinterpret the message you're trying to get across. Ensure you are consistent with your messages.

Receiving feedback

Feedback can be considered a gift – it offers the recipient the chance to improve, grow and feel cared about and valued. The feedback recipient will get more out of the feedback if they:

➤ **Are open and receptive to new ideas and perspectives** - Accept the feedback positively rather than being dismissive
➤ **Listen and don't interrupt** – be attentive and concentrate on what is being said
➤ **Understand the message** – if not, ask for clarification
➤ **Invite suggestions to aid improvement**
➤ **Reflect and decide what to do** – assess the value and consequences of using or ignoring the feedback
➤ **Acknowledge** and thank the person for giving feedback

Active listening

Active listening is a valuable attribute for both the provider and recipient of feedback, as it helps to promote effective two-way dialogue. Active listening involves maintaining good eye contact, maintaining an open body posture, using clarifying questions and summarising the points discussed.

Barriers to active listening include:
- Wanting to talk rather than listen
- Thinking of what we want to say next
- Focusing on one aspect of the conversation and as a result, getting the wrong idea
- Misunderstandings
- Tuning out from discussion topics that you don't like or are not interested in
- Over use of jargon

Weblinks and references to resources for information about giving and receiving feedback:
ACTPS Performance Framework
http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/463809/quick_guide.pdf
Bradford GP Training (UK)
http://www.bradfordvts.co.uk/educational-supervision/feedback/
London Deanery
http://www.faculty.londondeanery.ac.uk/e-learning/feedback/
South Australian Government (2008) Providing feedback and addressing performance concerns
http://www.skills.sa.gov.au/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=667&PortalId=6&TabId=1936
University of Technology Sydney
http://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/Giving-and-Receiving-Feedback.pdf
Vickery & Lake (2005) http://www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/teaching/on-the-run/tips/?a=99373