

# Giving Effective Feedback to Learners & Colleagues

## STRATEGIES

1. Start with the learner's self assessment and encourage problem solving... *"How do you think you did?"*
2. Base feedback on outcomes the learner wants to achieve... *"So what were you hoping to achieve?"*
3. Be descriptive to avoid making judgments and assumptions:

### DESCRIPTIONS ARE:

<b>Specific</b>	- not general comments
<b>Observations</b>	- what was seen and heard
<b>Behaviours</b>	- not personality traits

4. Balance feedback by commenting on what the learner or receiver of feedback should:

### CONTINUE TO DO:

Aspects of performance that were effective

### START...OR DO MORE OF:

Practices the learner knows how to do and should start, or do more often


### CONSIDER DOING:

A doable challenge that encourages growth

### STOP, OR DO LESS OF:

Practices that are not helpful, or could be harmful

***"Always give feedback with the intention  
of helping the other."***

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5. Share information – rather than give advice...  
*“What I’ve generally found to be effective is...”*
  6. Limit the number of points to one or two
  7. Give feedback only about something that can be changed
  8. Make feedback well timed and placed
  9. Check out interpretations of feedback...  
*“Can you tell me what you’ll take away from our discussion?”*
  10. Develop an action plan based on mutual goals

## TIPS FOR AVOIDING DEFENSIVENESS

### Focus on your own personal viewpoint

*“I think” – rather than “we think” or “most people think”*

### Use less confrontational language

*Ask “what, when, where”, and “how” questions... rather than “why”*

### Use language that reflects openness... use “and” instead of “but”

*“That’s an interesting idea, but / and here’s another way to think about it...”*

### Avoid using blaming language... “should”

*“You should never/always”... vs “In my experience, it is less/more effective when you...”*

*“You should have known”... vs “Can you tell me what gaps you see in your knowledge...”*

***“Every teacher is a learner – every learner a teacher.”***

### References:

Adapted from Kurtz, S., Silverman, J., & Draper, J. (2005). *Teaching and learning communication skills in medicine* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing.

The Feedback Grid, adapted from *The Bayer Institute for Health Care Communication*.