

Feedback is a way of learning more about ourselves and the effect our behavior has on others. **Constructive feedback** increases self-awareness, offers new options and encourages development, so it is important to learn to both give it and receive it. **Constructive feedback** does not mean only giving positive feedback. Negative constructive feedback, given skillfully, can be very important and useful. **Destructive feedback**, however, means feedback is given in an unskilled way which leaves the participant simply feeling bad with seemingly nothing on which to build or options for using the learning. This is not an acceptable outcome!

1. Start with the positive

- Focus on the positive - what you share during feedback, you are reinforce. Where possible, give positive feedback first and last.

2. Be specific

- Try to avoid general comments which are not useful when it comes to developing skills. Statements such as “You were brilliant!” or “It was awful” may be great to hear but they do not give enough detail to be a helpful source of learning. Try to pin-point what the person did which lead you to use the label “brilliant” or “awful” e.g. “The way you asked that question just at that moment was really helpful” or “By responding that way you seemed to be imposing your views on the client.”

3. Refer to behavior that can be changed

- Focus on the behavior rather than on the person- When you focus on the person's behavior, you are more likely to secure change. A person can change his or her behavior, not himself or herself

4. Offer alternatives

- If you do offer negative feedback then do not simply criticize but suggest what the person could have done differently. Turn negative feedback into a positive suggestion e.g. “You could try to sit quietly until someone else speaks first and then let him/her finish before you say anything.

5. Be descriptive rather than evaluative

- Tell the person what you saw or heard and the effect it had on you, rather than merely something was “good”, “bad” etc. e.g. “Your tone of voice made me feel that you were genuinely concerned about my opinion.” is more useful than “That was good”.

6. Own the feedback.

- Focus on 'I' statements- An 'I' statement is a statement about what you feel and or think (Example: 'I feel irritated when you speak over me during discussions. This differs from 'You' statements, as these tell the other person how he or she is, thinks or feels (Example: 'You irritate me when you constantly speak over me.)