

Teachers' Toolkit

Guidelines for giving and receiving feedback

Giving feedback – do's

- Establish the student's agenda
- Get the student to start with what went well – the positive
- Teacher starts positive– however difficult it may seem
- Comment on specific aspects of the consultation – i.e. in history taking
- Active listening (eye contact, stance etc.)
- Use of silence
- Clarifying
- Responding to cues (verbal, non-verbal, psychosocial)
- Summarising
- Empathising etc.
- Move to areas “to be improved” (avoid the term “negative”!) – follow the student's agenda first
- If in a group, ask other students to comment – but remind them “No criticism without recommendation”
- Teacher offers own observations & constructive criticisms
- Be specific
- Always offer alternatives
- Begin with “.....I wonder if you had tried”
- “....perhaps you could have.....”
- “...sometimes I find.....helpful....”
- Distinguish between the intention and the effect of a comment or behaviour
- Distinguish between the person and the performance (“what you said sounded judgmental” – rather than “You are judgmental”)
- Do discuss clinical decision making
- Do be prepared to discuss ethical and attitudinal issues if they arise

Giving feedback – don'ts

- Don't forget the student's emotional response
- Don't criticise without recommending
- Don't comment on personal attributes (that can't be changed)
- Don't generalise
- Don't be dishonestly kind – if there was room for improvement be specific and explore alternative approaches
- Don't forget that your feedback says as much about YOU as about the person it is directed to!

Guidelines for receiving constructive feedback

- Listen to it (rather than prepare your response/defence)
- Ask for it to be repeated if you did not hear it clearly
- Assume it is constructive until proven otherwise; then consider and use those elements that are constructive
- Pause and think before responding
- Ask for clarification and examples if statements are unclear or unsupported
- Accept it positively (for consideration) rather than dismissively (for self-protection)
- Ask for suggestions of ways you might modify or change your behaviour
- Respect and thank the person giving feedback