Observation and Feedback in the Clinical Setting
Core Skills for Effective Teaching
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A collaborative effort between 18 organizations across the US and Canada 2019

DISCLOSURE

- I have no financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify opportunities to provide feedback
- Describe the key elements of effective feedback
- Consider the behaviors required for effective feedback – the affective issues of both its delivery and reception
- Examine a practical model for delivering feedback effectively
- Encourage PRACTICE

DEFINITION OF FEEDBACK (In medical education)

“Feedback refers to information describing a learner’s performance in a given activity that is intended to guide his/her future successful performance in that same or in a related activity.”

Jack Ende, JAMA 1983

...the information is intended to reinforce or change behaviors, concepts, or attitudes in order to guide future successful performance...

OPPORTUNITIES:
Feedback may be provided in...

- In a conversation between the learner and the observer
- In a conversation between the learner and a faculty member who is describing the observation of the learner’s performance made by others (2nd hand feedback – Beware!)
- In writing
- On a schedule, or ad hoc

COMPARE FEEDBACK WITH EVALUATION
TWO CRITICAL ROLES

- Feedback (Coaching)
  - Formative information
  - Provided during the rotation
  - Describing specific performance
  - With the intent to guide future performance

- Evaluation (Judging)
  - Summative information
  - Provided at the end of a rotation
  - Evaluating degree to which the learner met set standards
  - With the intent to provide outcomes of the rotation
HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH FEEDBACK?

What are the potential barriers to providing “enough” effective feedback?

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO FEEDBACK

1. Time
2. Collusion of teachers and learners:
   - Learners fear negative comments
   - Teachers fear hurting learners’ feelings
   - Learners want praise
   - Teachers want to be popular
   - Both want to be treated fairly – is this a safe, trustworthy relationship?
3. Absent or insufficient primary data
4. Teacher’s lack of confidence in his/her skills

IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

VITAL & TRANSFORMATIVE (if effective)

- Influences a professional’s outcomes in terms of acquired knowledge, skills, performance and attitudes
- Failure to provide feedback is not neutral (think “vitamin deficiency”)
- Enhances relationships
- Increases teacher and learner satisfaction

“In clinical medicine, the importance of feedback extends beyond pedagogy. The goal of clinical training is expertise in the care of patients. Without feedback, mistakes go uncorrected, good performance is not reinforced, and clinical competence is achieved empirically or not at all.”

Jack Ende, JAMA 1983

CULTURAL BIAS

- Culture of Medicine doesn’t support us – and needs to change
- Normative to hear about mistakes
- Normative to hear global praise: “good job”
- We need to create a climate of trust and safety
- Learners need to hear the “specifics” about their actions/decisions that yielded praise-worthy work and about their actions/decisions that produced “sub-par” work

REFLECTION

Encourage Learner self-reflection

Encourage you to provide ad hoc feedback, and Encourage your learners to ask for feedback
GOOD FEEDBACK REQUIRES

Good Observations of our learners in action

GOOD OBSERVATIONS REQUIRE

TIME

FOCUS

CONTENT OF FEEDBACK

- Important
- Timely
- Specific – based on observations
- Pertaining to decisions & actions – not personality
- Best if based on stated objectives
- Digestible amount of information (3 items – max)
- Nonjudgmental & descriptive language
- Remember the “system”

LANGUAGE... MATTERS

- Language can create reality
- Calibrate language accurately
- “More effective/Less effective” rather than “good/bad”
- Connector words – “but” has no place in a sentence of positive feedback

FEEDBACK: A PRACTICAL MODEL

1) Prepare
   - Observe; Reflect; Identify the Important Content
   - Arrange timely meeting, in appropriate setting
   - Is rapport established?
   - Is feedback expected?

2) Provide non-evaluative information
   - Ask for recipient’s self-assessment
   - Reinforce desirable behaviors
   - Focus on specific observed behaviors
   - Be aware of own subjective feelings
   - Limit to 3 observations, or fewer

3) Respond to feelings

4) Plan adjustments and performance goals
   - Problem Solve
   - Tutor or self-study needed?

5) Closure
   - Ensure comprehension/agreement
   - Summarize
   - Plan follow-up

VIDEO CLIP

AACH – D. Duffy, R. Frankel, P. Williamson
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REQUIREMENTS

- Core Values
- Time
- Skill as an observer and communicator
- Confidence in your skills
- Practice – from which the confidence grows
- Appreciation helps – from your students, your department, your teaching institution

REFERENCES


THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE THAT CONTRIBUTED

Indiana State University
Bay Path University
Columbia University
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Invitae
Long Island University Post
Sarah Lawrence
Stanford Health Care
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Arkansas Medical Sciences
University of British Columbia
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Manitoba
University of Nebraska medical Center
University of Utah
Vanderbilt University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wayne State University
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