SESSION 2
_The Fine Art of Feedback_
60 minutes

Objectives:
1. Describe giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback in more detail
2. Explain the interactions between giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback
3. Identify barriers that prevent effective feedback
4. Learn advanced techniques for giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback

Materials:
1. Powerpoint presentation
2. Index cards (6 per participant)
3. Garbage can, chair, about 30 pieces of paper wadded up into balls

Notes for slides:

Slide 1: Title Slide

Slide 2: Title

Slide 3: Objectives
- These are the objectives for this session
- Explain that all three aspects of feedback will be covered and should be addressed to improve feedback

Slide 4: How do you know if you’re doing a good job?
- Ask the participants, “How do you know if you’re doing a good job?” The usual responses are “don’t know” or “assume I am” or “someone tells me” or “when I don’t get corrected.”
- Ask the participants if any of these statements ring true with them as you scroll through the list of statements.
- The bottom line is that we don’t know how we’re doing unless someone gives us feedback. If we assume we’re doing a good job but later find out we’ve wasted time and effort, we are frustrated and dissatisfied or we’ve used valuable resources.

Slide 5: Feedback Triad
- This triangle represents the three components necessary for effective feedback. Let’s look at what happens when only two of the components are present.
- Let’s say that you are giving feedback and someone is receiving it but they did not solicit it. [Walk up to someone in the audience and begin giving her/him feedback about not wearing the appropriate clothing to your workshop, that they should sit up straight, and be taking notes. The person you are directing this to will probably look at you and nod their head.] Turn to the audience and indicate that since he/she did not ask for my feedback, they are basically giving me ‘Lip Service’, nodding their head,
sorta smiling, but thinking “what else do I have to do today or when will this person shut up?”

- Now let’s look at a situation where someone has asked you for feedback and you are giving them feedback, but they are not mentally ready to receive it (long night on call, partied too much, sick child, etc.). In this situation, the person is looking for ‘Justification’. If she/he thinks they did a good job, she/he will only pick up on the positive comments. If he/she thinks they did a poor job, he/she will only pick up on the negative comments. The person is looking for justification for their actions.

- Finally, look at the situation where you’ve asked for feedback and are mentally ready to receive it. The person you asked is too busy at the moment, but promises to give it at the end of the day. When that arrives, he/she is too busy to give feedback but promises tomorrow. This goes on and on. The person asking for feedback become “Demotivated” and quits asking for feedback.

- It is critical that all three components of the triangle be present for effective feedback.

**Slide 6: Why use feedback?**

**Slide 7: Arts and Crafts**
- Take out your index cards.
- Answer the questions on the slide, one on each card
- This activity helps to solidify their ideas by writing them down

**Slide 8: Teach first**
- Explain to the audience that before anyone can give effective feedback, teaching must take place first. Feedback is what happens second.
- For example, pick someone from the audience and use the following description:
  - Jane Doe (the person from the audience) is a student and just finished a rotation with me. I’ve taught her how to make presentations and solve problems.
  - She now begins a rotation with (pick someone else in the room) and makes her first presentation. This new instructor begins to give her feedback about how bad her presentation was and her thought process is all wrong.
  - Now Jane is between a rock and a hard place because she learned my method but it obviously doesn’t work with the new teacher.
  - What the new teacher is actually doing is criticizing my teaching and not helping Jane. What the new teacher should have done first is explained how to give presentations to her/him and how he/she solves problems. Then the new teacher can begin giving the student feedback.
- The big problem here is that teachers ASSUME/TAKE FOR GRANTED students know how to do certain things instead of clarifying this at the beginning.
- TEACH FIRST, then fine tune with feedback.

**Slide 9: Before giving feedback**
- Before giving feedback to a learner, the following information should be taught:
  - Clearly explain your expectations
- Find out how the learner wants you to give them feedback (verbally, written, email, memo, etc.)
- Did you conduct an orientation at the beginning of your rotation?
- Have you investigated what the learner already knows by asking questions and requesting examples?
- What has the learner been doing prior to your rotation? What other services? On-site or at another facility? Previous job?
- A well-constructed orientation will cover all of these areas.

**Slide 10: Two types of feedback**
- Feedback can fall under two different categories.
  - Informal – at the moment; as close to the action as possible
  - Formal – where you plan to get together with the learner at a set date/time to talk about how things are going so far (Let’s meet on Friday afternoon at 2:00 to talk about your first week.)
- This workshop is more focused on the informal approach to feedback although many of the same information pertains to the more formal approach.

**Slide 11: Feedback triad**
- First part of the triangle to be covered is “Giving Feedback”

**Slide 12: Definition of Giving Feedback**
- There are many definitions of feedback in the literature. The first one is a more formal example.
- The definition I prefer is the second bullet. Observation means that you watched the learner perform some action and then described to the learner what you saw and what the results were. It is really nothing more than telling a story. There is no critical attack, no hidden meaning, or personal assessment.
- This is a good time to provide an example: [here is one example—see if you can come up with your own story]
  - While you were talking to the patient, you were so intent on taking notes that you missed many of the non-verbal facial expressions. The patient was very nervous and wanted to tell you more about your questions. By focusing on your note-taking, you missed seeing these cues and an opportunity to connect with your patient.
- This example explains what the learner did (actions) and what happened as a result. It does not criticize, attack, or disparage the learner.

**Slide 13: Activity**
- Take out your index cards.
- Answer the questions on the slide, one on each card
- This activity helps to solidify their ideas by writing them down

**Slide 14: Levels of giving feedback**
- There are four levels related to giving feedback.
The Task level is the most common area for giving feedback. Telling the learner how to tie a knot, or filling out a form, or other directions. It is feedback, but often not received as such. Two problems with this level:

- If you give too many suggestions (too much feedback), the learner goes into ‘goal accomplishment mode.’ He/she wants to finish as fast as possible to get away from you.
- If the task requires extreme focus or is the first time the learner has attempted it, the learner is not listening to your feedback because they are so focused on the task.

The Process level is where we need to move giving feedback. Not only the how-to but the why so that the learner understands the importance of doing it that way.

Self-regulation is somewhat difficult to comprehend. It has two parts:

- I am confident in my ability to perform; however, I am also open to asking others about my performance. [Example: I am very confident in my ability to detect heart murmurs. I also know that Dr. Smith is very good. So I am comfortable with explaining my approach to Dr. Smith and asking for input/suggestions.]
- Two problems with this level:
  - What if Dr. Smith laughs and ridicules me for my technique?
  - What if I find out that I’ve been doing it completely wrong?

The Self level is basically giving people warm fuzzies (nice job, you’re doing fine, etc.). We like to hear good things but it doesn’t tell me what I’m doing well.

**Slide 15: Feedback techniques**

- These are the same basic steps used in most workshops on giving feedback.
  - First bullet is one step that is not taught and not followed
  - Base the feedback on actually seeing the behavior and not from another source
  - Before giving feedback, make sure you and the learner know what specific behavior will be examined. Before you give feedback, ask the learner to self-assess based on the specific behavior
  - Tell the story of what you saw and what the outcome was

**Slide 16: Feedback techniques**

- Typical feedback guidelines
- This is where the learner should come up with a plan to improve. If the learner comes up with the plan, they are more likely to achieve it.
- Be sure to set a specific date/time to follow up on the improvements

**Slide 17: Activity**

- Have the participants find a partner. If they don’t know each other, make introductions.
- Each person has 30 seconds to THINK about something they like about the other’s outfit and one way to improve it. MAKE SURE THEY ONLY THINK AND NOT SAY IT AT THIS POINT!
Instruct them to tell the other person what they like, use the word ‘but’, and then tell the partner what to improve. Give them about 1 minute to complete this.

Do the same as item #3 above except replace the word ‘but’ with ‘and’. Give them 1 minute to complete this.

Ask the audience for their perception of the two approaches. Does one feel more comfortable than the other? Does one seem less inspired than the other? Most will say that using ‘and’ is less threatening and more like working together. Others might disagree.

Slide 18: Formal or corrective feedback
- This is brief coverage should anyone need to give more corrective feedback due to inappropriate behavior or performance violations.
  - Get yourself under control first
    - Take a break to cool down; control emotions
    - Think about how the learner may react and what you will do (screaming, crying, no reaction, objecting, etc.)
  - Conduct in a private setting—NOT IN YOUR OFFICE. Your office is your power base and will be intimidating to the learner.
  - Use a conversation voice to explain the situation.

Slide 19: Formal or corrective feedback
- Allow the learner to explain her/his side of the story.
- Have the learner devise a plan/approach for improvement. Decide on follow-up actions.

Slide 20: “Giving” review
- Recap of the Giving Feedback section
- Can quickly go over this slide

Slide 21: Feedback triad
- Next component of the triangle is Receiving Feedback.

Slide 22: Receiving feedback
- Receiving feedback is simply the communications model—a sender has information that he/she wants to transmit to the receiver. Each part has subsections that influence its effectiveness.
  - Information – must be timely, video is the most powerful form of feedback, etc.
  - Sender – is the person credible? How do they deliver the information? Is this person respectful of the learner? Did this person actually observe the actions?
  - Receiver – is the person mentally ready to receive? Why do you want the information? Will it help achieve your goals? How do you think you did?
  - Environment – praise in public, correct in private. Is it in a busy outpatient clinic with family members & patients present? Is it in the inpatient unit with the patient present? Is it in the OR with pressures and small group of people? Are you giving the information to an individual or group? THIS IS A GOOD
PLACE TO ASK THE AUDIENCE HOW DO YOU GIVE FEEDBACK TO A GROUP?

- Pick 5-6 participants. Single one of them out by saying, “John, you need to be more detailed in your note taking.” Ask the others what their initial reaction was when you did this. Typically, they all sigh relief that it wasn’t them singled out. However, your comment could be applied to all of them. There are cultural issues when dealing with a group.
  - Between the Information & Receiver is a barrier known as filters. We all use filters to make it through the day—I don’t have time right now; saying yes when we really don’t know what’s happening (HAVE AUDIENCE COME UP WITH OTHERS)
  - Between the Sender & Receiver is a barrier of perception. Learners will tell their friends about a teacher before they’ve met and the new learner already has a perception about the teacher.

Slide 23: Activity
- A volunteer is required.
- Volunteer sits in a chair with their back to a garbage can.
- They take a wadded up paper (ball) and toss it over their head, attempting to get it into the can without looking.
  - Facilitator lets them do this without any feedback (should miss all) while the volunteer keeps trying.
  - Then facilitator gives them nonspecific cheering (“close!” “pretty good!” “getting better!”), volunteer keeps trying.
  - Next facilitator only gives insults (“I think you can do better than that!” “That was terrible!”), volunteer keeps trying.
  - Lastly, the facilitator gives specific feedback (“a little to the left and farther away”). Volunteer should start getting more balls into the can.

Slide 24: Receiving feedback
- When you receive feedback:
  - Will it move you closer to your goal?
  - Don’t interrupt the sender
  - Listen closely and ask for clarification
  - Accept it as one bit of data or one piece of a puzzle. EXAMPLE: A patient comes to you with a fever of 103°. As the physician, you know exactly what’s wrong with the patient, right? WRONG! You need more information before making a decision. Same with receiving feedback. Collect all the information before deciding on a course of action.
  - Additionally you can stress that any person receiving feedback does not have to do anything with the information. You can choose to ignore it if it doesn’t help you achieve your goals.

Slide 25: Feedback triad
- The final component of the feedback triangle is Soliciting Feedback.
Slide 26: Feedback rich environment

- Mutual accountability – team members accept 100 percent responsibility for the outcomes of their communications. You might think that 50/50 would be fair, but look at it this way: If each person in a partnership assumes 50 percent of the responsibility for the outcomes of their joint communications, each can always blame the other for failures, claiming that “I kept my end of the agreement, but you didn’t.” Alternatively, if both parties agree that each is fully accountable for the results of their communications, it sets up a condition of no blame, no excuses, no hiding, and no victims.

- Willingness to learn – people who are willing to learn facilitate the expression of new ideas, including those that are “off the wall.” In a feedback-rich environment, everyone seeks fresh input continually, to expand the thinking processes and the knowledge base on which decisions are made.

- No fear – when messengers are shot for delivering bad news, the emperor insists that everyone admire his new clothes, and all the cows are sacred, the environment breeds fear and distrust. The prerequisite for a feedback-rich environment is emotional safety—room for people to honestly (and without fear of the consequences) express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions, deliver performance feedback as easily upward as downward, and challenge conventions and traditions.

- No surprises – it takes continual ongoing communication to eliminate the surprises that frequently derail individual or team performance. Communications need to be explicit and frequent, focused on continually updating status, progress, and obstacles to achieving goals. In this environment, the baton is not dropped as it is passed between players.

- Truthfulness – when people tell intellectual and emotional truths, others trust them implicitly. People value honesty and encourage team members to share their thoughts and feelings in order to develop trust across the team. Issues are confronted constructively and quickly, with full disclosure of all agendas, needs, and wants. People choose not to waste energy by posturing, manipulating, and doctoring communications.

- Self-responsible language – people express their points of view from the “I” perspective. Feedback is, therefore, highly owned by the individuals who express it. People do not attempt to speak for others, only for themselves. Similarly, the word “they” is rarely used. They so easily become the enemy because, first of all, we do not know who they are, and second, we do not know if they said it. “They” is confusing and unclear.

- Coaching – relies on coaching as the requisite communication skill of all members of that high-performance culture. Coaching flows freely among teammates, teams, and functions. Coaching occurs in a 360 fashion, up, down, and all across the team. Every person in a leadership role is committed to mastering coaching. Customer feedback is always sought and responded to and becomes one of the driving forces for strategic changes.

Slide 27: Soliciting Feedback: Receiver

- Request the information as close to the event as possible.
• Ask specifically what you want feedback on. Don’t say, “Give me some feedback.”
  This is too broad and could lead the sender to give useless information. Tell them
  exactly what behavior you want feedback on.
• It is much easier if the receiver uses an opening phrase to let the sender know they are
  open for feedback and the nature of feedback desired.
• Receiver needs to decide what he/she wants to do with the information.

Slide 28: Soliciting Feedback: Sender
• Develop an atmosphere as earlier described.
• If the person asks in a general sense for feedback, you should respond with, “What
  specifically do you want me to give you feedback on?” Clarification!
• Use a conversation voice and conducted with mutual respect
• Have the receiver develop a plan for improving—don’t tell them what to do!

Slide 29: Barriers to giving feedback
• As demonstrated in the beginning of this presentation, learners don’t already know
  how they’re doing. This statement is false.
• Ask the audience how much time they will spend correcting problems that they could
  have fixed early on. You can guess that the clean-up time will be 10 times longer than
  if it was addressed earlier. Not having time is a poor excuse and will cost more time
  later.
• If it happened once, chances are it will happen again. People will not change their
  behavior unless they receive information that the behavior is incorrect or
  inappropriate.
• The last statement (comparison) is an important point to cover. Ask the audience
  when the do assess a learner, what are they comparing it to? A set of department
  objectives? The previous learner? All learners ever encountered? A gold standard in
  their head? Whatever is used, the teacher needs to explain that model to the learner so
  it is clear. Trying to guess is frustrating and wasteful.

Slide 30: Take home points
• Recap of the 3 components of the Feedback triangle.