Giving Performance Feedback
Practicing Best Practices

Feedback: what and why

Feedback is giving someone information about their behavior and its impact on outcomes, from your perspective. Making feedback a regular part of workplace conversations can:

- Accelerate learning
- Demonstrate commitment
- Build trust

Types of Feedback

Feedback can be constructive (indicating need for change or improvement) or recognition (indicating affirmation and reinforcement). Which do you use most often? Which is most challenging?

Elements of the Message

To have an effective feedback conversation, it’s important to clarify the following three elements of your feedback message. What was the situation? What behavior did you observe? What impact did this behavior have on outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBI</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When and where</td>
<td>Specific Data NOT story</td>
<td>How behavior connects to outcomes</td>
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Data vs Story

Can you describe the person’s behavior without adding meaning or judgement? Think of watching a film, and describing what you see and hear.

Example:

**Data**  “I noticed that you didn’t speak in yesterday’s team meeting, while we were discussing this important project”

**Story**  “You seemed really uninterested in this project in yesterday’s team meeting”

Exploring the Issue

Once you’ve delivered your message (SBI), ask questions to explore the issue and get to root cause. Is the individual missing a specific skill? Is there a lack of motivation (will) or are expectations unclear?

Emotions and Delivery

Consider how and when to deliver your feedback. How much time has passed since the event? How much time is needed? What is your emotional state and how might that effect your tone? Find a private place and set aside time for the conversation.
When giving constructive feedback, defensive responses are possible. Take steps to minimize defensive responses by thoughtfully beginning a feedback conversation. Clearly set the stage for what you would like to discuss and start your message with “I noticed” or “I observed.”

Feedback Overview

**Elements of the message**
- SBI
  - Situation
  - Behavior
  - Impact

**Exploration of the issue**
- Skill
- Will
- Expectations

**Emotions and delivery**
- Tone
  - Privacy/Time
  - Set the Stage
  - Start with “I”

Build one piece of performance feedback into every 1:1 or regular check-in! For templates and guidance on how to use myHR Learn to record check-ins, see [http://perform.northwestern.edu](http://perform.northwestern.edu)