

Feedback: Considerations & Preparations

Rapport

Let's face it, you and your learners or mentees are extremely busy. It can be tempting to skip the small talk and go directly into delivering your feedback. Resist this impulse! If you start by developing and fostering rapport, your feedback session is more likely to be effective *and efficient*. Contrary to wasting time, by following these warm up strategies, you are gaining the potential to be truly heard.

Frame the conversation around what matters most to this person.

- ❑ **Establish Common Ground.** Ask questions that politely elicit information about what you both have in common. Encourage elaboration, and share your own stories.
- ❑ **Show Vulnerability.** Learners and mentees need to trust that you have their best interest in mind. By showing that you understand their perspective because you've been in their position, you show you are vulnerable and empathic.
- ❑ **Be Present.** Make eye contact. Use body language that shows you are listening and interested. During a feedback session, if you must redirect your attention from the learner or mentee to a call or text, provide at least a brief explanation.

Engagement and Intent

The purpose of your feedback should be to build the relationship or increase your trainees' or mentees' skills. Before deciding what your feedback will be or how and when you will deliver your feedback, take time to reflect on how you are feeling. Do you genuinely want this person to succeed? Does your assessment seem authentic and fair? Are your feelings toward your learner or mentee generally positive? Can you separate your feelings for this person from the behavior or skill you intend to address? Your intent should be genuine. Your delivery should be sincere.

Cues

- ❑ **Body Language.** Be aware of your physical posture. Sit or stand up straight. Keep your shoulders square with your trainee or mentee. Do not turn away.
- ❑ **Eye Contact.** While it may be uncomfortable to sustain eye contact, particularly when delivering feedback that is difficult for the learner or mentee to hear, consider it an indication of your respect for them.
- ❑ **Tone of Voice.** The way we communicate information will affect the message itself. For example, ending a declarative statement on a high note indicates, of course, that you are unsure about what you are saying.

Timing

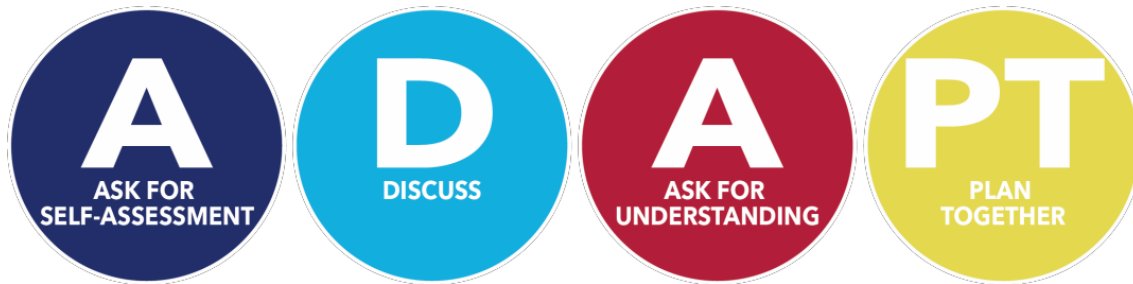
Time your feedback as appropriate for the type of feedback you will be delivering. For clinical or research trainees, generally feedback should be timely to your observations, but consider delaying your feedback session if there has been an error, emotions are running high, or you or the learner are fatigued.

Signposts

It is very common for learners or even mentees to think they have *not* been offered feedback when they really have. Use the “F” word. Here are some openers.

I'd like to give you some feedback that may really help our team dynamic.	I'd like your thoughts on today's lab meeting, and I'd like to give you my feedback as well.	I have some feedback on your exam. Is this a good time for you?
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STRUCTURING THE CONVERSATION with ADAPT*

Ask: Seek Self-Assessment

- "How do you think that went?"*
- "What went well?"*
- "What didn't go as well as you had hoped?"*
- "What will you do differently next time?"*

Discuss: Be an Active Listener and Reflect Back

- "How do you think that went?"*
- "What went well?"*
- "What didn't go as well as you had hoped?"*
- "What will you do differently next time?"*
- "What do you want feedback about?"*

Ask Again: Encourage Trainee or Mentee Self-Assessment

- "What are your thoughts about that?"*
- "Was there anything I discussed that doesn't make sense to you?"*
- "Anything you are unclear about?"*
- "What do you want to focus on?"*

Plan Together: Create an Action Plan Together.

- "If there was one thing you would work on immediately, what would it be?"*
- "What might you do to work on this?"*
- "Here are my ideas for how you can work on this..."*
- "Here are my tips/recommendations that will help you facilitate this improvement..."*

*ADAPT (from Johnston S, Pauwels J and colleagues; U WA.) is a recommended feedback model, one that enables you to plan for and structure your feedback, and therefore increase its probable efficacy.