

LC-L4 - Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback is central to evidence-based learning – it facilitates the development of self-awareness, offers options and encourages a broad spectrum of professional development. It is very important to learn how to give and receive constructive feedback. Constructive feedback does not mean only positive feedback – often the most useful feedback is ‘critical’, which may enable the recipient to ‘hear’ the point being made. Expand your capacity to give and receive (and assimilate) constructive feedback through personal work on relevant emotional issues such as ‘rejection’, ‘self-esteem’ and ‘defensiveness’.

Destructive feedback refers to that which is given in an unskilled way – feedback that leaves the recipient simply feeling defensive, with seemingly nothing on which to build or any options for using the learning.

Some general ‘rules’ for giving skilled feedback:

- » Own the feedback.
- » Feed the other person a “learning sandwich” – start with the positive, sandwich the ‘critical’ and end with the positive again.
- » Be specific. Give examples.
- » Refer to behaviour that can be changed.
- » Offer alternatives.
- » Leave the recipient with a choice.

Some general ‘rules’ for managing feedback sessions:

- » Agree the learning objectives for the session.
- » Use paraphrasing and summarising to check understanding, to recover the focus when lost and to move from the vague to the specific.
- » Use open questions and probes to help bring to the surface key issues and themes. Use challenge appropriately.
- » Help the ‘life coach’ to formulate strategies-for-change in the light of the agreed learning goals and focus of the particular session in question.

Evidencing criteria from peer feedback

All candidates need detailed comprehensive feedback from their peers to provide “testimony” evidence in their portfolios/Candidate Learning Records. It is important to avoid general statements and offer instead specific detailed feedback which can be used to claim evidence of meeting criteria.

E.g. “I thought you explained the boundaries of the session well. You explained clearly that you were a student life coach and went on to explain what life coaching was and what it could offer. You agreed an hour-long session but although you did mention confidentiality, you didn’t explain that in certain circumstances you might need to break confidentiality.”

This is much more useful than: “You set the boundaries of the session well.”