Feedback: an essential skill for professional development

Jo Shapiro, MD
Chief, Division of Otolaryngology
Director, Center for Professionalism and Peer Support
Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Boston, MA

Associate Professor,
Dept. of Otology and Laryngology
Harvard Medical School
Disclosures:

• My husband, Peter Goldbach, MD, is the CMO of Health Dialog, a population health management company

• Grant support from CRICO/RMF for the Operationalizing of the BWH Disclosure and Apology Program
Team sport

Jenny Rudolph, Dan Raemer, Robert Simon
Ed Krupat
Liz Peet, Emily Rickards, Janet Hafler
Gary Mullen
Deep Bow

CHADD
Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on "Giving Feedback"
What will you learn today?

• Value of effective feedback in promoting professionalism and collegiality

• Importance of promoting mutually respectful learning community

• Skills to deliver effective feedback
Why bother?

Biggest bang for the buck
Still struggling to do well
Feedback: defined

“When a learner is offered insight into what he or she actually did as well as the consequences of his or her actions.”

Ende, J.

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on "Giving Feedback"
Not giving feedback is NOT neutral

“Without feedback, mistakes go uncorrected, good performance is not reinforced, and clinical competence is achieved empirically or not at all.”

Jack Ende, M.D.

*JAMA* 1983; 250:771-781.
This is all about building and sustaining relationships.
Why saying *Just Do It* doesn’t work

What is your biggest personal barrier to giving feedback?
Challenges

- Demoralizing
- Culturally unacceptable
- Safe environment?
- Perception of time commitment
- Skepticism re result in change
And more challenges...

- Underestimation of importance
- Want to retain “good guy” status
- The angry or clueless recipient
- Knowledge and skills deficit
- Emotions
Can I get a handle on my own emotions?

This means we may need to get over our *righteous anger*
“Let me wait until I am sure this is a real problem.”
Feedback:
Formative - integral part of learning process
Presents information, not judgment*

Evaluation:
summative – comes after the fact
judgment re how well learner met goals

* (JS/CMS team disagrees)
Creating a climate of trust

“The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”

William James
Basic Assumption

I assume that you are a dedicated person who shows up at work intending to do an excellent job.
Intent vs. Impact

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women's Hospital on "Giving Feedback"
We can change the culture

• Do you care about me?

• Do you want to help me succeed, or are you more interested in identifying my failures?

• Will you take the time to communicate with me and let me know how I am doing?
What are various approaches?
Control approach to feedback

My goals as the feedback giver
- Get you to do the right thing; avoid the wrong thing (as defined by me)
- Admit your mistake and be contrite
- Occasionally...shame you, make you feel bad

My assumptions as the feedback giver
- I know what went wrong; “I have the answer”

How I do this
- Use a blaming, sarcastic, disdainful tone
- **State the judgment and (often) solution**
“Non-Judgmental” Approach

My goals as a feedback giver

– Avoid shame and blame; “people make mistakes”
– I want to maintain a good relationship with you
– Get you to do the right thing, avoid the wrong thing (as defined by me)
– Admit your mistake and be contrite

My assumptions as a feedback giver

– I know what went wrong; “I have the answer”
  • But, I don’t want you to be defensive
  • And, I think it’s better if you find the answer yourself

My solution

– I withhold the judgment
  • Lead the colleague to what I think but won’t say
– I use a kind tone
Problems with “Non-Judgmental”

Withholding judgment is *not* non-judgmental

- Judgments and feelings often “leak”
- Mixed messages undermine trust
  - I’m acting nice but I’m packing a punch;
  - I say it’s okay to learn from mistakes, but won’t discuss the mistake directly

Non-judgmental is not desirable

- You have valuable expertise and insight;
- You are paid to be discriminating
Trying to learn the other person’s perspective through genuine curiosity and exploration.

First, state your observation
I observed...

Then, state your point of view
I am concerned/please because...
Frame-based feedback: algorithm overview

My Frame
- First person observation of specific behavior
- Concern or appreciation

Their Frame
- Short open-ended question (for starters)

Match your discussion to their frame

- Rudolph, et al.
Clarity

Sandwiches are not healthy in some settings
You know *what* happened, but not *why* it happened

Therefore, you may not know how to prevent it from happening in the future
Get curious

“When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.”

Parker Palmer
Frame-based feedback: algorithm overview

My Frame
- First person observation of behavior
- Concern or appreciation

Their Frame
- Short open-ended question (for starters)

Match your discussion to their frame
Find the other’s frame through a short, open-ended question or statement

I wonder what happened

What your thoughts were at the time?

Help me understand how you see this.

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women's Hospital on "Giving Feedback"
Frame-based feedback: algorithm overview

My Frame
- First person observation of behavior
- Concern or appreciation

Their Frame
- Short open-ended question (for starters)

Match your discussion to their frame
Exercise

• Feedback Giver: Identify difficult feedback situation
• Feedback Receiver: Be realistic in your response
• Observer: Give feedback to feedback giver
• 5 minutes for each scenario

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women's Hospital on "Giving Feedback"
Frame-based feedback

My goals as a feedback giver
- Establish a context for growth and change that...
- Provides the information and motivation to change if you choose

My assumptions as a feedback giver
- I have a take on this, and that is valuable, and you have a take on it too
- I hold the basic “Basic Assumption” and I am curious, so...
  - I want to solve the mystery of how this came about
  - Move from “I understand” to “help me understand”
  - I might have something to learn here, too, about my colleague or the system

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on “Giving Feedback”
Constructive vs. Destructive Criticism

- **Constructive**: feedback that was specific, considerate, and did not attribute poor performance to internal causes.

- **Destructive**: feedback that violated these basic principles.

Baron RA.

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on “Giving Feedback”
Attitude is everything

• If you don’t hold the Basic Assumption and don’t show a genuine curiosity
  – The most perfectly crafted feedback and inquiry won’t be effective
  – You may create cynicism and distrust

• If you hold the Basic Assumption...
  (at least while you’re asking the question!)
  – This underlying stance of curiosity and compassion buys you all kinds of leeway on the crafting of questions
You don’t control their reaction

"our fitness needs to get to the next level"

Tony DiCicco, Coach of the Boston Breakers, the Boston women's professional soccer team,
Boston Globe magazine 01.25.09
Some common reactions

Defensive
Denial
Anger
Sadness

Don’t underestimate your own reactions
Reactions to Feedback

• Balance the tension between listening versus staying on point

• Receiver’s need to be heard versus giver’s need to stay on track/not being derailed

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on “Giving Feedback”
Feedback Fundamentals

- Expectations
- Climate of trust
- Frame-based
- Specific remediable behaviors (not character)
- Suggestions for improvement
- Reinforcing feedback if appropriate
Not buying it?

- What about frame-based feedback/debriefing do you not buy?
- Remaining questions or concerns?
When *not* to use:

- First time event (if not egregious)
- Repetitive or egregious behavior
- Misconduct or illegal behavior
Remember, there’s a person at the end of that evaluation form
Suggested comments on today’s presentation

- This is one of the most transformative presentations I’ve ever heard
- I learned so much
- She should get a pay raise and a promotion
Courage required

“The problem is not a lack of skill, it is a lack of courage.”

What did you learn today?
The “must remember” skills for difficult conversations

- Get a handle on your own emotions
- Establish trust (hold Basic Assumption)
- Clarity: specific behaviors and concerns
- Frame-based: maintain curiosity
- Separate behaviors and character
- Set expectations
- Make feedback expected/routine

Jo Shapiro, MD, Brigham & Women’s Hospital on “Giving Feedback”
Thanks for learning with me today

Feedback please...