

Constructive Feedback Essentials

Evaluation

V. Feedback

Evaluation tells the learner how well or poorly they performed.

- Great job!
- Do better next time!

Feedback—to be constructive—describes the performance observed.

- You communicate well with patients, looking at them directly and using images to explain conditions.

1. Offer more than evaluative remarks.

While you may begin with an evaluative remark - a conclusion or assessment about the student's performance, evaluative remarks alone are not constructive feedback. Explain why you have assessed the student's performance in that way.

⇒ *Example:* Student is doing a good job overall. ...

2. Describe relevant, observable behaviors.

Describe observable behaviors or skills the student demonstrated or failed to demonstrate, and refer to the relevant context.

⇒ *Clinical:* Student does not use the Emergency Medicine-focused case presentation style when presenting patients, be-

ginning instead with a complete history.

⇒ *Preclinical:* Student does not ask questions or participate in discussion during group sessions.

3. Suggest corrective action.

Advise students how they may improve behaviors or practice needed skills to meet expectations appropriate for performance in the block or clerkship.

⇒ *Clinical:* Student should review the handout describing the ER case presentation style and use it as a guide when doing case presentations.

⇒ *Preclinical:* Student should review pre-session comments and identify 1 or 2 relevant questions/topics to raise in the group session.

4. Include constructive compliments with constructive correction.

It is not enough to say, *Great job!* or *This student should join our residency program!* Constructive compliments...

- ◆ **Describe** relevant, observable behaviors;
- ◆ **Explain** why you think the student's performance is "great" or why they would make a good member of your team or program
- ◆ **Tell** the student that you recognize their behaviors that meet expectations or that will support their improvement; and
- ◆ **Offer** students an opportunity to identify and build on those strengths.

Example of constructive feedback in a clinical situation→

Contact

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Constructive Correction

This student does not follow the ER-focused approach to case presentation. The student tends to begin with the complete history of the present illness and has difficulty describing succinctly the reason for the emergent visit at the beginning of the presentation.

Constructive Compliment

This student asks questions to contribute to our discussion of possible diagnoses or options for assessment and treatment; and seeks clarification as needed.

Advice

This student should review the handout on ER-focused case presentations and use it as a guide while presenting and request formative feedback on case presentation skills.