A Model for Giving Feedback
SA Best Practices: used with permission from David Surratt

Feedback MUST BE:

1. **Descriptive Not Evaluative.** When you describe your own reaction to someone’s behavior you reduce the chances of the other person reacting defensively. You also increase the chances of the person accepting the feedback and using it as he or she sees fit. For example, if you say, “When you interrupt me, I feel annoyed,” the chances are the person will hear you. However, if you say, “You’re a rude, obnoxious person when you interrupt me,” chances are the person will respond to your evaluation, not your description.

2. **Specific.** General feedback is almost never helpful because it does not give the receiver much to work with. Specific feedback gives the person a definite sense of what his or her dominating behavior is and the impact of that behavior on you.

3. **Well Intended.** The whole idea of feedback is to help the receiver become more self-aware and to improve interpersonal skills. The giver of feedback must offer such feedback for the purpose of helping the receiver, not degrading him/her. Always think about feedback before you give it to make sure it is intended to help the other person, not make you feel better.

4. **Directed Toward a Behavior the Person Can Do Something About.** Before you give someone feedback, make sure it is something she or he can do something about, not just something based on your own bias.

5. **Well-Timed.** Feedback should be given as soon as possible after the behavior and in an atmosphere where the person is ready to hear it. You should try to be sensitive to the other person’s ability to handle what you have to say at a particular
moment. Also, timely feedback seem

6. **BALANCED OVER TIME:** You should balance your positive feedback with developmental feedback. If all your feedback is positive, you’ll miss opportunities to help people strive for higher goals. Also, people might question your sincerity if your feedback is nothing more than endless streams of positive comments. If your comments are always negative, you could create a dynamic that undermines confidence or does not allow the receiver to be open to feedback.

7. **CHECKED OUT WITH THE SENDER.** The receiver must have an opportunity to repeat what the giver said, to ensure clear communication between the sender and receiver. All feedback should be checked out, all the time, to the point where the sender is satisfied that the receiver has heard precisely what the sender said.
## Feedback Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convey your positive intent. Gain consent</th>
<th>“Hi, would you be open to some feedback about the meeting right now?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I observed:</td>
<td>You reading through the content on the powerpoint slides and not making contact with your audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I assumed:</td>
<td>that you were nervous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt:</td>
<td>excluded; that you didn’t care about getting feedback from me or anyone at the meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Discussion/Solution                      | Ask their perception of what happened. When a resolution or change is needed, focus discussion on solutions.  
ASK: What ideas do you have for a more effective presentation? I have a few ideas; would you like to hear them?  
Next time, I would practice what you want to say more (I would be happy to help with this).  
Make notes to yourself about how you might elaborate on key points.  
Practice making eye contact with people—not only in meetings, but also one-on-one. |