

## I'll take some Feedback with those Fries... Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback between Team Members raises the Bar for Success

There are a number of situations that warrant feedback to a team member; they include: yelling at a colleague within earshot of a patient, inappropriate behavior expressed toward a patient and a lack of follow-through which results in others picking up the slack. Remember, in order for feedback to be heard, it is best when it is genuine, thoughtful and given in a spirit of helping the recipient of your feedback change his/her behavior.



### What to avoid when giving feedback:

- Feedback that is full of anger, vindictive or given in a spirit of blame and judgment shouldn't be delivered. This type of feedback will only heighten tension between team members and nothing will be learned. Expect the problem to become a recurring issue.
- Feedback that is not clear and that doesn't have an explanation: it is not useful to say to someone, "What you did wasn't a good thing; it really messed things up," and then walk away. With no context delivered, the charge may be confusing and make the other person feel badly while learning nothing from the interaction.

### Elements of useful feedback:

**Rule # 1: use "I" statements.** "I am concerned" and "I was wondering why" are examples of initiating feedback that is not focused on blame or shame.

**Rule # 2: ask permission before you give feedback.** It is not useful to give another team member feedback if they are not ready or willing to hear it. Saying something like, "I would like to give you some feedback about your conversation with the clerk from pharmacy" allows the recipient to understand some of the initial context of the feedback.

**Rule # 3: remain calm and focused.** If you are feeling angry, wait to give the feedback when you cool down; being in state of calm and remaining focused will bring the best results.

**Rule # 4: set out the context followed by an explanation.** "I was concerned that you didn't follow-through with the request to ask pharmacy to deliver the medication for my patient after I asked you to do it. The reason I am bringing this up is because I was depending on you to help me out. Can you explain why you weren't able to follow-through with my request?"

**Rule # 5: stop and allow the recipient of the feedback to respond.**

Once you've given the feedback, wait for the other person to respond. Don't be alarmed if you hear all sorts of explanations, perhaps denial and defensiveness. Allow the person to have their say. If you listen to what is being said, you may pick

up feelings of inadequacy or frustration at not knowing how best to accomplish the task, which is requesting specific medication from the pharmacist.

**Rule # 6: offer suggestions.** In a relaxed, respectful way, offer suggestions for helping your colleague respond to this situation in a more productive way. This can be an opportunity to help build your colleague's skills so that problems regarding following through on requests don't become a recurring issue.

Implementing ongoing constructive feedback to your colleagues is a way to elevate the level of teamwork. And, if you can influence others on the team to also engage in constructive feedback, you've just helped to create a winning strategy for your team and your patients.

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