

TEN STEPS FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

1. Describe what you see or observe instead of making an evaluation or giving your judgment.
2. Be specific instead of general. Specifics are helpful.
3. Feedback should provide information about that which can be controlled and changed, otherwise it only adds to frustration.
4. Timing is important; always consider it, but do not use it as an excuse.
5. Check out what the person you were giving feedback interpreted you as saying. Assumptions cause problems and can lead to hard feelings.
6. Check out the validity of your feedback with others.
7. Encourage feedback, but do not pressure others or impose yourself on them if it is not wanted.
8. Do not overwhelm others with a lot of information. Offer your feedback in small pieces.
9. Own your own feedback, and feelings by using "I" statements. After all, it is only your opinion.
10. Share your feedback with others in a way that makes it easy for them to listen to what it is you want to express.

GIVING SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK -- Long Form

You can use this information to give healthy, supportive feedback when someone is sharing feelings or talking about issues. You may also want to give this information to others and teach them how to give you supportive feedback.

When someone wants to talk, but the listeners don't know how to respond, here are some of the things people do:

1. They give advice: try to "fix" things, tell you what you "should" do.
2. They interrupt or distract with questions: try to show you they understand, but really make it more difficult for you to talk.
3. They try to top your story: "I know how you feel. I remember when I..."
4. They invalidate your feelings: "It's not that bad." "Don't worry about it." "There's nothing to be afraid of." "Cheer up." "Don't cry." "Smile." "Everything will be fine."
5. They tell you how you feel, or how you should feel, or that they know exactly how you feel, even when they don't.

Here's a way to give feedback that works better and is much more supportive:

1. Show the person you were really listening by not interrupting or asking any questions. Then summarize briefly what the person was saying.

You say: "I heard you say..."

2. Without telling the person what he/she feels, state what feelings you believe you saw, heard, or sensed. This is validating for the other person without breaking any boundaries.

You say: "The feelings I saw (heard/sensed) were..."

3. Give encouragement and support, rather than advice, and tell the person how you identify with the situation, if you do. You can use one of these or more than one, in the order given. Remember not to use "shoulds."

You say: "I encourage you to..." AND/OR

"I support you in..." AND/OR

"I can identify because..."

This process will feel awkward at first, and you don't need to use it all the time, just when someone is sharing something difficult or significant.

THIS IS A GREAT WAY TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

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GIVING SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK -- (Short form, verbal or written)

1. I heard you say...
2. The feelings I heard (saw, sensed) were...
3. I encourage you to...
4. I support you in...
5. I can identify because...