ENSURING MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK: 'THAT'S YOUR JOB, NOT MINE!'

Ndidi Unaka, MD, MEd, Sue Poynter Wong, MD, MEd, Daniel Schumacher, MD, MEd, Javier Gonzalez del Rey, MD, MEd, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center/University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Cincinnati, OH
Objectives

• Discuss barriers to trainees driving their own feedback process

• Recognize generational differences between trainees and evaluators which may influence the effectiveness of the feedback process

• Utilize educational strategies to equip trainees to be effective self-directed learners who seek and obtain meaningful feedback about their performance
Needs Assessment

- What are you hoping to get out of the workshop?
- Whose job is it to ensure learners receive meaningful feedback?
- What key variables are necessary to facilitate this process?
In Your Groups

• Discuss:
  – What went well?
  – What went wrong?
  – What would you have done differently?
  – What factors may be playing a key role in the interaction?
We need to recognize there are significant differences between the perceptions of trainees and attendings regarding feedback.
Generational Differences

• Generation: individuals of a particular age group who share common experiences, values, sense of identity which are shaped by major historical events or social trends

• Important to be aware of your own generation's characteristics and consider how they might impact your teaching style

Generation Specifics

- **Baby Boomers** (1946-1964): individuals’ lives were marked by significant political and social upheaval, including the civil rights and women's liberation movements and the Vietnam War.

- **Generation X** (1965-1982): time period marked by relative growth and stability in the world economy and rise of numerous cultural freedoms.

- **Millennials** (1983-2000): term “Millennial” was first applied to those who would reach age eighteen and enter college or the adult workforce at the turn of the millennium.

Millennial Learners

• Tech savvy; use of several modes of communication (cell phones, texting, email, social media)
• Interested in fairness, transparency
• Rely on clear expectations, objectives
• Driven by self-interest and immediate satisfaction of needs

Engaging Today’s Learners—the R’s of being a Millennial

- **Restless**—active learning environment, less lecture
- **Relevance**—can’t simply disseminate information, want teachers to show them how to apply it; connect content to current roles
- **Rationale**—need to know “why”, less conformation with rules
- **Relaxed**—less formal, more relaxed environment
- **Rapport/Relationship**—desire to connect with teachers, need have personal relationships
Characteristics of Millennial Feedback

Effective
• Timely/immediate when possible
• Specific, direct and simple as possible
• Goal oriented-clear expectations
• Learner oriented
• Private

Not so Effective…
• Judgmental
• Public
• Not based on direct observation
• Punitive
• Only one time
General Tips: Details

• Be specific
  – Use the phrase: “this is feedback”
  – Should be based on first-hand data, ideally through direct observation
  – Include examples if possible

• Limit the amount of feedback given in one session
  – Focus on changeable behaviors, not personality traits
  – Focus on decisions and actions, not assumed intentions or interpretations

Jack Ende, MD “Feedback in Clinical Medical Education” in JAMA, 1983
Feedback Acceptance

• Acceptance of feedback is influenced by a millennial’s belief that the feedback is:
  – Credible
  – Accurate
  – Offered in a nonthreatening manner
  – Constructive and not destructive
  – From someone whom the recipient trust

• Defensiveness to feedback should be immediately addressed
It’s not only what you say… but how you say it..

- **Ask for a self-assessment**
  - “So, how do you think “x” went?”

- **Balanced start:**
  - “I like the way you...”

- **Explain what:**
  - “I’ve noticed that when you...”

- **Explain why:**
  - “I feel...” or “It’s a problem because...”
    - Be **specific** with your examples

- **Check their view:**
  - “Does this seem reasonable?” or “How do you feel about that?”

- **Work out how to change:**
  - “How can we change/solve this?”

- **Agree:**
  - “So, we’ve agreed that...”

- **Ask for feedback:**
  - “Is there anything you think I should be doing differently?”

- **Follow-up:**
  - “Next time we have a patient with this diagnosis...” or “Next session...”
Strategies to Facilitate Meaningful Feedback
Self-directed Assessment Seeking

• Self assessment
  – “personal, unguided reflection on performance for the purposes of generating an individually derived summary of one’s own level of knowledge, skill, and understanding in a particular area”

• Self-directed assessment seeking
  – “a process by which one takes personal responsibility for looking outward, explicitly seeking feedback and information from external sources, then using these externally generated sources of assessment data to direct performance improvements”

Eva and Regehr, 2008
Fig 1: Theoretical Framework for Resident-driven Synthesis of Assessment Data
Case 1

You are an attending on a busy inpatient month in April. Over the course of the week, you have developed growing concerns regarding your intern’s efficiency and ability to prioritize tasks. Additionally, your intern struggles with articulating a clear assessment and plan for patients with medical complexity. You have sought the intern out and given the intern some feedback over the course of the week but there has been very little improvement. Your senior resident lacks confidence in the intern. She has to follow up on the intern’s every move. It is the end of the week and time for a formal feedback session with the intern.

• How would you approach giving feedback to the intern?

• How can you promote self-directed assessment seeking in your residents?
Case 2

You are an attending in a resident continuity clinic. You have worked with a senior resident over the past several months and identified that the resident struggles with effective communication with families. She also is inefficient and sees an average of 3 patients in her afternoon clinic. You have also noticed that any time you suggest changes to the resident’s plans, she takes it very personally. You approach the resident to let her know that you would like to sit down and give her some feedback at the end of clinic today and she immediately becomes tearful.

• How would you approach giving feedback to the resident?

• How can you promote self-directed assessment seeking in your residents?
Example Self-directed Assessment
Seeking Strategies

• When resident asks for feedback, ask what they want feedback on
• Ask resident what they are working on and how you can help
• Share gaps you are working on to normalize the feedback/improvement process
• Ask for resident’s self assessment in specific area and engage in reflection on/calibration of that
Effective Feedback

- Ongoing, formative process
- Presents information in a nonjudgmental manner with the intent of helping trainee develop key skills and behaviors
- Allows trainee to work towards a goal and show progress over a time
- Best when frequent, face-to-face, and provided in small doses
- Focuses on what was done and the potential consequences of the action
- **Assists learners in establishing their goals and critiquing their performance, with the ultimate goal of becoming self-evaluators and motivators**
How To Engage Learners in the Feedback Process

• Set expectations early

• Open ended questions

• Encourage self reflection, self-identification of strengths, deficiencies and goals

• Change trainee perception of “constructive” feedback
Action Plan

• How are you going to approach this issue at your home institution?
• What steps need to be taken?
• How will you get buy in?