

Hints for Giving Feedback

Preparation:

- When providing constructive feedback, take a few minutes to reflect on the specific actions or behaviors that you are giving feedback about
- Give constructive feedback in a private location
- Consider patient safety: If a behavior needs to be changed immediately, calmly redirect the student; further discussion about the behavior should be addressed in private, if possible

Timing:

- Consistently make time each shift for feedback. The student's comfort with feedback will be increased when they see it as a natural and ongoing part of their clinical time
- Give constructive feedback when the student has time for reflection and discussion, but address a concern before the student leaves the clinical
- Offer advice to the student before a difficult situation in order to help them be successful
- Offer immediate positive reinforcement when the student is observed properly performing a skill or meets a goal

Focus:

- Have the feedback be specific to a behavior; relate that behavior to one of their goals
- Use best practice principles or hospital policy to provide unbiased feedback
- Be objective and non-judgmental, describing specific behavior observations
- Be direct, avoiding mixed messages
- Use "I" statements rather than "you" statements
- Maintain a calm, neutral tone and body language; use unemotional language
- Define the impact on the patient, family, student, unit, and/or health care team
- Be prepared to recommend a solution

Conclusion:

- Encourage reciprocal conversation, and ask for clarification
- When possible, use open-ended questions to make the student an active participant in the process of feedback:
 - "What do you think went well?"*
 - "Is there anything you would do differently next time?"*
- Offer the student ideas for next steps
- Check to be sure that clear communication has occurred
- Summarize the discussion before moving on so that both you and the student understand what has been discussed and what the next steps will be
- Focus on positive feedback and role modeling