



Providing Positive Feedback

Ask what they think

- Allow staff to identify the areas they want to make changes. (Remember: People are generally better persuaded by what they themselves say than by what others say to them.)
- The questions you use should be authentic and reflect your own conversational style.
- Additional questions can be aimed by guiding the staff person to look at the effect of their actions on the participant. For example, “What did you observe about the reactions of the participant?”

Affirm

- Find something to affirm everyone on:
 - *“I appreciate you letting me observe you.”*
 - *“You really got the conversation off to a good start.”*
 - *“You did a nice job handling those kids.”*
- Use as an opportunity to affirm skills staff are already using.
- Keep it focused on what went well. This is a great opportunity to affirm staff efforts and skills that they are already using. If they don’t come up with anything positive when asked how it went, point out what you observed that went well.

Ask Permission

- Ask permission to share observations/suggestions.
 - *“Would you like to hear my feedback?”*

Positive feedback pointers

- Be clear, succinct, and specific.
- Avoid feedback overload
- Focus on behaviors rather than personality.
 - Let go of assumptions and judgments.
 - Share what you see without blame or judgment
- Use collaborative language
 - *“Have you considered...?”*
 - *“I wonder whether...”*
 - *“Some staff have found...”*
 - *“I’m curious...”*
 - *“I’ve noticed that sometimes...”*

- Avoid restrictive language
 - *“You should”*
 - *“always”*
 - *“don’t”*
 - *“never”*
 - *“you need to”*
 - *“you must”*
 - *“you have to”*
- Balance the feedback
 - Offer positive feedback (strengths) in addition to eliciting and suggestions ideas for improvement.
 - Use the ‘criticism sandwich’ (criticism is sandwiched by positive statements)
- Encourage self-reflection
 - *“What do you think about my observations?”*
 - *“What, if anything, do you see yourself doing differently because of my feedback?”*
 - *“What else would you like to add?”*

Tips for the Mentor:

- ❖ You will want to vary the words as appropriate and use consistent, neutral, nonverbal communication.
- ❖ The point is to make the questions a genuine inquiry that is not aimed at judgment but is focused on self-development.
- ❖ If the WIC staff person asks you how they did, ask them how they felt it went or reflect any concerns.
- ❖ If the WIC staff person expresses concern about trying something, try brainstorming with them reasons why it might be useful to them.

Finishing Up

- Thank staff for their willingness to be observed and receive feedback
- Summarize feedback and learnings
- Express confidence in their abilities
- Assess future needs
- Arrange follow-up, if appropriate

BIGGEST Tip for the Mentor:

- ❖ **Primary outcome: DO NO HARM!! Leave them feeling good about having someone observe them again.**