

## Giving Feedback to Students

Regular, constructive feedback is an important part of the clerkship process. The objective of feedback is to help a learner improve. Feedback is information on what a learner did. This is different than an evaluation, where a learner is ranked or graded.

### Quick Tips

- Help the learner to recognize the feedback. Tell them when you're about to provide feedback.
- Conduct feedback sessions in a private, relaxed, and supportive atmosphere.
- Engage the learner in self-assessment. Ask, "How do you think you did?" Be a good listener. Compare your assessment with the student's and discuss.
- Ensure that comments are information-specific, issue-focused, and based on observations.
- Focus on a specific behavior (what the learner did, vs. who he or she is).
- Direct feedback toward behavior the learner controls.
- Provide feedback as soon after the behavior as possible.
- Limit the amount of information to what the student can use.
- remember the difference between feedback and evaluation.
- Make sure you are being understood.
- Link feedback to the learner's goals.
- Summarize the essential points of the discussion and establish a follow-up plan to address the learner's needs.

### The Difference Between Feedback and Evaluation

The nature and timing of assessment varies based on the circumstances and needs of the learner.

**Formative feedback** occurs at teachable moments and typically takes place in brief, timely, focused, one-on-one interactions between you and your student. High-quality feedback provides information about a particular behavior and how that behavior is helping or impeding a learner's progress toward goals. Meaningful feedback is specific, detailed, and includes both positive and negative comments. Keep in mind that feedback describes the learner's behavior without judgment or evaluation against a standard.

**Summative evaluation** occurs at the conclusion of a defined clinical experience. It involves evaluation of competence based on standardized benchmarks. Summative feedback looks considers trends or patterns of behavior and provides and an assessment of performance over time.