

Topic: Finding opportunities to provide constructive feedback as a preceptor

Case Overview:

At the final evaluation with your learner, they stated that an area for improvement for you as the preceptor is to provide more feedback. Some of the comments included:

- “I felt the feedback you provided on my performance was a surprise at the end of rotation.”
- “I felt I did not know what I was being evaluated on.”
- “I felt you were so busy that we rarely had the chance to discuss feedback.”

Reading the comments in the post-rotation evaluation was difficult for you to comprehend. You tried to provide feedback when you remember, but with all of your daily responsibilities you often forget to build this time into your day. Thinking back to your time as a student and resident, you remember you felt similarly. In order to continuously improve your approach as a preceptor, you reach out to your mentor to ask how you can find time to provide quick and effective feedback for your learner, despite your busy schedule.

Recommendations:

1. Timing of Feedback

- a. Determine a schedule that is agreeable between learner and preceptor.
- b. Discuss with the student at the beginning of the rotation to expect feedback routinely.
- c. Feedback should be immediate and timely to facilitate improvement.
- d. Find a place to converse in a relaxed, private atmosphere.
- e. Block out time on your calendar for formal feedback at both the midpoint and final evaluations at the beginning of the rotation.
- f. **Example:** Your learner made a recommendation on rounds that was misunderstood by the provider and required further explanation. As the team moves onto the next patient, ask the learner to speak for a moment in an empty conference room or stay back in the hallway while the rest of the team moves forward. Ask the learner what they felt about their feedback and if they would change anything. Emphasize the positives and negatives of the interaction. The feedback will only take a moment but will allow the learner to put feedback into practice for the subsequent opportunities on patient care rounds.

2. Preparation for Giving Feedback

- a. While observing learner performance, a standardized scoring tool should be used to evaluate practice in-line with specific goals.
- b. Scoring tool should be shared with learner at the beginning of the rotation to set baseline expectations.
- c. Learner performance should be observed on multiple occasions if possible.
- d. Take notes throughout the rotation that can be referred to during feedback sessions.
- e. Set aside time on your calendar to reflect and gather examples for discussion.

- f. **Example:** Your learner is starting rotation with you next week from a new school. Your learner sends an email message before starting the rotation. You send them background reading. However, you also ask them to provide the learner and preceptor evaluation forms from their school. They offer to connect you with the student coordinator at their College of Pharmacy. It is important to always be prepared before the student starts your rotation to level-set expectations.

3. Providing Feedback:

- a. Ask the learner to critique their own performance first and identify areas they would like to focus on at the beginning of the rotation (self-reflection). Remember to listen intently.
- b. Feedback should focus on the strengths, followed by areas for improvement.
- c. Highlight a few important areas that can be adapted over time.
- d. Describe the behaviors seen rather than being evaluative and provide specific examples.
- e. **Example:** Following a challenging day on rotation, your learner stops by your office. They wanted the opportunity to discuss the day with you. Questions you could post to the learner include: What was the most important thing you learned today? What might you improve upon for tomorrow? Based on what the learner describes, you can then provide your feedback, always remembering to reflect off of what the learner said.

4. Always Remember to Follow-up:

- a. During future observations, remember previous feedback provided to gauge progress.
- b. Return to goals and areas for improvement over time.
- c. **Example:** You provided feedback regarding your learner's clinical presentations of their ICU patients at the midpoint evaluation. You expressed to the student that you noticed that they provide a large amount of detail about the patient but have trouble identifying the most important points. The learner expressed an understanding of your feedback. The next week went well. However, you notice during the last week that the learner is having difficulty again after increasing their patient load. You discuss strategies for prioritizing most the acute patients in order to help them prepare for future practice.

References:

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