



Effective Communication in Supervision

*Giving Feedback – The good,
the bad and the ugly*

Walter F Baile, MD
Rebecca Walters, MS, LMHC, LCAT, TEP



MD Anderson

I*CARE

Interpersonal Communication and
Relationship Enhancement

Set your **TIMER** for a
Successful Conversation!

- **Think Through the Encounter**
(ahead of time)
- **Introduce Issues**
- **Manage the Discussion**
- **Establish a Plan and Expectations**
- **Revisit and Give Feedback**

1

Think Through the Encounter (ahead of time)

- Be sure you **have the right information/data** you need.
- **Run it by others** if you need a reality check or advice.
- Have the **endorsement** of the “one up” (upper management) to avoid being undermined.
- **Rehearse** what you will say – Don’t let your thinking get catastrophic (focused on the worst possible outcome).
- Put on your “**Feedback Hat.**” (Strive to help the person improve performance.)

2

Introduce the Issues

- **Meet on their turf**, if possible (being “called into the office” may not lead to productive conversation).
- **Clearly state the issue** using “**I Statements**” (tends to decrease defensiveness in others).
“I’m worried about your getting to clinic late...”
“I’m concerned about your interaction with...”
“I have something important to discuss about...”
- **Provide Facts** – avoid personal stuff.
“In going over your attendance, I see that...”
- **Maintain eye contact.**

3

Manage the Discussion

- Try to **stay calm.**
- **Focus** on what the other is saying.
- Try to be **nonjudgmental** and personal. It’s about changing behavior.
- Use “**Tell me more**” to clarify.
“When you say you feel treated unfairly, can you tell me more?”
- Use the “**Six Second Rule**” - when your emotions boil, wait 6 seconds or until calm before responding.
- **Reaffirm** the other person’s issue.
“So what I hear you saying is...”

4

Manage the Discussion

(Cont'd.)

- **Align** with the person by **acknowledging and validating** emotions with empathy.

“I can see you weren’t expecting this.”

“I know this is hard for you to hear.”

“I see your point.”

“This isn’t easy to talk about, is it?”

- Use **“Wish Statements”**

“I wish I could change that.”

“I wish I had better news.”

“I wish that I did not have to revisit the issue.”

5

Establish a Plan and Expectations

- When emotions subside, **work on the problem together.**

- **State your expectations.**

“It’s important that we resolve this.”

- **Collaborate/Negotiate/Brainstorm.**

“What are your ideas for how we can...?”

- **State your goals.**

“I’d like to see you try to...”

- Set SMART Goals:

S=Specific

M=Measureable

A=Achievable

R=Resourced

T=Timed

- **Summarize**

“So this is what we’ve decided.”

6

Revisit and Give Feedback

- **State purpose of meeting.**

“I wanted to meet with you to follow up on...”

- **Review** agreed upon goals/agreements.

- Get their **perception.**

“How are things going?”

- **Praise Effort.**

“I appreciate the work you put in to...”

- **Give Feedback.**

“You’ve really improved on...”

“I think you’ve struggled with...”

- **Brainstorm** to further improve performance.

“What will it take for you to bump this up a notch?”

7

Feedback – when things have NOT changed.

- **State the problem.**

“I am concerned that you are still coming to work late.”

- **Explore the problem.**

“I’m wondering what’s gotten in the way of your following through with our agreement?”

- **Deal with emotions as they occur.**

“It sounds frustrating.”

- **Restate the need to improve.**

“This is really important so let’s brainstorm some more as to how we can fix this.”

- **State consequences.**

“I’m trying to avoid this being moved to a higher level.”

8

Resources

Walter F. Baile, M.D.,

Professor of Behavioral Science

Director, Interpersonal Communication

And Relationship Enhancement

(I+CARE) Program

Department of Faculty Development

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Rebecca Walters, MS, LMHC, LCAT, TEP

Director, Hudson Valley Psychodrama Institute

I+CARE Faculty

Cathy Kirkwood, MPH

I+CARE Project Director

Department of Faculty Development

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Email: icare@mdanderson.org

For video demonstrations of these techniques,

please visit our Web site at:

www.mdanderson.org/icare

Free online CME available

9