GIVING & RECEIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

This resource packet, designed to supplement our Feedback Courses, includes comprehensive materials and sub-topics on the art of giving and receiving feedback:

1. **Feedback Foundations**
2. **Tips & Common Pitfalls**
3. **Receiving Feedback**

Register for Upcoming Feedback Courses

Access an Online Recording of past Feedback Courses

CITY OF **MADISON**
Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback: Foundations

Feedback conversations are an important aspect of values-based leadership, as they directly support and reflect our core principles of **reflection**, **balance & perspective**, **true self-confidence**, and **genuine humility**. Feedback is an essential part of everyone's experience at #TeamCity and serves as a robust tool for:

1. Strengthening communication
2. Building trusting relationships
3. Creating a healthy culture
4. Increasing engagement and collaboration
5. Helping us learn, grow, and develop

Why Feedback Matters

(How to Give Feedback Effectively and Respectfully – Verywell Mind)

Feedback is an important tool for both **personal** and **professional development**.

Honest, timely, and well-delivered feedback can be an essential communication tool that helps everyone in #TeamCity grow and learn more about us and others.

Practicing feedback skills—such as being; **specific, action-focused, and balanced** can help ensure people welcome what you have to say.

Laws of Effective Feedback

(Receiving and Giving Effective Feedback – University of Waterloo)

There has been a great deal of research on behavior change and the effect of feedback. To summarize this research, the following "laws" of feedback will increase its effectiveness:
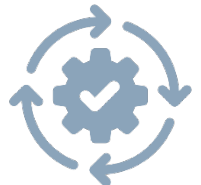
- ☐ **Immediacy** – Seek an **appropriate time** to communicate your feedback.
- ☐ **Frequency** – Feedback should be a **continuous process**, not a one-time event. After offering feedback, **make a conscious effort to follow up**.
- ☐ **Point to Positive Behavior** – Provide the recipient with **balanced feedback** regarding their strengths and their opportunities for growth.
- ☐ **Own It!** – When offering evaluative comments, use the pronoun **"I" rather than "they" or "one,"** which would imply that your opinion is universally agreed on.

☐ **Listen with Empathy** – Hear the person out, and **listen to what they are really saying**, not what you assume they will say.
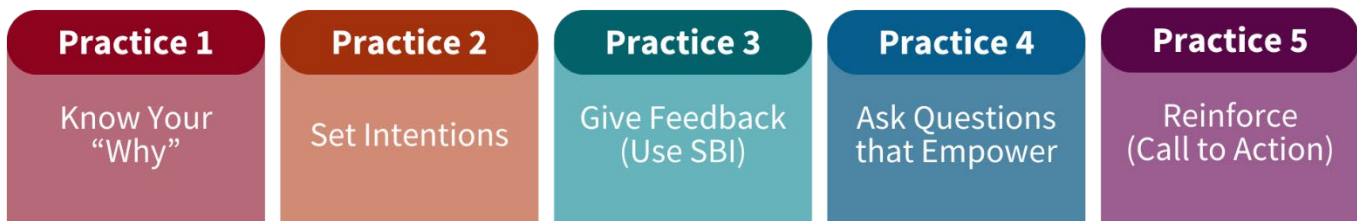
5 Practices of Feedback

(Give Continuous Feedback, But Not a Constant Performance Review – Medium.com)

Once you know the **Laws of Effective Feedback** you need to know how to put it in practice. **The 5 Practices of Feedback** gives a structure to your feedback that is centered around the **Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) Model**.

The SBI Model is used to address both strengths and weaknesses in a **clear, specific, professional, and caring way.**

Practice 1	Practice 2	Practice 3	Practice 4	Practice 5
Know Your "Why"	Set Intentions	Give Feedback (Use SBI)	Ask Questions that Empower	Reinforce (Call to Action)

Practice One: Know Your "Why"

☐ **Recognize** and **articulate the problem and/or the opportunity**.

Practice Two: Set Intentions

☐ Intentions are about your purpose. They are always positive. **Consider what you want** or **need.**

Practice Three: Give Feedback: Use The SBI™ Model

(The Situation-Behavior-Impact Feedback Tool – Mind Tools)

☐ Capture and clarify the **Situation.**
☐ Describe the specific **Behaviors** observed.
☐ Explain the **Impact** that the person's behavior had on you.

Situation — Describe the situation. Be specific about when and where it occured.

Behavior — Describe the observable behavior. Don't assume you know what the other person was asking.

Impact — Describe what you thought or felt in reaction to the behavior.

Practice Four: Ask Empowering Questions

(Technical Assistance Guide on Re-Interviewing – US Department of Education)

Empowering questions open the door to a productive two-way conversation and helps reinforce and gain understanding of the feedback.

☐ Ask questions that are **open ended** and **avoid leading questions**.

Practice Five: Reinforce/Call to Action

☐ Consider in advance **how you will ensure and/or encourage behavior change** (accountability) for the integration of the feedback.

Want to Learn More About Feedback?

This is the **first resource out of three** that can help you on your feedback growth journey.
Continue scrolling to learn about tips, common pitfalls, and receiving feedback.

⏵⏵ NEXT

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Updated 5/23/24

Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback: Tips & Common Pitfalls

Feedback conversations can be **challenging**. Here are some tips to guide you through a feedback conversation, as well as some common pitfalls to avoid.

Criticism vs. Feedback

(Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 1 – Intentionaleaders, LLC)

Avoid using the terms **criticism** and **feedback** interchangeably to **avoid confusion** and **misunderstanding**.

☐ **Criticism**: Is (by definition) **judgmental** and **condescending**. There is no way to make criticism "constructive."

☐ **Feedback**: Is **providing information** (insights, observations, examples) used **to improve performance.** This comes from a place of clear intentions and strong values.

Most Common Pitfalls of Feedback

(What are Some Common Feedback Pitfalls and How Can You Avoid Them? – LinkedIn)

Providing **actionable feedback** is difficult – even with good intentions and support.

This might not come naturally and if we don't practice, we can develop feedback practices that can have a negative impact. Here are some **common feedback pitfalls:**

Action	Impact(s)
Being vague or general	This **does not** tell the recipient what they did well, what they need to improve, or how they can do it.
Inconsistent or contradictory	This might leave the recipient **puzzled, defensive**, and **unsure what to do**.
One-way communication	This can make the recipient feel disrespected, bored, or overwhelmed. It can also prevent the feedback from being **understood, accepted, or applied**, as the recipient **may not agree**, may have a **different perspective**, or may need **more clarification**.
Untimely or infrequent	**Untimely** – waiting too long to give feedback. **Infrequent** – giving feedback only once a year or giving feedback only when something goes wrong. These can make the recipient feel **ignored, unappreciated, or surprised**.
Not using trauma-informed supervision strategies	**Lack of psychological safety** and **no element of choice** felt by recipient.

Use Assertive Communication
(How to Use Assertive Communication – Verywell Mind)

Assertive communication involves:

☐ Stating your feelings and needs

☐ Being clear and direct

☐ Being respectful of others

This helps ensure that your feedback is **communicated clearly**, while also not **belittling or dismissing other people's thoughts, feelings, or opinions.**

I Want...

I Think...

Assertive Communication

I Need...

I Expect...

Updated 5/23/24

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Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback: Receiving Feedback

This resource is all about being on the **receiving end of feedback**.

While you may be searching for guidance on how to **GIVE better feedback,** knowing what could run through a feedback recipient's mind can be a helpful guide to how you frame your feedback.

How to Receive Feedback Gracefully
(How to Accept Constructive Feedback for Growth (Without Being Defensive - LinkedIn)

Receiving feedback can feel like a personal attack – whether it's about how we do things or our behavior… even if that isn't the intention. It's easy to get defensive and react in one (or more) of the following ways:

☐ Minimize   ☐ Deflect
☐ Avoid   ☐ Invalidate
☐ Counter   ☐ Exaggerate
☐ Attack   ☐ *And more…*

We can feel defensive to feedback because our brains have developed over time to minimize threats and maximize rewards.

The SCARF Model highlights the triggers which can activate this threat or reward response…

Our Threat Response: SCARF
(Use the SCARF Model to Understand Our Individual Triggers – Child Care Technical Assistance Network)

S	**Status** is about where you are in relation to others around you.
C	**Certainty** concerns being able to predict the future.
A	**Autonomy** provides a sense of control over events.
R	**Relatedness** is a sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe.
F	**Fairness** is a perception of impartial and just exchanges between people.

3 Types of Closed-Mindedness
(Signs Someone is Closed-Minded and 4 Ways to Handle It – Leaders.com)

When receiving feedback, we can also become **closed-minded**.

Being **closed-minded** means having a **rigid** or **inflexible belief system** that resists new ideas, perspectives, or information. Typically, it is typically encountered in three ways:
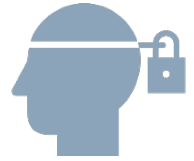
- ☐ **Experts**
  - Feel they have all the answers.
  - Are reluctant to try new things or challenge themselves.
  - Have strongly held beliefs.
- ☐ **Conscientious Thinkers**
  - Thrive on details, information, and data to make sense of their world view.
  - Take great pride in their past work.
  - Respond sharply to criticism of it.
- ☐ **Attainment Focused**
  - Looks to see what they are getting out of a situation or what is in it for them.

What to Do Instead

(Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 2 – Intentionaleaders, LLC)

When we recognize that we are experiencing a SCARF threat response, or closed mindedness, we can take these steps to help:

- ☐ **Take a Breath (aka take a Pause)**
  - Breathing and pausing allows you to respond rather than react.
  - This is a choice that must be made deliberately.
  - Pauses can be seconds, minutes, or a day.
    - If you need time to process--take ownership over the timeframe; set a time to follow up.
- ☐ **Notice Your Thoughts**
  - Observe your thoughts and reactions
  - Remember the SCARF model and examine what might be triggering a threat response.
- ☐ **Seek to Understand**
  - Remain calm.
  - Try to separate the content from the messenger and/or the way the message was delivered.
  - Find the nugget of truth or learning.
  - Avoid attempting to rationalize your actions.
- ☐ **Express Gratitude**
  - Feedback is a gift and those that can give and receive it have the strongest and most trusting relationships with others.
  - Be graceful and grateful for the opportunity to learn.

Want to Learn More About Feedback?

This is the **third resource out of three** that can help you on your feedback growth journey.
Scroll back up to review giving feedback, tips, and common pitfalls.

If you're still in looking for additional feedback support, reach out to
OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com anytime!