

Giving Feedback

Providing your team with effective feedback is a skill that is learned over time. Good feedback is clear and constructive, while also avoiding the sort of negativity that may lead to frustration or a loss of confidence.

To provide helpful feedback that focuses on performance improvement:

- ▶ **Determine what type of feedback you are providing.** Often, when giving feedback, managers will use a combination of these three types:
 - Positive feedback: Offers praise or encouragement.
 - Neutral feedback: Delivers facts and updated information.
 - Remedial feedback: Focuses on correcting mistakes and improving performance.
- ▶ **Use effective feedback strategies.** Constructive feedback:
 - Offers broad strokes and helpful tips. Avoids nitpicking or micromanaging.
 - Points out specific things the person did well and targets areas for improvement.
 - Is provided on a timely basis.
 - If remedial, is focused on improving performance rather than punishing mistakes.

Delivering remedial feedback is a necessary part of addressing performance concerns. Next time you are in this situation, try these tips:

1. **Stay calm.** If tensions are high or it's been a difficult day, give everyone a chance to regroup before providing feedback. Sample language: "Let's meet in the morning to talk about what happened."
2. **Consult with Human Resources.** Review relevant policies related to the person's behavior. In addition, the LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can help you prepare for the meeting.
3. **Listen.** When giving feedback that is focused on performance improvement, it is important to listen as much as you speak. Ask clarifying questions that will help you understand the individual's choices. Sample language: "Would you please explain your understanding of the assignment?"
4. **Create an action plan.** Compile a list of steps that can be taken to avoid mistakes and improve performance. Sample language: "Let's list some steps we can take to avoid this situation in the future."
5. **Make a referral to LifeMatters.** If a personal issue is impacting the individual's performance, remind them that LifeMatters is available to help. When there is a violation of organizational policy or a pattern or poor performance, consider making a performance referral. (Consult with HR before taking any disciplinary action.) Sample language: "LifeMatters can help you address issues that may be impacting your ability to focus on work. Please call."
6. **Follow up.** Check in periodically to review the person's efforts and offer additional feedback. Point out positive improvements and be encouraging.

The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can assist with any management issue. Call 24/7/365.

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