Solution

What...

What is Direct Dialogue? In one word - FEEDBACK

Performance feedback is truly just a conversation, or series of conversations.

> " In an organizational context, feedback is the information sent to an entity (individual or group) about its prior behavior so that the entity may adjust its current and future behavior to achieve the desired result. "
>
> - Business Dictionary

Why...

Feedback has two very important purposes as part of an organization's success:

► Elevating individual (and collective) behavior and performance
► Promoting change

How...

► The most powerful conversations are 1:1 (face-to-face)
► The conversation is the relationship. One conversation at a time you are maintaining, building, diminishing or destroying your relationship.
► Communicating in a manner that is timely, concise, and direct is a fair approach to feedback.
► Be guided by the 3:1 ratio of a positive relationship (3 or more compliments to every 1 call-out).

MUSTER THE WILL

So, how do we overcome fear of engaging in feedback conversations?

1. Do it more
2. Be prepared
3. Engage a mentor

MASTER THE SKILL

▶ **Informal** Direct Dialogue (Day-to-Day, In-the-moment)

- o Compliment
- o Call-Out

▶ **Formal** Direct Dialogue (Scheduled – When Needed, and can also be incorporated as part of Annual Performance Reviews and/or Mid-Year Performance Conversations)

- o Positive Coaching Conversation
- o 5-Point Correction Conversation

1. *Observation/Evidence.* Get Specific. What did you observe that was great? What did you hear about that was great?

   "I noticed…." "I saw…." "I heard…."

   Example: "When I was talking to your patient, Mr. Smith, he shared with me what a thorough job you did in explaining his new medications."

2. *Standard/Impact.* Whatever behavior, performance or contribution you are recognizing has a positive ripple effect. Don't be silent on communicating this positive impact.

   Example: "Because Mr. Smith so clearly understands his new medications, he has a much higher likelihood of being compliant and recognizing any possible side effects."

3. *Standards/Expectations.* Employees want to be part of a winning team. High standards of behavior, performance, and contributions guide an organization toward being a winning team. Each time anyone on the team is being complimented for living those standards, the

compliment should "connect the dots" between the action and the standard. Don't assume that an employee will make that connection themselves.

Example: "Your thorough explanation to Mr. Smith is a great example of achieving our standards for excellence in communication and patient education."

4. *Inquiries.* When complimenting an employee (or a peer, boss), you can turn this into a mini-learning moment by asking questions such as "Can you share some tips for your success?" "How can I (or others) learn to do this?" When we make inquiries, it **turns feedback into dialogue** which promotes coaching toward positive change.

Non-Verbal Communication. Sincerity in any communication is increased when we are mindful of our body language. Don't just rush by spewing gratitude. Portray body language that communicates that this is the most important thing I am doing today. Stop. Smile. Face each other. Make appropriate eye contact. Use a positive tone of voice. Gently touch their arm for a few seconds (if appropriate to your relationship with the individual).

COMPLIMENT POINTERS:

▶ Be specific when you compliment someone – provide concise, not general, compliments (see examples below)

▶ Learn to notice when the employee is doing something right

▶ Don't wait too long to compliment, but it's never too late

▶ Be pure in your reinforcement (not "you did well, but next time I want you to….")

▶ Don't reserve compliments for perfection or "above and beyond") - compliment progress, improvement, and attempting changes

▶ Compliment in front of others when appropriate to the person and situation

▶ Send handwritten thank you notes to home as a way of complimenting

GENERAL VS. CONCISE COMPLIMENT

General Feedback: "Samantha, you are so good with patients. Keep up the good work."

Concise Feedback: "Samantha, I was just rounding on the inpatients today and each one that you have cared for has mentioned you by name as being so helpful in their care. For example, Mr. Smith mentioned that you took extra time to explain to him all of his new medications in a way that made him truly less confused about them. And, Mrs. Jones mentioned that you helped her meet her pain goal today by discussing some different options with her physician. Thank you for taking excellent care of your patients in keeping with our standards of patient care and service excellence."

To initiate the conversation, ask permission. It might sound something like this: "Can I take a moment to share with you something I noticed?" This leads to a "micro-yes" or permission to proceed.

1. *Observation/Evidence - Get Specific.* What did you observe that was outside of a standard?

   "I noticed…." "I saw…." "I heard…."

   Example: "When I was talking to your patient, Mr. Smith, he shared with me that he asked you some questions about his new medications and he said that your reply was this it wasn't your job to help him understand them."

2. *Standard/Impact.* Whatever behavior, performance or contribution you are calling out has a possible negative ripple effect. To "strengthen" the call-out, include a statement about the impact.

   Example: "Mr. Smith remains confused and concerned about his new medications and says he will not start taking them until he gets more information. As well, he is very upset about your refusal to assist him or to offer someone who will."

3. *Standards/Expectations.* High standards of behavior, performance, and contributions guide an organization toward being a winning team – but only if we strive to achieve those standards. Each time anyone on the team is called-out for being outside those standards, the call-out should "connect the dots" between the action and the desired standard. Don't assume that an employee will make that connection themselves.

   Example: "A lack of willingness to assist Mr. Smith is not in keeping with our standards for medication safety or patient education. As well, our service excellence standards require us to respond appropriately to requests for assistance by providing it ourselves or finding someone who can assist."

4. *Inquiries.* When calling-out an employee (or a peer, boss, provider), you can turn this into a mini-learning moment by asking questions such as "What's getting in your way?" "How can I (or others) help?" "What ideas do you have that would help you be successful with this?" When we make inquiries, it turns feedback into dialogue which promotes coaching toward positive change.

Non-Verbal Communication. Sincerity in any communication is increased when we are mindful of our body language. Don't just rush by spewing a call-out. Portray body language that communicates that this is the most important thing I am doing today. Face each other. Make appropriate eye contact. Use a professional/calm tone of voice.

What if the behavior/performance doesn't improve after a call-out?

▶ **Advice for leaders:** advance to formal direct dialogue

▶ **Advice for employees:** when calling out again, advice employee that the consequence of this behavior/performance continuing will require you to report it to leadership.

Using Non-Verbal Signals as Call-Outs

A non-verbal "signal" can also be developed as a way for providing a call-out.

Such as:

▶ **Organization-wide:** When committing to the behavior standards of the organization, each employee gets a pin to where on their name badge (or a special name badge). Then, when an employee wants to call-out someone for being outside the behavior standards, they simply tap their pin or badge to signal the call-out to this person.

▶ **Department-specific:** When employees in a department are struggling with a specific standard like washing their hands, they could use a "stop" hand signal to provide a simple call-out that the absence of handwashing was noticed.

Individual v Group "Call Out"

Do not use group communication (e.g., email, staff meeting) to address specific performance issues of individuals. Group communications rarely is effective at addressing individual issues.

In essence, avoid "Painting everyone with the same brush" related to behavior or performance that is below standard as:

▶ The individual(s) who the message applies to may not think it applies to them, so they disregard it (or they don't read it).

▶ The individual(s) that this "group call-out" doesn't apply to are will be offended to be included in such a communication.

It isn't just the work of leaders to provide feedback. In a mature, professional work environment and just culture, everyone is empowered and equipped to provide feedback to others.

Organizations, and the leaders within them, must support employees to muster the will & develop the skill to engage in peer-to-peer feedback conversations. Doing so, is an act of caring.

While FEEDBACK may have gotten a bad rap as something negative or uncomfortable, FEEDBACK is truly an act of caring. A person giving feedback CARES enough to SPEAK UP about behaviors or actions – great, or even not so great – that were noticed.

I NOTICED = *I care*

"**I noticed** you following all of the safety precautions we learned for using the new patient lift equipment."

"**I noticed** you trying out our new telephone etiquette standards on that last call."

"**I noticed** that you're getting faster at documenting your patient assessments."

"**I noticed** that you missed scanning the insurance cards for two of today's clinic registrations."

> " *Solve problems at the lowest possible level with the least amount of bureaucracy, paperwork and drama!* "
>
> - Sue Tetzlaff

Formal feedback is dedicated, scheduled 1:1 time between a leader and employee for the purpose of performance and/or behavior development.

Formal direct dialogue can be scheduled and provided "when needed" and/or incorporated into the organization's systematic processes for scheduled formal feedback such as:
- ▶ Annual Performance Reviews
- ▶ Mid-Year Performance Conversations

Two Formal Direct Dialogue conversations:
- ▶ Positive Coaching
- ▶ 5-Point Correction.

The "Spirit" of Positive Coaching

- ▶ These conversations are your leadership tool for the ongoing development of employees. These coaching conversations show your commitment to the value of the ongoing development of everyone in the organization. "Coach, and never stop coaching."

- ▶ Coaching conversations are positive conversations when you do it right.

- ▶ Prioritize the learning or development needs. Narrow the focus – pick only one, at most two, specific coaching topics to focus on in a given period of time. Do not "kitchen sink" multiple coaching opportunities or the conversation will certainly feel negative to the employee.

- ▶ Engage in a series of coaching conversations for ongoing development. Master one development priority, then move on to the next.

- ▶ Positive coaching works best for technical, procedural, or knowledge-based development needs, but can work to positively impact behaviors/attitudes as well.

Positive Coaching Conversation Outline

▶ **Set Up** – Purpose ("spirit of coaching", outline of the conversation, and engage the employee in the documentation and plan development process. (NOTE: If positive coaching is being conducted as one component of the annual performance review or mid-year conversation, the set up may include the other components of the required annual review or mid-year conversation).

▶ **Build Up** – Thank them for what they do well. Describe their positive qualities (Pointer: consider those positive traits/skills that will assist them in mastering their current coaching need).

▶ **Coach Up** – Cover one, or at most two, improvement/development opportunities. Engage in dialogue to create clarity around the coaching need and to co-create the coaching plan. Engage the employee to take the leadership in creating and documenting the plan (. . . promote employee's "ownership" of their development opportunity).

▶ **Support Up** – Communicate your confidence that they can succeed. Reassure them that you care enough to support them in their ongoing development.

▶ **Button/Close Up** – Agree on, and confirm, the follow up and documentation process.

Incorporating COACHING into Annual Evaluations &/or Mid-Year Conversations:

Example:
Goal Cycle/Fiscal Year/Performance Review Period is January-December:

▶ Annual Performance Review (Feb/March)
  o Includes COACHING for one development priority

▶ Mid-Year Conversations (Aug/Sept)
  o Includes COACHING for one development priority

▶ In between annual performance reviews and mid-year conversations:

  1. Check-in on the employee's coaching/development plan during employee rounding and/or other scheduled follow up meetings; adjust the plan as needed based on #2 below

  2. Use validation tactics to assess if plan is working (provide compliments, call-outs in the moment in alignment with the development opportunity that was identified)

  3. If the employee succeeds with the coaching/development plan prior to the next scheduled annual and/or or mid-year conversation, consider initiating coaching for the next priority development need (e.g., "coach, and never stop coaching" – a continuous cycle of coaching under the spirit of "we should always be improving")

  4. If a newly discovered higher priority urgent coaching/development need arises, consider tabling the current coaching plan to allow time/focus to engage in positive coaching for the more urgent, higher priority development need (this should be rare).

Allowing behavior or performance that is chronically below the organization's defined standards for behavior, performance, and contributions is a barrier that can derail your culture and your results.

When a team member is functioning at this low level, other team members (and patients!) are likely negatively impacted. As the leader, these other team members and patients are looking to you, as the leader, to do something about it as they may feel powerless .... and maybe even victimized.

What to do if you have an employee who is not effectively performing or complying with standards:

▶ Understand the problem (the details of the problem, the seriousness of the impact, chronic/persistent vs. episodic/isolated). You may want to keep the conversation(s) that seek understanding of the problem separate from the conversation(s) that are meant to correct the problem.

▶ Understand the overall performance level of the employee. For the same act of non-compliance, the conversation may be different based on the performance level of the individual and/or the chronic vs. episodic nature of the problem.

▶ Prepare & deliver the appropriate content of the conversation using the suggested 5-Point Correction Conversation outline:

1. Directly state, <u>concisely</u>, what is being **observed** (What are they doing or not doing?)
2. State the **impact** the behavior/performance is having (on others, etc.)
3. State specific **standards/expectations** (What is it that they should be doing?)
4. Describe the terms of **follow up monitoring/evaluation** (How are you going to monitor if positive change is occurring? How often will you be meeting to provide feedback on what is learned through monitoring?)
5. State specifically the **consequences** for lack of improvement (What is going to happen if they don't meet the standards/expectations within the expected timeframe?)

▶ Follow up from the conversation with an email to the employee restating the summary of the conversation ("Per our conversation today....) and confirming the next check-in meeting. A documented

improvement plan &/or disciplinary action will likely also be part of this conversation and/or follow up communications.

Direct Dialogue 2.0

Informal Direct Dialogue ("performance/behavior feedback")		Formal Direct Dialogue ("performance/behavior management")	
Compliment	Call-Out	Positive Coaching	5-Point Correction
1. Observations/Evidence 2. Impact 3. Standard/Expectation Inquiries: "Can you share tips for your success?" "How can I learn to do this?" Body Language: Positive (eye contact, smiling, face-to-face)	1. Observations/Evidence 2. Impact 3. Standard/Expectation Inquiries: "What's getting in your way?" "How can I help?" "What ideas do you have?" Body Language: Positive/Neutral (eye contact, face-to-face)	• Open Up • Build Up • Coach Up • Support Up • Button/Close Up Body Language: Positive (eye contact, smiling, face-to-face)	1. Observations/Evidence 2. Impact 3. Standard/Expectation 4. Monitoring 5. Consequences Body Language: Serious tone, formality, professionalism
Documentation: None	Documentation: None	Documentation: Employee-generate (shared w/ leader); Could be part of annual performance review &/or mid-year performance conversation documents	Documentation: Leader/HR-generated; Personnel File (formal improvement plan, discipline) (shared w/ employee); could add employee-generated plan
3 times more compliments than call-outs ("3:1 ratio")	If continues (chronic/persistent) after call-outs move to formal direct dialogue (coaching or correction)	If evolves as chronic/persistent after positive coaching, move to 5-Point Correction	If lack of improvement per required timeframe, progress to consequences (steps in the disciplinary process)