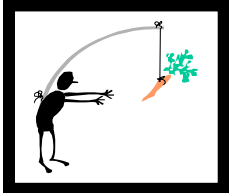


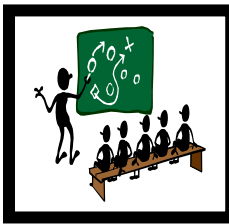
# Principles of Effective Feedback

Feedback is verbal or written communication regarding the effects of a person's behavior.



## **Motivational feedback**

It highlights specific effective behavior so that the person is aware of it and will continue to use it. The focus is on reinforcing competence.



## **Constructive feedback**

It is intended to help people correct and/or refine their behavior in order to become more effective. The focus of feedback is ALWAYS the development of competence.

1. **It is balanced.** Feedback should be strengths-based, offering observations of behaviors that were done well, and also suggestions for improvement. Feedback that consists only of praise may be regarded as patronizing. Feedback that is too critical may be resented and rejected.
2. **It is behavioral.** In order for feedback to be useful, it needs to focus on behavior the person can change. It needs to focus on the specific aspect of performance you want the person to continue doing or stop doing. "Your assessment was superficial," will not be useful in helping the person produce better assessments. Use more specific feedback, such as, "There are gaps in information, particularly about the children. For example, you did not describe the children's emotional adjustment." Or, "you provided a thorough explanation about the parent-child relationship." Avoid using generalizations, such as "You tended to..." or "You were always..." assumptions, labels, or attitudes. Generally, it is easier for people to change behaviors than attitudes. "When you asked me about my sex life, I felt that you were violating my privacy," versus "You were intrusive."
3. **It is relevant.** Effective feedback should focus on skills directly related to performing a task. Feedback about unrelated matters may be perceived as petty or judgmental. When giving feedback on identifying child risk factors, for example, it would not be appropriate to comment on someone's handwriting. Avoid use of jargon or technical terms that the other person may not understand.

## Principles of Effective Feedback (continued)

4. **It is participative.** In order for feedback to be successful, people must commit to trying the new techniques or behaviors being suggested. The best way to do this is to involve people in generating ideas for change; for example, “What could you do in the future to...?”
5. **It is achievable.** Only provide feedback on items that the worker can do something about. Feedback to a timid person might be “In order to be more assertive, you might want to try closing the conversation by summarizing key points and moving on.” rather than “You need to be way more assertive if you don’t want to be eaten alive.”
6. **It is prioritized.** There is a limit on how much criticism a person can take. Typically, it is about 3-4 items per session before the worker’s threshold is reached. Feedback should be given so that the most important points are presented first, then the second most important point, and so on. Each person will have a different threshold, so watch for cues to determine whether the person receiving the feedback might have reached his or her limit.

