Giving Feedback to a Colleague

A presentation for FGSR Professional Development Week Nov. 18, 2009
Candy Sloboda, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta

As a graduate student and as a professional in your field, you will be asked to offer your advice, feedback and evaluation. Candy was asked to offer advice on how to give feedback to a colleague, perhaps as it may relate to their teaching, lab management, academic presentation, interaction with students, and so forth. She describes what she expects from a colleague to colleague relationship and the steps to prepare and deliver feedback.

Colleague to colleague feedback relationship:

- A "working alliance"
- The goal is to encourage self-reflection and commitment to ongoing professional development.
- Feedback should be supportive, educational and developmental.

The Process:

1. Getting started:
   - The colleague asking for feedback needs to do a self assessment or self-reflection [what does he/she want to gain from the feedback].
   - The person desiring feedback needs to determine what [performance measures] he/she would like feedback on.
   - A time for the colleague to observe the person seeking feedback needs to be determined.
   - Collaboration on an observation tool should occur if possible.
   - Date, time, room etc. for observation is determined.

2. Three Step Observer Process:
   a) Time log review: [feedback] should be chronological and include both observations made and reactions seen or experienced.
   b) Enumerating strengths and areas for growth: includes a holistic picture, highlighting of strengths and identifying 1 – 3 areas for growth.
   c) Focus summary: note highlights experienced in the class, lab, etc. and note the most positive strengths
3. Feedback Guidelines:
- distinguish events from interpretations
- focus on descriptions/observations versus judgments/inferences
- focus on behaviour rather than personality
- focus on impact
- be selective in the feedback you give – ignore the minor
- do not give prescriptions
- invite discussion versus telling
- offer specifics versus generalities
- invite discussion versus gossip
- limit the amount of feedback given

4. Giving Negative Feedback:
- describe what you say and its effect on you or the class
- soften the message with your words
- stick to specific issues
- sight things previously done that perhaps could have been used again
- present growth areas as questions

5. Bibliography
- College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, Peer feedback: Learning from each other. Retrieved November 1, 2009 from www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1P3-62859983.html
- www.learning.ox.ac.uk/rsv.php?page=319
- www.uchsc.edu/CIS/FDBKChkList.html
- www.ualberta.ca/~uts/peer-consulting.html
- www.personaltoday.com/articles/2008/04/01/45190/how-to-give-feedback.html