

Observing & Giving Feedback Skill Card 25

[Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#)

Process For Completing the Observation Form

1. Place a mark (/) every time you observe a behavior. Observation aims to record and describe behavior, providing others with an objective assessment of how well they used the skills. What is most important is that the observer be able to provide specific, detailed feedback on how many times the person used the skill.
2. When the person you observe uses an effective behavior that is not listed on the observation form, place a mark (/) in the “Other” space and note what they did on the back of the observation form.
3. When the role-playing is complete, tally the number of times they used the skill. While the observer tallies the results, the other group members should privately summarize their impressions of what the person doing the role-playing did well and what they need to do to improve.

Process For Giving Specific, Detailed Feedback

1. The purpose of feedback is to provide information that helps others improve their skills and to reinforce their use of those skills.
2. For feedback to be helpful, it must be specific and detailed.
3. Avoid giving negative feedback.
4. Avoid all judgmental words such as “good”, “bad”, “excellent”, etc.
5. Sit next to the person you give feedback to so they can look at the Observation Form while you provide feedback.
6. Be specific and detailed about how many times they used the skill.
7. Phrase feedback so it reviews the definition of the skill to help them better conceptualize how the skill is to be performed.
8. When giving feedback, use their name, make eye contact, and use “I Statements”.

For example: “ Todd, *I observed you...*” or “*I heard you...*” or “*I noticed...?*”

Specific examples of active listening & asking genuine inquiry questions include:

“I observed you actively listening/paraphrasing by saying It seems to me... 3 times”

*“I heard you actively listening/paraphrasing by saying I get the impression that you are...?”
once”*

“I noticed you asked a genuine inquiry question by saying What makes you think that? twice.”

“I didn’t hear you ask a genuine inquiry question.”

Avoid telling the person they did a good or a poor job. This does not help. What does “do a good job” mean? For feedback to be helpful, it must be prompt, detailed, complete, and ongoing. People need to understand specifically what they did well or specifically what they need to do better. For a compliment to be effective, it must specify exactly what is praiseworthy about what the person has done. If you want to give a compliment with specific feedback, use “I Statements”.

A specific example includes:

“I think you did an effective job when you continued to problem solve and negotiate to find a solution that met both of your most important needs.”

Giving a compliment is meant to make someone feel good. The intention behind giving feedback should be to help them understand what they did well and/or something they could do better.

Process For Giving General Impressions

After sharing your observations, ask them if they would like specific feedback on one thing you observed them doing particularly well. In most situations, when giving feedback or advice, it is important to ask them first. Don’t give unsolicited feedback or advice. Unsolicited feedback and advice will usually not be received well, no matter how well-intentioned or good the advice or feedback is. When giving feedback and advice, always use “I Statements”.

If they say that they would like feedback, here is what to say:

“Todd, one thing I observed you doing particularly well was...”

A specific example includes:

“Todd, one thing I observed you doing particularly well was paraphrasing feelings even when the person didn’t explicitly state what they were feeling.”

If someone you are giving feedback to doesn’t agree with you, don’t argue. You could summarize what they say and then ask them to share their perspective, but don’t try to change their mind. For example: “So you think you did ask genuine inquiry questions, is that right?” If they say “yes,” you can say “okay” and leave it at that.

Ask Them For Their Impressions

After you have given feedback, ask them for one or two skills they think they did particularly well and one thing they think they can do better or do more consistently.

A specific example of what to say includes:

“What are one or two things that you did particularly well?”

“What are one or two things you want to do better or more consistently?”