Giving Feedback of a Sensitive Nature: How to Say What Everyone Else is Thinking

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September 26th and 28th, 2019
We do not have an affiliation (financial or otherwise) with a pharmaceutical, medical device or communications organization.

Je n’ai aucune affiliation (financière ou autre) avec une entreprise pharmaceutique, un fabricant d’appareils médicaux ou un cabinet de communication.
What sensitive feedback topic is most anxiety-provoking for you?
The last time you "needed" to give sensitive feedback, what did you actually do?

I ran away!

I hoped someone else would deal with it.

I turfed it to a colleague or resident.

I gave the feedback, but very indirectly or vaguely.

I gave direct feedback and felt good about it.
What we will cover:

• Describe the importance of sensitive feedback for learner success.

• Discuss strategies for effectively delivering sensitive feedback.

• Practice steps for delivering sensitive feedback.
Disclaimer

“Your Dress is Too Short”: How to Say What Everyone Else is Thinking

CATEGORY: Leadership and Administration
SESSION COORDINATOR: Gina Luciano, MD, Mercy Medical Center

Giving clinical feedback to learners is difficult for many educators. Providing sensitive feedback is even more challenging, and the impact of this feedback and its delivery can have long-lasting effects on learners’ careers and how others perceive them. Educators are in a unique position to help shape all aspects of their learners’ professional identity, including non-clinical aspects. This workshop tackles the challenges of delivering sensitive feedback in a timely and effective manner.

We apologize in advance for not covering all topics, and certainly do not mean to offend anyone by inclusion or exclusion of any particular topic.
EVALUATIONS OF SEXY WOMEN IN LOW- AND HIGH-STATUS JOBS

Peter Glick, Sadie Larsen, Cathryn Johnson, and Heather Branstiter

Lawrence University

We hypothesized that women who dress in a sexy versus business-like manner evoke negative emotions and perceptions of lesser competence if employed in high- (but not low-) status jobs. Male and female undergraduates evaluated a videotaped female target whose physical attractiveness was held constant, but who was (a) dressed in sexy or business-like attire and (b) alleged to either be a manager or a receptionist. Participants exhibited more negative affect toward the sexily attired manager and rated her as less competent than the neutrally attired manager. This effect was fully mediated by emotional reactions. In contrast, the appearance manipulation had no effect on emotions toward or competence ratings of the receptionist. These findings suggest that a sexy self-presentation harms women in high-, but not low-status jobs.

Whether we like it or not, a person's appearance affects their success at work. When an employee looks unkempt or wears revealing clothing, they may have a harder time gaining their colleagues or customers' respect. But how do you broach what feels like a sensitive topic? And how can you frame the feedback as trying to help them — not make them feel self-conscious?


https://www.bna.com/workplace-odors-no-n57982065001/

https://hbr.org/2017/05/how-to-give-an-employee-feedback-about-their-appearance
What We Won’t Cover:

• What is or is not culturally appropriate
• Debate appropriate dress and political correctness
• Your HR policies

Why is it essential to give learners sensitive feedback?
Delivering Sensitive Feedback

1. Introduce the topic
2. Emphasize why the conversation is important
3. Describe the behavior non-judgmentally
4. Discuss the potential consequences of the behavior empathically
5. Ask the other person for their insight
6. Consider secondary causes for the behavior
7. Build an agreement on next steps

Let’s Practice

1. Introduce the topic / “shot over the bow”
2. Emphasize why the conversation is important
3. Describe the behavior non-judgmentally
4. Discuss the potential consequences of the behavior empathically
5. Ask the other person for their insight
6. Consider secondary causes for the behavior
7. Build an agreement on next steps
What pearls would you like to share to improve comfort and delivery of sensitive feedback?
Strategies for Success

- Importance of partnership and a supportive and safe environment
- Same gender in certain conversations
- Group approach (review dress code with the group rather than individual)
- Be aware of space and time (have conversation at the end of the day so s/he isn’t self-conscious the rest of the day)
- Be direct
- Culturally sensitive
- Be objective (refer to standard dress code)
- Vulnerability or anecdote of a similar personally embarrassing story can be helpful
Questions and Comments

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Your input matters.

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• Go to: www.royalcollege.ca/icre-evaluations to complete the session evaluation.

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You could be entered to win one complimentary registration for ICRE 2020 in Vancouver.
Vous pourriez participer au tirage d’une inscription gratuite à la CIFR 2020 à Vancouver.
Resources

- [http://content.wisestep.com/talk-employees-body-odor-polite/](http://content.wisestep.com/talk-employees-body-odor-polite/)
- Kerry Patterson. Crucial Conversations for Talking When Stakes Are High. 2011
- Susan Scott. Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life One Conversation at a Time. 2004
Delivering Feedback

- Alliance between teacher and trainee
- Well-timed and expected
- Based on observation
- Limited to changeable behaviors
- Non-evaluative
- Specific
- Offer subjective data
- Actionable

What sensitive feedback issue is most anxiety-provoking for you?
The last time you "needed" to give sensitive feedback, what did you actually do?

I ran away!

I hoped someone else would deal with it.

I turfed it to a colleague or chief resident.

I gave the feedback, but very indirectly or vaguely.

I gave direct feedback and felt good about it!
Why is it essential to give learners sensitive feedback?
What pearls would you like to share to improve comfort and delivery of sensitive feedback?
The next time you need to deliver sensitive feedback, what will you do?

Run away!

Hope that someone else deals with it

Turf it to a colleague or chief resident

Deal with it, but indirectly or vaguely

Deal with it directly.

Call one of the presenters for advice!
Case 1: The Stinky Teammate Scenario

ROLE: Program Administrator

A faculty member working on the hospital wards with a team of three learners comes to you for “help.” Two interns work alongside one senior resident who supervises the team with the faculty member’s expertise and support. It is the end of the 1st week of a four-week rotation and the faculty member has noticed that one of the interns, a competent young learner, exudes a distinct odor that is very bothersome. You do not know this intern well but feel you must give feedback as it is obvious that other people are also bothered by the "stench" and because the faculty member is “unwilling” to deliver this message.
Case 1: The Stinky Teammate Scenario

ROLE: Intern

• You are a very nervous new intern, 2 months into residency training. You feel that you are behind your peers and are intimidated by a new faculty member on your current rotation as s/he has a great reputation in the field that you want to go into.
• You are stunned when during a private meeting your Program Administrator tells you that the faculty member is saying that you "stink." You respond initially to the comments by becoming withdrawn and defensive as no one has ever said this to you before.
• You shower every day and use deodorant. You do sweat a lot as the hospital is hot and you have a lot of stress from the daily routine that you are learning how to maneuver.
• With supportive discussion and focus on how to make this a positive you come around to how this may affect both you and those around you.

Role: Observer

• Your critical role is to observe the interaction and to document what went well, what went poorly (and why) and alternative approaches that you might suggest.
Case 2: The Short Skirt Scenario

ROLE: Program Administrator

- You are the Program Administrator for an internal medicine residency program. You regularly meet with the residents on Monday afternoons to see how they are doing. Normally what your residents wear to the session has never been something you’ve taken note of until recently, when you keep seeing one of your most competent female residents, Melissa, wearing a skirt or dress that seems a bit short. She is well respected by her peers and juniors as a hard-working resident and is a smart individual. One of the associate program director’s has mentioned to you that she too has noted Melissa’s short dresses.

- During today’s session, Melissa is wearing a blue dress that ends about mid-thigh. Over the dress is her white coat which ends at her knees. She sits down at one of the chairs in the group circle and her skirt rides up a little higher and her thigh is clearly visible. You feel that the dress is too revealing for the clinical setting and does not meet the institutional dress code.

- Your job, as the Program Administrator, is to give Melissa feedback regarding the importance of appropriate attire at work. You actually have an appointment scheduled with Melissa after today’s session – she had requested the appointment to speak about her search for new housing.
Case 2: The Short Skirt Scenario

ROLE: Medical Resident: Melissa

- You are a third year medical resident at a great residency program and have enjoyed your training experience. You’ve been meaning to speak to your program administrator about new housing options in the area and had made an appointment to meet this afternoon.

- When you arrive for the meeting however, you discover that the Program Administrator had a different agenda and tells you that your clothing choices recently have been too revealing. You are initially taken aback by the statement, but then become annoyed because you don’t think your clothes are revealing. In fact, you bought them from the professional section of the local department store and actually spent quite a bit of money on your dresses and skirts in anticipation of job interviews and find yourself becoming defensive during the conversation.

Role: Observer

- Your critical role is to observe the interaction and to document what went well, what went poorly (and why) and alternative approaches that you might suggest.