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Getting Beyond “Good Job”: How to Give Effective Feedback

This article is the fourth in a series by the Council on Medical Student Education in Pediatrics (COMSEP) reviewing the critical attributes and skills of superb clinical teachers. The previous ar-

sessions at strategic points during a clinical rotation, usually at the mid-

ways to improve learner performance. The learner and preceptor can then develop an action plan for improvement together.

Ideally, brief feedback should occur daily. For preceptors, remembering to “STOP” for a moment to give feedback may enhance the frequency and effectiveness of feedback. Faculty-development programs can help preceptors understand expectations for students and overcome anxiety about giving feedback.¹⁶ Course or program directors can e-mail or notify preceptors of the need to give major feedback at the midpoint of the rotation. Preceptors may designate a day of the week for feedback (eg, Feedback Fridays).¹¹ Finally, learners themselves can be encouraged to take the initiative to elicit feedback by either asking for it verbally or asking their preceptor to fill out a form or a clinical encounter card.¹⁷

CONCLUSIONS

Effective feedback is critical for improving the clinical performance of medical students and residents. It provides learners with information on past performances so that future performance can be improved. Ulti-

mately, not only does effective feedback help our learners but our patients as well. Feedback is a critical skill for educators that is necessary and valuable and, after some practice and planning, can be incorporated into daily practice.²

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