Constructive Feedback Approaches

Constructive feedback is a challenging concept to grasp. Especially for learners transitioning from outside of the Canadian context, giving and receiving feedback constructively is an intercultural challenge.

For this reason, the program purposefully models **4 principles of constructive feedback**:

1. Descriptive & objective

Feedback should be based on something that is specific, observable, and can be described, as opposed to subjective feedback that may result from a personal experience, bias or misconception.

(a) *"When the client asked how old you are, you paused before giving your answer."*
(b) *"The pause was uncomfortable for the client."*
(c) *"This happened to me one time and it was a bad experience."*

2. Non-judgmental

Non-judgmental feedback means choosing words carefully and mindfully, avoiding critical language. It is open-minded and often indirect, omitting unnecessary criticism. It often uses 'I' statements to reflect the perspective of the giver, rather than focusing on the receiver.

(a) *"You shouldn't be so surprised to hear this question. It's normal."*
(b) *"I saw that you appeared surprised when the client asked your age. It seemed to me that this question was unexpected because usually the medical professional is the one who asks the client these things."*
(c) *"If you show your emotions like that, it's going to be hard to deal with difficult clients.*

3. Question-based

Feedback that is question-based involves using open-ended questions to invite reflection. In utilizing open-ended questions, rephrasing 'why' questions with more specific 'how' or 'what' questions is often a helpful way to be less direct or abrupt.

(a) *"What is something that went well during this interaction? How would you communicate in this situation differently next time?*
(b) *"How could you adapt your communication for a client that is hearing impaired OR 15 years old OR speaks English as their second language?"*
(c) *Both (a) and (b) are acceptable question-based feedback.*

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4. Actionable

Feedback should address something that can be changed or improved, rather than feedback that is too abstract or critical to be implemented. A good practice for giving actionable feedback is to consider verb choice – *what could be done differently in future?*

(a) *"Connecting with the client is important. Always try to connect with them first."*
(b) *"What important points about this interaction should be communicated differently? List all the ways body language/ eye contact/ word choice can specifically be adjusted in the future."*
(c) *"Not everyone will like your approach and your personality and that's OK."*

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