

TYPES OF FEEDBACK (INTERVENTIONS) IN SUPERVISION

Daphne Hewson and Michael Carroll (2016)
 (Expanded table from Chapter D3 in *Reflective Practice in Supervision*)

The literature tends to limit the definition of feedback to comments on performance (positive/negative, affirmative/corrective) and it calls many of our examples (below) “interventions”. We class them all as feedback because each one “feeds something back” by drawing attention to some aspect of the practitioner’s work and asking her to consider it. They are “formative feedback” in the sense that they provide opportunities for learning.

We contend that most of what a supervisor does is give feedback. Even giving information is giving feedback because it feeds back that there’s a gap in their knowledge that needs to be filled. In the summary below, we’ve grouped together those with different names but similar content (various authors for the different types are identified in the Reference list).

The examples are based on hypothetical feedback from Jake to Sabine (in Erin Mayer’s story (Chapter D2)). Jake wanted Sabine to hear that her energy and engagement with her team were great, but her paperwork and reports were sloppy and that she didn’t prepare well for important meetings.

Type	Description and example
Appreciative	Appreciate effort, actions and presence <i>Thanks for all your energy and commitment</i>
Catalytic	Probe to elicit self-discovery; get things moving; seize the moment to bring additional meaning <i>You usually have so much energy, but you don’t put it into preparing for meetings.</i>
Cathartic	Enable emotional discharge <i>What is it you really feel about paperwork?</i>
Confrontative	Highlighting discrepancies or what was previously unknown to the practitioner <i>You don’t pay attention to the issues I raise in our feedback sessions. You listen to the positives and ignore the problems.</i>
Conceptual Analytic Integrative	Explore conceptual or theoretical processes <i>Let’s talk about how cultural differences might be affecting your report writing</i>
Corrective Prescriptive	Correct an error; direct behaviour <i>Don’t come to meetings unprepared. Check the agenda beforehand and bring the relevant reports</i>
Descriptive	Raw observation (low level of inference) <i>You put lots of energy into engaging with your team</i>
Emotional disclosure	Emotional response to the other’s behaviour <i>I’m annoyed that you come to meetings unprepared.</i>

Evaluative	Assessment in relation to performance criteria <i>You aren't doing reports in time or in the required format. On the other hand, your team engagement skills exceed our expectations.</i>
Informative Coaching	Impart knowledge, information or training <i>Have a look at this sample report. Notice how it's structured and how the conclusions are highlighted..</i>
Interpretative	Suggest a new perspective <i>Maybe you're a people person, not an admin person.</i>
Negative Concern	Constructive criticism <i>I'm concerned that your report writing isn't up to scratch.</i>
Reflective	Invite mindful consideration <i>What do you think I've noticed about your preparation for meetings? How does that fit with your view?</i>
Responsive	Empathic acknowledgement <i>It seems like you put so much energy into your team that you don't have time to prepare for meetings.</i>
Supportive Facilitative Empowering Positive	Affirm attitudes, qualities and actions <i>I notice how well you've engaged with your team.</i>

This is an interesting range of “feedback” options. Many people are surprised that we call them all feedback because they think of feedback as simply telling someone how they did (positive versus negative feedback or affirmative versus corrective feedback). The literature tends to limit the definition of feedback in this way too. Indeed, in the literature many of the options we've listed above are called “interventions”, not feedback.

We categorise the different types of formative feedback in terms of their primary method: corrective, evaluative, informative, affirmative and exploratory (Chapter D3 in *Reflective Practice in Supervision*).

References

- Claiborn, C. and Goodyear, R. (2005) Feedback in psychotherapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61, 209-217.
(Corrective, Descriptive, Emotional disclosure, Evaluative (positive and negative), Interpretative)
- Falender, C. and Shafranske, E. (2004) *Clinical supervision*. American Psychological Assoc.
(Analytic, Empowering, Evaluative (positive) Integrative, Concern, Reflective, Responsive)
- Loganbill, C. Hardy, E. & Delworth, U. (1982) Supervision: a conceptual model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 10, 3-42.
(Catalytic, Conceptual, Confrontative, Facilitative, Prescriptive)
- Meyer, E. (2014) *The culture map*. PublicAffairs.
- Stone, D. and Heen, S. (2014) *Thanks for the feedback*. Penguin
(Appreciation, Coaching, Evaluative (positive and negative)).