



## PROVIDING FEEDBACK THAT HAS AN IMPACT ON PLAYERS

- Effective feedback is specific, not general.
  - Consider saying, "The shift you just played was aggressive and you pressured the opponent into the corner; you effectively caused a turnover which created our offensive drive."
  - Don't say, "Good shift" or "you should've had that guy!"
- Effective feedback always focuses on a specific behavior, not on a player or his intentions.
  - When [in a particular game, shift or moment] against {Opponent} and you skated out of our zone before the puck cleared, it resulted in a odd-man chance.  
The opposing player you should have defended was their player who set up the game winning goal.
- 1. The best feedback is sincerely and honestly provided to help.
  - People will know if they are receiving it for any other reason.
- 2. Successful feedback describes actions or behavior that the individual can do something about.
  - Players will often want to know what they could have done instead. It will be clear to you if they lack an understanding.... often times they will ask "How did that happen?"
  - Sometimes a simple reminder of what to do is all that is necessary.....or restate fundamental expectations to keep a player on track.
- 3. Whenever possible, feedback that is requested is more powerful. Ask permission to provide feedback.
  - Offer "I'd like to give you some feedback about today's practice. Is that okay with you?"
  - Effective feedback involves the sharing of information and observations.
  - It does not include advice outside the realm of the environment or circumstances that bring you together.
- 4. Effective feedback is well timed. Whether the feedback is positive or constructive provide the information as closely tied to the event as possible.
  - Athletes need time to clear their own mind of their on-ice performance so be mindful of "being on their back."
- 5. Effective feedback involves what or how something was done, not why. Asking why is asking people about their motivation and that provokes defensiveness.
  - But it might be okay to ask the player "what were you trying to achieve by doing X, Y or Z?"

- Some questions might be intended to test their mettle, such as “You are sure you know our backcheck requirements, right?” and require no verbal reply.
6. Check to make sure the other person understood what you communicated by using a feedback loop, such as asking a question or observing changed behavior.
    - Ask the athlete “Did you see anything different about how you play because you made this or that change?”
    - Or “Tell me about the opportunities created because you did this or that.”
  7. Effective feedback is as consistent as possible. If the actions are great today, they're great tomorrow. If the behavior merits discipline, it should always merit discipline.
    - I prefer applying the word ***discipline*** by its Latin root meaning *to learn* versus exacting a punishment; an exact set of rules and consequences will only box us into a corner.
    - The “bungee cord” approach is recommended.....

## TIPS TO GETTING STARTED

- Feedback is communication to a person or the team regarding the effect their behavior is having on themselves, another person, or the team.
- Positive feedback involves telling someone about good performance. Make this feedback timely, specific, and frequent.
- Constructive feedback alerts an individual to an area in which his performance could improve. Constructive feedback is not criticism; it is descriptive and should always be directed to the action, not the person.
- The main purpose of constructive feedback is to help people understand where they stand in relation to expected and/or productive skill development or team play.
- Recognition for effective performance is a powerful motivator. Most people want to obtain more recognition, so recognition fosters more of the appreciated actions.

This article was provided by Mike Lichtenberger from USA Hockey’s Atlantic District. It is adapted from *How To Provide Feedback That Has an Impact* © 2005 About, Inc. a part of the New York Times Company