

Giving & receiving feedback

Giving and receiving feedback helps us to develop self-awareness when training as helpers and is an essential skill when working with clients.

For the giver-

- Before giving feedback, reflect on why you are giving it.
- The aim of offering feedback is to help the receiver to become more aware of what they are doing and its effect on others.
- Feedback is unlikely to be helpful (for giver or receiver) if the receiver feels criticised, attacked, or forced.
- If we genuinely want to help or offer information, our feedback is more likely to be useful to the receiver
- Feedback is an offering – the receiver has the choice to use it or not

Guidelines for offering feedback:

- Be specific, rather than generalising. For example, 'When you smiled, I felt upset because I wanted to be taken seriously' rather than 'You never take me seriously'.
- Use 'I' statements, such as 'I feel disappointed' rather than 'You've let everyone down'. This makes feedback more accurate and believable.
- Offer observations (what you actually saw/heard) rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- Offer your ideas, reflections, suggestions or information rather than giving advice or opinion – offer rather than push!
- Feedback can be supportive and challenging. It is useful to offer both, for example, 'What I appreciate . . .' and 'What I find difficult . . .'

For the receiver-

- Feedback can be useful in giving you information about how others experience you.
- Feedback also tells you something about the giver – it's not objective!
- You can decide whether or not the feedback is useful to you.
- Listen to the feedback first and then clarify any points that you do not understand. You do not have to justify your work/behaviour.
- If the feedback was difficult for you to hear, you might want to allow yourself time to come back to it and reflect on it.