

The Feedback FRENED

Purpose and rationale

Workplace-based assessment (WBA) feedback relies on a committed and constructive trainee-trainer relationship. Studies have shown that trainees value tailored training dialogues with trainers because they have the potential to correct understanding, reassure and relieve stress. It is important to trainees that verbal feedback occurs immediately following an observation and that trainers understand the totality of their performance in context, beyond a list of competences. Trainers' judgements are also essential in helping trainees to make sense of changes they need to effect in order to improve their practice.

Good quality verbal feedback is the primary aim of WBA and also forms the basis for rich written feedback in trainee portfolios to aid reflection. The purpose of the Feedback FRENED is to aid the WBA verbal discussion and help ensure its quality. The Feedback FRENED, therefore, has the following aims:

To help promote a constructive trainee-trainer relationship

- Emphasising a supportive and protective learning environment
- Enabling trainers to be more approachable

To help promote WBA feedback as a formative verbal dialogue

- Helping a more natural, complete, face-to-face discussion at the time of the event
- Encouraging richer verbal feedback as the basis for written feedback
- Encouraging improvement to be seen as a positive and intrinsic element of practice

To help demonstrate trainee performance in context

- Linking the competency-based view of performance with a more holistic discussion of professional practice
- Linking previous and present performance to deliberately demonstrate and record learning
- Helping trainers to tailor the discussion to trainees' needs

A workplace trial of the Feedback FRENED as part of a qualitative study, suggested that it could foster more complete conversations and that with use it could promote a natural dialogue. However, it required a commitment from both trainees and trainers. Written comments could be provided by trainee or trainer, briefly summarising the discussion as 'field notes' under the same headings.

Using the method

The Feedback FRENED is named after its five headings: Feedforward; Reflect; Enquire; Next and Do. The framework can be used with any existing WBA to aid the trainee-trainer feedback discussion, representing a way of undertaking feedback. Separately, each of the five headings stimulates a component of a formative dialogue so that when combined, form a complete formative dialogue. The headings are not linear and may merge into one another.

The tool is designed for trainees but trainers should be aware of how the method works and both should agree whether to use it in advance of any WBA.

Following the observation, trainees should take a few minutes ahead of the feedback session to think about how they might set their performance in context and what they might want to say and ask.

Feed-forward - Links past and present learning

WBA should feed into the next cycle of learning so that any improvement can be demonstrated and recorded. For example, a suturing technique, management skills, or procedural skills may have been practiced by trainees since the last time and trainee and trainer may agree that the current WBA would provide an appropriate opportunity for demonstrating the new skills by increasing the level of responsibility (or decreasing the supervision level) and recording the outcome accordingly.

- What have you learned since last time that you want to demonstrate?
- What should the next level of responsibility be?

Reflect - allows trainees to set their performance in context

In order to properly assess trainees, trainers should have a full picture of trainee performance, not just in terms of the application of their knowledge, skills, judgement and professionalism but also trainees' internal thought processes and beliefs. Incorporating the trainee's own internal judgement of their performance must be addressed if learning is to result. Because many of these aspects may not be easily observable, trainees should have the opportunity to say what did and why and what they might do differently to demonstrate insight into their own performance. The trainee's view provides an opening for the trainer's view and provides a vehicle to resolve any mis-match. Trainee and trainer can then re-live and reflect together.

- What should the trainer know about what you did and the context of your performance?
- What should the trainer know about the impact of your action, actual or potential - on your learning / on your colleagues / the patient / the organisation?
- What could you have done differently or better (to demonstrate your insight)?

Enquire – allows trainee questions to be addressed

Enquire enables trainees to consider what questions about their performance they want trainers to address and provides the opportunity to ask trainers questions. For example, trainees might ask trainers what they might have done in that situation. Trainers have responsibility for addressing the trainee questions as fully as possible so that trainees' concerns and uncertainties are dealt with.

- On what do you want your trainer to give you specific guidance?
- Do you have any concerns and uncertainties that you want to raise?

Next – Allows planning for improvement

WBA should lead to improvement even when performance is satisfactory. The curriculum encourages an aspiration for excellence and continual incremental quality improvement. Trainees and trainers should select only 1 or 2 areas to focus on to prevent trainees from being overloaded. Next might also incorporate ideas for a quality improvement project.

- What do you want to focus on improving? / process improvement

Do - allows a specific plan of action

Trainees need to know what specifically they can do to move learning forward. Trainee and trainee should discuss specific actions that develop from the discussion, an aspect often lacking in feedback. These actions should be those that can be achieved within the timeframe of the placement so that they can be completed. Trainees sometimes need the help of trainers to achieve some actions e.g. to help them access particular resources and, therefore, any trainer actions should also be agreed.

- How might you get where you need to go next within the timeframe of the placement?
- Are there any specific actions you can discuss with your trainer?

More information about the tool's development can be found [here](#)

Accessing the App prompt

[FeedbackFRIEND](#)

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Click the link above to open the app and add it to your home screen.

