How to Give and Receive Feedback

When and Where to Give Feedback

- Is it your place to give feedback? Is there someone more appropriate who should give the feedback (Supervisor or Program Coordinator)?
- Timing (when all parties are calm and open to participating in active listening)
- Setting (when it is just the two of you)
- Tone of the message (calm delivery)

Giving Feedback

- Communicate clearly. Make sure the message is clear and relevant.
- Be specific. Positive feedback should be specific and realistic. If you praise someone heavily for doing the minimum, (he/she) won't be motivated to do more. If you overdo the positive feedback, you appear insincere and your message is worthless. Remark on specific opportunities for improvement.
- Avoid using the word "but." This word negates everything said before it.
- Consider the receiver.
- Allow the person time to respond.
- Don't take it personally if your feedback does not result in immediate change.

Giving Constructive Criticism

- Again, focus on valid and unbiased feedback (facts) and avoid pointing out personal character traits.
- Make your message clear and relevant.

Receiving Feedback

- Don't be defensive. Be open and receptive to what is being said—practice active listening.
- Take the feedback with a grain of salt. Feedback is a reflection of someone else's opinion—you might learn something.
- Ask questions to clarify.
- Summarize and reflect what you heard.