

## 7 Best Practices for Giving Feedback About Observation

PRESENTED: January 2020 REVISED: September 2020

- S STATE THE PURPOSE**

Make sure you tell program delivery staff that you want to discuss their strengths, note areas for improvement, identify where support/training are needed, and encourage self-reflection.
- U UNDERSTAND THE STAFF MEMBERS SELF-PERCEPTION**

Ask the staff members to share their thoughts about their own program delivery first. After listening to their perceptions, you may decide to change the focus of what you want to discuss.
- P PUT POSITIVE FEEDBACK FIRST**

Begin and end the conversation with positive feedback. Effort and excellence need to be celebrated. Use the SAR method: Situation. Action. Results. "Jane, you facilitated a really large workshop. You welcomed participants individually and used their names, and I could see them responding to you by engaging through the entire session, asking questions, and coming to talk to you at breaks."
- P PROVIDE A MODEL FOR PROGRAM DELIVERY**

Reflect on the observed session before giving feedback. Model for program delivery staff how they should work with participants by setting a warm, accepting tone; asking questions to encourage reflection; and listening and paraphrasing to convey understanding. Emphasize that you are learning, too. Observing others helps you learn how to be a better facilitator and leader.
- O OFFER SPECIFIC INFORMATION USING A CALM TONE**

Prioritize which two or three key aspects to explore. Be explicit and specific about behaviors you observed, using more than one example. Focus on description rather than judgment. Use I statements, such as, "I did not see you welcome the male participants when they arrived."
- R RESPECT THE ROLE OF CULTURE**

Communication style, feedback, persuasion, leadership, decisions, trust, disagreeing, and timeliness all vary by culture. Learn about the staff's values and family, community, and previous workplace expectations. Acknowledge these and work together to develop an organizational culture of continuous quality improvement.
- T TEACH WHILE STAYING SUPPORTIVE**

Remember that your purpose is to help staff learn about their strengths and ways they can improve. Always check to see whether staff understand your feedback. One way to assess this is to ask them to tell you their key takeaways from your discussion. Program delivery staff need to be supported. Constructive feedback encourages reflection, builds self-esteem, promotes awareness, and helps to identify actions staff can take.