# 3 TIPS

## FOR HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Employees are eager for feedback. However, feedback that focuses only on the negative or lacks specificity can leave employees feeling confused or unclear -- not only as to why they received the rating they did, but also what they are doing well and what they need to do going forward.

**1**

**2**

**3**

## BE POSITIVE

Research shows that employees who feel inspired to improve or are positive about knowing how to do their work better after receiving feedback are 3.9 times more likely to be engaged than employees who are left with negative feelings.

## CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Performance review comments should be thoughtful and specific, which means using the right words is key to relaying a message and its meaning. Action verbs like "solve", "establish", and "eliminate" are particularly impactful.

## BE SPECIFIC, PROVIDE EXAMPLES

Providing concrete examples within the observations being shared makes feedback more impactful. It also shows the employee that their People Leader is paying attention.

# WRITING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

## 1 BE POSITIVE

**Affirmative feedback**, sometimes referred to as positive feedback, can be recognition of good work or successful projects, reinforce effective behaviors, and show appreciation for demonstrating strengths and WVU Values.

**Learning feedback**, sometimes referred to as constructive feedback, may be used to correct specific behaviors to meet standards, or to help refine or enhance skills for maximum effectiveness.

Whether reinforcing a particular behavior pattern through affirmative feedback, or encouraging the changing of behavior through learning feedback, framing comments in a positive light is essential to building an individual's confidence, motivation and engagement.

- Focus on specific and objective achievements, behaviors, and contributions (Remember: Be aware of any biases!).
- Use language that highlights strengths and expresses appreciation while avoiding vague praise.
- Frame any areas for improvement as opportunities for growth.

## 2 BE SPECIFIC, PROVIDE EXAMPLES

Once you've evaluated performance, considered how to positively frame both affirmative and learning feedback, use the **Situation-Behavior-Impact** model to guide you in writing comments.

- Describe the specific situation in which the behavior occurred, or the pre-set expectation that you are addressing. Try to keep this description short and succinct.
- Give observable descriptions of the behavior in question.
- Describe the result of the behavior and how it affected others, how it missed, met or exceeded expectations for their role, or how it contributed to team or University goals.

## 3 CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Remember that your responsibility as a leader is to provide thoughtful, positive, and specific feedback to employees. Choosing your words carefully means:

- Using action verbs such as "solve," "establish," or "eliminate"
- Avoiding inflammatory language
- Critiquing or commenting on behavior, not character

**Note:** Practice caution when using "you" statements. Starting a sentence with "You..." to directly address a behavior can sometimes come off as accusatory if not phrased carefully. Consider incorporating "I" statements, such as, "I noticed..." to promote a more collaborative feedback loop.

# WRITING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK WORKSHEET

**Employee Name:** _____     **Date:** _____

**What achievements, behaviors or contributions should be reinforced? What behaviors should you encourage the employee to change?**

**Succinctly describe the situation in which these achievements, behaviors or contributions occurred.**

**What specific behaviors were observed?**

**What were the results or impact of the behaviors described?**

**Write out each comment using your answers above, focusing on using action verbs and incorporating "I" statements.**

*Attach additional sheets as necessary.*