GUIDELINES FOR ASKING FOR AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

“The ability to give and receive feedback effectively is a key skill for doctors, aids learning between all levels of the medical hierarchy, and provides a basis for reflective practice and life-long learning.”

Ferguson-Smith & Johnson, Developing essential professional skills: a framework for teaching and learning about feedback. BMC Medical Education, 2005 5:11

1. Start by practicing **CPR**

   **Challenge** your thoughts that create anxiety and reluctance to ask such as: If I ask, they’ll tell me I’ll never make it as a doctor
   I can’t stand it when someone tells me I made mistakes
   It’ll be humiliating to hear what I am doing wrong

   **Practice** thoughts that help you have a positive approach to getting feedback such as: My goal in residency is to learn and practice, not prove I’m perfect
   I can only get better by learning what I can improve on
   This feedback is to help me not hurt me

   **Rehearse** asking for feedback such as: Rehearse in your mind the setting and what you will think and how you will handle the feedback you receive
   Role play with another resident asking for feedback and ask that resident for feedback on how you asked, using guidelines such as these

2. Self-assess first. Know the performance criteria for the activity. Review your performance and note strengths and areas to improve
3. Asking Guidelines
-a.) Lower your anxiety before asking. Meditate, do an emotion shift, breathe
-b.) Ask in one of your very first contacts with your supervisor, senior resident, attending, etc.
-c.) Forewarn the person you wish feedback from. “My goal in this rotation is to learn and strengthen my skills. I know I have lots to learn and your feedback will help me do that. I would appreciate your suggestions for what I can do better and how to do that.”
-d.) Request feedback as you go along. “I’m interested in your feedback on what you saw me doing on that case and any suggestions for how to perform better. If now isn’t a convenient time to do that, could we set up a time?”

-e.) Receive it well. Do’s and Don’ts when being given feedback:
   Dos:
   - make eye contact
   - listen
   - maintain open body language
   - repeat suggestions and write them down
   - ask for suggestions on how to implement the ideas
   - thank the person for the feedback
   - ask the person to offer feedback again

   Don’ts:
   - interrupt the person giving you feedback
   - make excuses for any difficulty noted (“I was tired, I just came off call, We were backed up with patients”)
   - argue with the person giving you feedback
   - look away, roll eyes
   - maintain closed posture

4. What to do when the feedback is destructive.
   Recognize destructive feedback:
   - pessimistic (“You’ll never get this”)
   - threatening (“If you don’t do better, then…..”)
   - vague (“You just need to do it faster”)
   - not timely (“Last week you ….”)

   Take deep breaths and calm down.
   Try and restate the feedback in more positive, specific terms
   (“If I do ………..will that help?”)

   Ask for specific feedback
   (“Are there a couple things you would recommend I do to work on that?”)

   Talk with trusted peers about the experience and seek support and advice