

Feedback in family medicine training

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On behalf of the Section of Residents

Feedback is key to developing the skills, behaviour, and competencies necessary for independent practice. However, soliciting and making good use of feedback can be challenging. In this article we outline the components of good feedback and offer tips to assist residents in making effective use of any feedback they receive (**Figure 1**). An easy-to-print handout containing this information is also available from **CFPlus**.*

What are field notes and why are they important?

A *field note* is written feedback given to a resident after observation of his or her interactions with a patient, family member, or health professional. Feedback can be documented for interactions with patients or team members, discussions with preceptors, written communications, presentations, clinical skills, or procedures. Field notes serve as a reminder of the skills you have acquired and the skills that might require further development throughout residency training.

How do I ask for feedback?

Ensure the observer providing feedback has sufficient time to sit with you in a confidential setting. Feedback should not take longer than a couple of minutes. It might be helpful and appreciated if you inform your preceptor in advance that you will be seeking feedback on specific skills. Be flexible with time or location changes due to clinical activities or commitments. If either space or time are not available immediately, invite the observer to provide feedback at a later date or time. Follow up with the preceptor in a timely fashion if feedback is not given immediately.

How do I prepare for a feedback session?

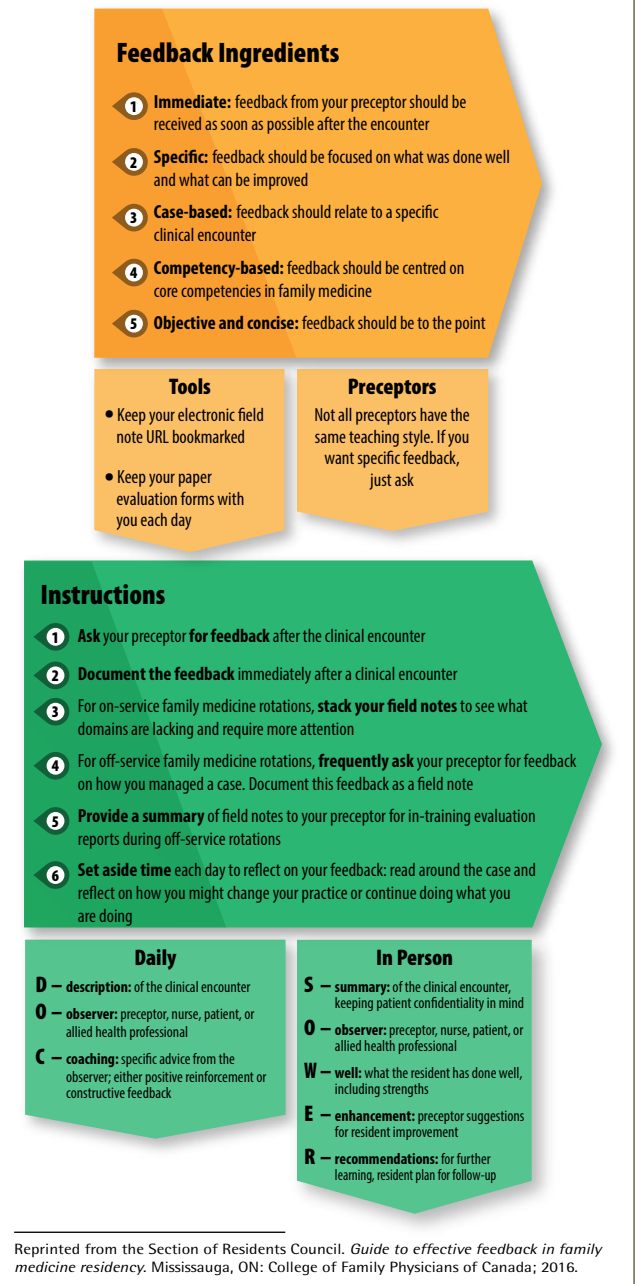
Before meeting with your preceptor, reflect on your clinical encounters and prepare a list of what you did well and what you think requires further improvement. Highlight specific examples during your feedback meeting. What challenges did you face? What would you do differently? How can your preceptor support you in meeting your learning needs? Bring these ideas to your feedback session.

What do I do with positive feedback I receive?

Positive feedback is intended to reinforce behaviour and

*An easy-to-print **handout** is available at www.cfp.ca. Go to the full text of this article and click on **CFPlus** in the menu at the top right-hand side of the page.

Figure 1. Effective feedback for residents



La traduction en français de cet article se trouve à www.cfp.ca dans la table des matières du numéro de mai 2016 à la page e282.

skills essential for practice. Residents should take note of what behaviour and skills they have acquired, and residents are expected to maintain those skills throughout their practice and careers.

What do I do with constructive feedback I receive?

It is normal to have skills that require improvement during residency. If constructive feedback is given, ensure the feedback you receive is specific and that you understand which behaviour or skill requires improvement. Do not be afraid to ask your preceptor for clarification. After feedback has been given, make a plan to work on the identified skills and schedule a time to reassess the skill at a later date.

Some residents might take feedback personally. Feedback is intended to facilitate development of specific skills, behaviour, and competencies. It is important to avoid becoming defensive, assigning blame elsewhere, or taking the feedback personally. If you believe that the feedback you received is not appropriate, talk with your faculty advisor, chief resident, or program director. 🍁

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Competing interests

None declared

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