**Giving and Receiving Feedback**

Giving and receiving feedback are essential skills for supervisors and they are also very important for enabling learning during our training programme.

**Giving feedback**

Hawkins and Shohet (2012, p160) offer five important elements for giving feedback effectively, which can be remembered by the acronym; CORBS.

**Clear statements** – giving clear and concise information.

**Owned** by the person speaking – your own perception, not the ultimate truth. What you heard, what you saw, how you felt. Use phrases such as “When you said …., I felt”, and not “You are”.

**Regular** – give immediately or as close to the event as possible and regularly, rather than only when something difficult has happened.

**Balanced** – balance feedback about areas of strength and areas for development.

**Specific** – base your feedback on observable behaviour, which the recipient can change.

I recommend getting into the habit of exchanging feedback about the session with your supervisees in every supervision session. The feedback you give can affirm your supervisee as well as suggest areas for development. Inviting feedback from your supervisee helps to balance the, often hidden, power dynamics in your relationship. What they say gives you valuable information about what works best for that individual at that stage of their development as a coach.

**Receiving feedback**

It can be hard to receive feedback as it can evoke archaic shame responses in us. If that happens it may help to remember that the feedback is the perception of the other person. It can be very illuminating to notice the repeating themes in the feedback we receive; they point us towards areas for development and of strength.

**Listen** – carefully to all the feedback being given without judging it, containing any impulse you may have to become defensive or explain your behaviour.

**Accept** – the feedback as that person’s experience of you. A simple “thank you” is often the best initial response.

**Clarify** – if the feedback is not clear to you, or does not meet the principles of CORBS, seek clarification.

**Request** – the feedback you are not given and would like to hear.

**Giving and receiving feedback in skills groups**

When giving feedback in the skills groups, whichever role you are in (supervisor, supervisee or observer), it is very important to focus on the process of the supervision that took place, rather than the content under discussion. This might include interventions made, flow and dynamics between supervisor and supervisee or your felt responses during the session.

Please use the following order and foci:

1. First the supervisor is invited to comment on their performance and view of the session.
2. Second the supervisee comments on their experience of what took place, preferably giving one piece of feedback about something they appreciated and another about something they did not find useful, using the principles of CORBS.
3. Then the observer(s) comments on what they observed and offers feedback to the supervisor about some aspects of their performance, balancing feedback about areas of strength and areas for development, using the principles of CORBS.

As the person receiving feedback it is good to write down what is said to you (or ask someone else to do this on your behalf). This helps you to check that you understand what is said and creates a record for later reflection.

As the supervisor do ask for what you would specifically like your observer(s) to watch/listen for and give you feedback about. In that way you can select the focus of the feedback you receive; you can direct your learning.

As the supervisee you may find it beneficial to reflect on your use of supervision in the skills sessions as this is also a skill to develop. However, the focus of your feedback in the skills groups should be on how you experienced being supervised.

As the observer be aware of the quality of the feedback you offer – if you were offered such feedback how would it help you to learn and develop as a supervisor?

Please work within the time limits of each part of the skills practice so that time is equally available to everyone involved.