



# The Arch to Assessment: Using Evaluation Tools to Build Staff Competency

Approximate time 1:30

## **Workshop for Supervisors**

# The Arch to Assessment

## Acknowledgments

### Project Team

Curriculum Development: Donna A. Dickson, Barry Keesan • Technical Publication Specialist: Amy R. Amish • Composition Specialist: Amy Shaver

### Management Team

CEO: Barry Keesan

President and COO: Donna Dickson

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WorkSmart Learning Systems Inc.  
PO Box 10248  
Rochester, NY 14610  
(585) 654-7420  
Fax (585) 442-8942  
[www.worksmartlearning.com](http://www.worksmartlearning.com)



- ? What is the VENA guidance initiative?
- ? Why is the National WIC Association focused on this initiative?
- ? In what way is it more than the “program of the month?”

Note: Briefly review this section.

- ? How does this differ from your daily management practices now?
- ? What changes may this require in the way you interact with your staff?

## BUILDING COMPETENCE

Research indicates that for employees to gain new levels of ability they must...

- Have clarity about what acceptable performance “looks like”
- Be given continual feedback on how their actions compare to expectations

### Supervisor’s role

The competencies associated with the VENA guidance initiative are behavioral and attitudinal in nature. During this workshop, you will translate these rather abstract and invisible competencies into concrete, observable employee actions in order to bring clarity to performance expectations.

In this workshop you will also learn how you can reinforce your expectations for performance related to the competencies.

After the workshop, you will be responsible for actively monitoring your employees to catch them in acts of outstanding performance, reducing barriers they encounter to adopting the competencies, and helping them improve areas where they are falling short of expectations.

## GAINING CLARITY

Note: Summarize this section and then work with the group to review the example.

? Is this action observable?  
Can you watch someone and know they are demonstrating this action?

Ans: Yes

? Is it concrete? Would two different people be likely to interpret "good listener" the same way?

Ans: No

How can we improve on this action?

- Listens without interrupting
- Maintains eye contact while listening
- Gives full attention while listening

Employees have learned how to...

- Build rapport
- Use critical thinking
- Develop positive client centered health outcomes during the nutritional assessment process

To ensure each staff member clearly understands what is expected in terms of each of these competencies, you will define concrete, observable actions for each competency.

Consider the competency, critical thinking. To define an action that is *observable*, ask yourself...

- How would I know if an employee were using critical thinking?
- What would the employee be doing?
- How would the employee be acting?

To be effective, you must define actions in *concrete* terms. This means that any two people would likely assess the employee action in the same way.

### Example

Competency: Rapport building

Action: Is a good listener



## OBSERVABLE AND CONCRETE

### Purpose

To identify observable, concrete actions for each of the competencies

### Instructions

1. Work with your group to identify at least two observable, concrete actions for the competency the facilitator assigns to you.
2. Use the examples in the Building Competency checklist that follows for ideas.
3. Write your work on the flip chart so you can to share it with the larger group.

Competency: \_\_\_\_\_

### Actions:

Note: Divide participants into three groups, assigning one of the competencies to each group.

Allow groups at least 20 minutes to work and then review each group's actions.

Encourage groups to evaluate each other's work by asking:

Can I see someone doing this?

Would two different people be likely to assess this the same way?

Make improvements as needed.

Discuss next steps with the group:

- Define at least five actions for each competency, by job role if necessary.
- Document them in the checklist that follows and distribute to supervisors and employees.

Note: Review the checklist and protocol.

Point out that they have a master checklist on a disc so they can customize the actions for each competency and each job role.

## **BUILDING COMPETENCY CHECKLIST**

The *Building Competency* checklist is a tool to help you monitor employee performance and provide effective feedback.

### **Using the checklist**

You will be responsible for observing each of your direct reports as they are interacting with clients and for documenting your observations using the checklist. Each of your direct reports should be evaluated on a regular basis.

After you complete the checklist, you will review it with employees using the following protocol...

1. Point out one action where they scored well (1 or 2), stressing the importance of continuing to do what they already do well.
  - If possible, share an example of what you observed and the positive outcomes of the employee's action.
2. Explain what you saw or heard for an action where they scored poorly (4 or 5) and asking what they'd like to do differently in similar situations in the future.
  - Be sure to let the employee do the problem solving and be open to learning about issues beyond the employee's control.
  - Document ideas for improvement on the checklist.
3. Review the rest of the actions, alternating between higher and lower scores.
4. Ask the employee how you can support her/him in continuing to build competency.
  - Express your confidence in her/his ability to succeed.
5. Provide a copy of the checklist to the employee and keep one for your files, so you can evaluate performance improvements over time.



***Building Competency Checklist***

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Ideas for improvement**

Rating	1 Excellent	2	3	4	5 Poor
Rapport Building Actions					
<i>Listened actively (did not interrupt, restated what was said, gave full attention)</i>					
Responded promptly and politely (smiled, greeted by name)					
Expressed empathy (I understand, I can imagine how you feel)					
Ensured privacy (kept voice low, closed door, moved to a private location)					
Demonstrated caring (was patient, used respectful language, offered help)					
Used open-ended questions					
Identified client's stage of change correctly.					

**Comments**



Rating	1 Excellent	2	3	4	5 Poor
Critical Thinking Actions					
<i>Accurately completes the WMC nutrition assessment (no missing data)</i>					
Accurately identifies nutritional issues (asks open ended questions, identifies missing information)					
Effectively prioritizes nutritional problems (conducts a thorough analysis, considers client's abilities and attitudes)					
Identifies the client's health priorities (asks open ended questions, does not lead the client)					

**Comments**

Rating	1 Excellent	2	3	4	5 Poor
Positive Client Centered Health Outcomes Actions					
<i>Collaborates with the client to agree on a health outcome goal (does not lead the client, uses the client's ideas and language)</i>					
Stresses client's healthy practices (gives genuine praise)					
Equip the client to be accountable (asks open ended questions, poses what-if situations)					
Provides useful, constructive feedback (avoids negative terms, uses respectful language, does not place blame)					
Provides appropriate suggestions to address nutritional issues (uses the client's own language and ideas, makes reasonable suggestions in terms of scope)					
Demonstrates an understanding of the client's view of nutrition when making recommendations (asks for validation, use paraphrasing and summarizing)					

**Comments**



**We earn the right to  
give feedback by  
first listening and  
understanding.**

—Robert Carkhuff

! In studies of interpersonal communication, many people rank giving constructive feedback as among the most uncomfortable communication tasks.

? Is this true for you? Why or why not?

## CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

In studies of interpersonal communication, many people rank giving constructive feedback as among the most uncomfortable communication tasks.

Most people agree that giving constructive feedback is one of their least favorite communication tasks.

Some reasons include...

- We anticipate strong, negative reactions
- We want to be liked, and feedback doesn't always endear us to others
- We have received hurtful or inappropriate feedback ourselves
- We don't know how to do it effectively

Yet, sharing constructive feedback can be one of the most effective ways to improve performance. It allows for trust to be established and improvements to take place.

Sharing feedback takes courage and involves some personal risk.

## CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

! We've all read or learned about keys to delivering feedback effectively.

? What are some hints or tips you've found especially valuable?

Adhering to certain conditions will help increase the likelihood that you communicate effectively, and will decrease the likelihood that defensiveness will be the result.

Your feedback should...

- Be descriptive rather than judgmental
- Be specific rather than general
- Be directed toward behavior that can be changed
- Be well timed
- Be checked for comprehension
- Promote self-discovery

### Model for positive feedback

It is important to deliver positive feedback in a way that sounds genuine. Praising someone for doing the bare minimum will not be well received.

1. Briefly state what you observed that was effective.
2. Describe the positive outcomes or the *potentially* positive outcomes of the action.
3. Thank the employee.

### Model for constructive feedback

To deliver constructive or corrective feedback in a way that supports learning, use the following model...

**When you...**

(describe the behavior/actions objectively and specifically)

**The result is...**

(describe the consequence or potential consequence)

**To summarize...**

(if appropriate, describe your expectations, stating the consequence if s/he does not modify her/his behavior)



! We agreed that for feedback to be effective, it must be stated objectively and made specific. This sounds simple, but it can be very challenging.

Note: Review the activity instructions.

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

Debrief:

Ask for volunteers to share their experience.

? Is behavior-related feedback more challenging to discuss than task-related? Why or why not?

? Why is it especially important to be objective when dealing with attitudes and behaviors?

? Is it more difficult for you to give praise or to provide constructive feedback? Why?

## DELIVERING FEEDBACK

### Purpose

To practice phrasing positive and constructive feedback in an effective manner

### Instructions

1. Read the scenarios that follow.
2. You and a partner will take turns playing the role of the manager and the employee for each scenario, switching roles so you each have practice delivering feedback.
  - Managers will provide positive feedback and then constructive feedback, using the models provided.
  - Employees will listen to the feedback and respond as realistically as possible. Then, employees will note the manager's effectiveness, using the Feedback Observation Form.

– Continued

**Scenario 1**

The employee you are observing effectively prioritized a client's nutrition problems even though there was a significant language barrier.

You heard the employees say to a client, "If you do not start following my advice, you are going to risk your baby's health."

**Scenario 2**

The employee you are observing frequently used empathic statements during the meeting with the client. You noticed that the client seemed to become more relaxed and open over time.

The nutrition plan the employee suggested did not match well with what you believed were the greatest client health risks.

*– Continued*



**Feedback Observation Form**

Did your partner...	Yes	No	Comments
Briefly state what s/he observed that was effective.			
Describe the positive outcomes or potentially positive outcomes of the action.			
Thank you.			
Describe the undesirable behavior/actions objectively and specifically			
Describe the consequence or potential consequence			
Describe his/her expectations, stating the consequence if you do not modify your behavior			

