

Unit 205: Professional workplace standards

Activity 4: Find the ball feedback exercise (Tutor)

Objective:

To experience different feedback styles and get a feel for the effects that they have upon the receiver.

Time frame: 60 minutes

Props: One golf ball

Instructions:

1. Ask for 4 volunteers from the group. Copy their names onto a flipchart or whiteboard, then inform them that they will be called back into the room one at a time to search for a golf ball. Ask them to leave the room.
2. Coach the remaining participants about the process and their roles at each stage:
 - a) **Silent feedback:** When volunteer #1 enters the room, the participants are to remain completely silent and motionless.
 - b) **Negative feedback:** When volunteer #2 enters the room, all participants should give negative feedback, no matter how close or far away the searcher is from the ball. Be sensitive to your group, but instruct them to give the kind of negative feedback that they might hear back in the workplace when someone is dissatisfied with their performance (and with certain audiences – wringing hands, for example). Participants should NOT respond to any requests for direction or assistance.
 - c) **Positive feedback:** When volunteer #3 enters the room, all participants should give positive but non-specific feedback, no matter how close or far away the searcher is from the ball. Participants should NOT respond to any requests for direction or assistance (except with further exclamations of “you can do it” or “we have faith in you”).
 - d) **Specific feedback:** When volunteer #4 enters the room, participants should provide specific hints and suggestions for finding the ball, without giving it away. They should respond to yes/no questions.
3. Ask the group to help you choose which of the volunteers will receive the different types of feedback. Note that some individuals get upset with the negative feedback, even though it is a simulation. Ask your group which of the volunteers would have the least difficulty with the ribbing involved.
4. Hide the golf ball. Invite the participants in one at a time. Each volunteer receives the prescribed feedback noted above.
 - a) **Silent:** Hide the golf ball in a not-too-difficult location within the room. Allow 2–3 minutes for the search.

- b) **Negative:** Choose a more difficult spot. Allow 2–3 minutes for the search.
- c) **Positive but general:** Choose a more difficult spot. Allow 2–3 minutes for the search.
- d) **Specific:** Choose a more difficult spot. Allow 2–3 minutes for the search.

5. Debrief: Ask the volunteers, one person at a time, in the order in which they came into the room:

- How did you feel while looking for the ball?
- What did you think/feel as a result of the feedback you received?
- How did the feedback you received affect your performance?
- What did the feedback you received prompt you to think/feel about the other people in the room who were giving it?
- If this was the type of feedback that you received every day, how do you think it would impact your desire and/or ability to keep yourself and your teammates safe?