

Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

Constructive Criticism

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We need to be free, willing and able to learn by making mistakes and constructive criticism needs to offer motivation, inspiration and encouragement. Persistent destructive criticism can damage self-confidence and self-worth. It's all about how we give feedback to others and how others provide feedback to us.

Top Tips

Giving Feedback

Feedback sandwich. First give some positive context or praise, then highlight the issue that needs improvement, finish with a compliment or something positive.

Keep it brief. Refer to a minimal number of criticism points. A long list will sound like you're bombarding them.

Specific. Be clear about what specific point you are making; otherwise it might get lost in your waffling.

Behaviours. Focus on a specific behaviour that has been observed rather than giving a personal opinion. It's not personal and so shouldn't be made to feel as such.

Don't assume. It can feel personal if you make wrong assumptions about the person you're criticizing, e.g. if someone's late handing in an assignment, don't assume they're lazy or couldn't be bothered. They may have a good reason.

Time and place. No one likes being embarrassed in front of others, so be mindful about appropriate privacy and timing.

Own it. It helps to contextualize criticism within your own experiences, so try something like, "This is something I always got wrong but then I learned ..." so you can normalize the issue.

Open & honest. Being transparent helps to maintain trust, integrity and honesty.

Facts. Keep to the facts and limit emotions. People hear facts but can get caught up and confused if a message is layered with your own emotion, anxiety or stress.

Options. If you're giving criticism, offer some ideas or options that the person can take to remedy the situation; otherwise they may remain stuck with what to do next.

Be positive. Often, appropriate criticism can be miscommunicated if you deliver it negatively. Stay positive and model how the criticism is a "positive learning opportunity".

Follow up. If you've given criticism, be available to support the actions that you recommend to remedy the situation.

Receiving Feedback

Poor skills. The person giving you feedback might be inexperienced at knowing how to give constructive feedback. Show them this leaflet! Appreciate that this is a skill they may not possess.

Not personal. Much of what you hear can be negatively selective if you're anxious and mistrustful.

Learning. Embrace constructive criticism as a learning opportunity even if it hurts.

Clarification. Sometimes we react negatively to criticism because we don't understand it. Ask for clarification. You also don't have to accept feedback from others which you believe to be incorrect or inappropriate!

Resources

MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



Opening Hours: Online

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



Opening Hours: Online

www.livinglifetothefull.com

NO PANIC

Supports sufferers of panic attacks, phobias & other anxiety disorders, including tranquilliser withdrawal.



Youth Tel: 0330 606 1174 (landline rates apply) **Opening Hours:** 15.00-18.00 Mon-Fri

Adult Tel: 0844 967 4848 (landline rates apply) **Opening Hours:** 10.00-22.00 daily

www.nopanic.org.uk

MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



Opening Hours: Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

ANXIETY UK

Information and support for anxiety sufferers



Opening Hours: Online

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support

BIG WHITE WALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



Opening Hours: Online

www.bigwhitewall.com

If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling