Guidelines for Constructive Feedback

• Acknowledge the need for feedback – this should be part of team member’s behavior and the organization’s culture.
• Give both positive and constructive feedback, i.e., feedback that helps an individual improve.
• Understand the context – where it happened, why it happened, what led up to the event; before you give feedback, review the actions and decision that led up to the moment.
• Know when to give feedback – do not give feedback when it is about something that the person has no power to change, the person has low self-esteem, purpose is not improvement, but to put someone on the spot or to demonstrate how smart or how much more responsible you are; the time, place or circumstances are inappropriate (in the presence of outsiders).

• Know how to give feedback
  • Be descriptive.
  • Do not use labels.
  • Do not exaggerate or pass judgment.
  • Speak in terms of yourself, especially when describing areas of improvement.
  • Restrict your feedback to things you know for certain.
  • Help people hear and accept your compliments when giving positive feedback.

• Know how to receive feedback
  • Breathe.
  • Listen carefully.
  • Ask questions for clarity.
  • Acknowledge the feedback.
  • Acknowledge valid points.
  • Take time to sort out what you heard.