



Oregon WIC Listens

Conducting Observations

Getting started:

Here's what to do:

1. Before the participant is seen, establish rapport with the person you will be observing -help them to feel comfortable being observed.
2. Make sure you have time for discussion afterwards.
3. Explain the purpose of the observation
4. Set agenda with the person you will be observing
 - o What are you working on?
 - o What would you like me to listen for?
5. Reinforce confidentiality

Tips for the observer:

- ☞ Make sure they know you are there to get ideas, not to evaluate their performance. Tell them the notes you are taking are for your own use, so you can remember what happened only.
- ☞ Choose a seat out of the way, preferably where you can see both parties.

While observing:

Here's what to do:

1. Watch for the participant centered skills staff are using.
2. Write quotes of what you hear the staff person or the participant say
3. Write your affirmations for the staff person to share after the participant has left.

Tips for the observer:

- ☞ Use the Observation Guide to take notes during the observation
- ☞ Create and maintain a safe and supportive environment

Providing positive feedback:

Here's what to do:

1. Ask permission
 - Once observation is complete, ask permission to share observations/suggestions, e.g. "Would you like to hear my feedback?"
2. Ask what they think
 - Allow staff to identify the areas they want to make changes. (Remember: People are generally better persuaded by what they themselves say than by what others say to them.)
 - The questions you use should be authentic and reflect your own conversational style.
 - Additional questions can be aimed at guiding the staff person to look at the effect of their actions on the participant. For example, "What did you observe about the reactions of the participants?"

Here are some ways to open the conversation:

- 🗣️ How do you feel the appointment/visit went?
- 🗣️ What do you think went well?
- 🗣️ What might you do differently next time?
- 🗣️ What are you working on or what help do you want in the future?
- 🗣️ Here are some examples of things I heard you say.....

3. Affirm

- Find something to affirm everyone on:
 - "I appreciate you letting me observe you."*
 - "You really got the conversation off to a good start."*
 - "You did a nice job handling those kids."*
- Use as an opportunity to affirm skills staff are already using
- Keep it focused on what went well. This is a great opportunity to affirm staff efforts and skills that they are already using. If they don't come up with anything positive when asked how it went, point out what you observed that went well.

4. Provide positive feedback

- Be clear, succinct, and specific: *"Specifically, I noticed..."*
- Avoid feedback overload
- Focus on behaviors rather than personality
 - Let go of assumptions and judgments.
 - Share what you see without blame or judgment!
- Use collaborative language
 - "Have you considered...?"* *"I'm curious..."*
 - "I wonder whether..."* *"I've noticed that sometimes..."*
 - "Some staff have found _____ helpful. Others have tried _____."*

• Avoid restrictive language

"you should" *"don't"* *"you need to"* *"you have to"*
"always" *"never"* *"you must"*

- Balance the feedback
 - Offer positive feedback (identify strengths) in addition to eliciting and suggesting ideas for improvement! End on a positive note!
 - The criticism sandwich (criticism is sandwiched by positive statements)
- Encourage self-reflection
 - “What do you think about my observations?”*
 - “What, if anything, do you see yourself doing differently because of my feedback?”*
 - “What else would you like to add?”*

Tips for the observer:

- 👤 You will want to vary the words as appropriate and use consistent neutral nonverbal communication.
- 👤 The point is to make the questions a genuine inquiry that is not aimed at judgment but is focused on self-development.
- 👤 If the WIC staff person asks you how they did, ask them how they felt it went or reflect any concerns.
- 👤 If the WIC staff person expresses concern about trying something, try brainstorming with them reasons why it might be useful to them.

Finishing up:

Here’s what to do:

1. Thank staff for their willingness to be observed and receive feedback.
2. Summarize feedback and learnings
3. Express confidence in their abilities
4. Assess future needs: *“What kind of support could you use in the future? How can I help?”*
5. Arrange follow-up, if appropriate

Tips for the observer:

- 👤 Primary outcome – Do no harm! Leave them feeling good about having someone to observe them again.

Examples of Feedback Questions

Simple Feedback:

Step 1: Present positive feedback

"Specifically, you did an excellent job..."

Step 2: Present observations and recommendations

"I noticed...next time you might try..."

Step 3: Encourage reflection

"Anything else you want to add?"

"What do you think about my observations?"

Split Feedback:

Step 1: Ask positive perception of the counselor.

"What went well?"

"What did you like about...?"

Step 2: Agree, summarize, and add.

"I agree with _____, and you did a good job with..."

Step 3: Ask the staff person what could be done differently next time.

"As you think about how it went, what might you do differently next time?"

"If you could go back and do it all over again, what would you change?"

Step 4: Agree, summarize, and add.

"Great insight (I agree with _____). I'd also like to suggest that you..."

Step 5: Encourage reflection

"What do you think about my observations/recommendations?"

"Anything else you want to add?"

Scaling Feedback

1. Overall rating of the interaction

"On a scale of 0-10, how do you think this interaction with the participant went, overall?"

2. Client success rating

"On a scale of 0-10, what are the chances that this participant will succeed, change, adhere?"

3. Peer-to-peer rating

"On a scale of 0-10, how would other certifiers would rate this interaction with the participant?"

4. Observer rating

"On a scale of 0-10, how do you think I would rate this interaction with the participant?"