

A Quick Guide to Preceptoring Nursing Students

Feedback is Helpful If:

- it is given as information or ideas and not a demand for change
- the behaviour is described and not judged
- the receiver is open
- it is specific rather than general
- it is immediate
- it is appropriate to the needs of the situation
- alternatives are explored
- both positive and critical feedback is provided

Feedback is an essential method of assisting students to improve their nursing practice and further develop their skills and abilities. Students must be able to self-evaluate and reflect on their practice so they should take the lead in debriefing by asking pertinent questions and identifying their knowledge and skills and then request your comments and suggestions. Be generous with your praise; telling students what they have done well will provide motivation to try harder and learn more. Praise specific performance and make the praise sincere.

Critical Thinking:

You are trying to help the students think like RNs so whenever possible and reasonable, avoid telling a student what to do or provide direct answers to their questions; instead, offer comments and questions to help stimulate the student's critical thinking. Students will learn more if they share their thinking about patient issues and decisions. However, there are times when a situation demands you give a student the answer, so do so.

Red Flags to Help Identify Students who are Having Difficulty:

- ongoing performance anxiety
- lack of insight into abilities and unable to self-evaluate
- lack of critical thinking about patient care
- lack of preparation
- disorganized, defensive behaviours
- dishonesty and not taking responsibility for own behaviour
- inappropriate behaviour towards staff or patients (rudeness, aggression)
- lack of engagement (non-verbal cues, not initiating discussions, low profile)
- repeatedly asking similar questions
- lack of assertiveness

These are just a few indicators of a student having difficulty. If you notice any of these or any other behaviour that concerns you, please notify the BCIT instructor immediately. Also refer to the BSN Guide for Preceptors for more detailed information on student progress.