

[HANDOUT 12] Types of feedback

Depending on the nature of the content, we can say there are at least 8 types of feedback:

1. Questions: Requests from people for information, or an explanation, or perhaps a justification. Questions require at least a response, perhaps a discussion and ideally a resolution.

2. Suggestions: Ideas or proposals from the community. Suggestions are often about how to tackle issues or what an agency could do better or differently.

3. Concerns: Matters that a person considers to be of interest or importance, and that may cause worry or anxiety.

4. Appreciation: Expressions of recognition and/or gratitude, for example of the importance or quality of something an organisation has done for someone, or for a community.

5. Complaints about a programme: This is feedback that expresses dissatisfaction about some aspect of a programme. It might be about the scope or quality, or perhaps the methodologies used. The failings expressed may be perceived or real.

6. Complaints about staff behaviour (i.e. 'sensitive feedback'): Expressions of dissatisfaction - even accusations of misconduct - can also be directed towards staff, volunteers, suppliers or partners. The reported behaviour may include, to name a few possibilities:

- **Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** (e.g. aid workers asking for sexual favours in exchange for aid; buying sexual services or engaging in other exploitative sexual behaviour).
- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** (this combines two things, often overlapping: sexual violence – for example sexual assault or rape – and gender-based violence, defined by the IASC as “umbrella term for any harmful act... perpetrated against a person’s will ... based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females).
- **Corruption** (e.g. a person asking for a bribe – often, but not always money – in return for giving somebody access to a service or aid)
- **Extortion** (e.g. a person gaining some benefit – again, often money but possibly other benefit such as being awarded a contract or being given a job – through force or threats).
- **Fraud** (i.e. when a person deliberately misleads someone for financial or personal gain).
- **Physical or verbal abuse.**
- **Favouritism** (i.e. giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another).
- **Nepotism** (i.e. a person in power giving jobs to relatives or friends on the basis of their relationship, and not on the basis of their demonstrated suitability for the job).
- Any other issues of **serious misconduct** that may breach the organisation’s code of conduct.

Sensitive feedback normally has special procedures to it can be dealt with as soon as possible, and with the necessary attention to:

- Ensuring victims receive the restitution and support that is their right.
- Protecting the informant or victim (they may not be the same person) from risks of retribution.
- Ensuring that any investigation is fair and also respects “due process” rights of the accused.

7. Threats: Actions or expressions suggesting that a person might harm a person (perhaps an organisation's staff, volunteers or supplier – sometimes it is even a threat of self-harm) or property (e.g. a threat to burn down a clinic or a supply store). Threats often come in the form of ultimatums: "If you don't do (this thing that I want), I will impose this harm ..."

8. Rumours: Information or stories of uncertain or doubtful truth and questionable accuracy that may cause people to be *misinformed*. Rumours are important pieces of information because they can offer an insight into some of the fears, myths, hopes and concerns of a community that can be harmful to people's health and health structures and the reputation and trust in a service provider. Rumours are similar to physical pain – they are often uncomfortable but they can be useful because they tell us that something might not be right.

When false information is deliberately spread by – for example, starting and spreading rumours in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth – that's called 'disinformation'.

Source: Adapted from IFRC (2020), WHO (2018), Mercy Corps (2017), CRS (2013).