

Psychiatry Coding & Reimbursement Alert

Human Resources: Get Set For Better Performance Appraisals With These 11 Pointers

Focused feedback is the key to improvement of employees.

Every practice uses performance appraisals of their employees to help determine the efficiency of their employees and to help them improve their approach to work-related tasks and goals. It is imperative to plan out performance appraisals, so it will benefit your psychiatry practice and aid your employees to perform better.

Regardless of whether you perform annual, end-of-year employee reviews or performance-generated reviews, if your appraisals don't provide useful feedback, they are pointless. Review this list of the dos and don'ts of giving successful performance reviews from **Anna Johnson**, author of *How To Manage People*, to ensure your practice offers solid employee feedback.

1. Don't wait until the performance review to give your employee feedback. You need to give him feedback about his performance consistently and regularly. If you wait until his performance review, you're denying him the chance to make changes and improve before his appraisal. Also, feedback is more effective if it is more proximate to the event(s) to which it relates.

2. Do let your employees know when they've been performing poorly or when they've done a great job, and specifically tell them what they need to change or did well.

For example, telling an employee that he isn't meeting your expectations is too vague. Instead, tell him that you'd like to see him meet his productivity goals by completing tasks on time.

3. Don't focus on the most recent performances during the review. This might be hard to do, especially if your worker recently made a big mistake on some duties, but it ignores the big picture of how your employee has been performing over the course of the entire performance period.

If your performance reviews are yearly or semi-annually, focusing on the most recent event is unfair to your employee and can lead to an inaccurate assessment. That mistake might have been the only one she's made all year, so you don't want to use that as the focal point of the review.

4. Do take notes of your employee's performance during the year, so when it's time for her performance review, you have a set of documented examples to guide you. You can set up a folder for each of your employees and store your notes for easy retrieval when review time comes.

5. Don't be too positive during the review just because you don't like to give negative feedback. You're hurting your employees by not telling them what they need to improve or change. Even the best employees have room for improvement or development and can use a little constructive criticism.

6. Do think of what impression you want the employee to have after his review. For example, if you want him to feel like he's doing okay but could improve his performance, plan your comments accordingly, and your review will have the impact you want it to have.

7. Don't focus on being too critical of your worker. If all you have to say are negative points about your worker's performance, she will either tune you out completely or start looking for a new job. Merely listing all of her negative qualities won't help either one of you. If you want her to know that if she doesn't change you'll have to let her go, say so.

8. Don't rely on continuously telling him he's doing a bad job. He might just assume you're having a bad day. Give him the consequences, and he'll understand you clearly.

9. Do provide constructive criticism about your employee's performance and give advice about how she can improve.

For example, instead of saying that an employee is working too slowly, tell her that you've noticed that she's been behind in her work lately and offer some possible solutions to help her correct the problem.

10. Don't do all the talking. A performance review isn't your chance to give a speech to your worker while he silently listens to you. It's an interaction between the two of you about his performance.

11. Do listen to what your employee has to say.

For example, if the employee is always behind on jobs, let him explain why. He might have a physical problem, such as arthritis, that you didn't know about. Ask your employee to share his goals with you, and work together to see how you can help him meet his goals and those of the practice in the process.