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The Core Principles of Constituent Feedback

FEEDBACK

The feedback community believes that, done right, listening and responding to feedback can be a strong force for increased equity in the world and getting better results for people. So why is feedback essential for social interventions and what does it mean to 'do feedback right?' The Feedback Principles below, created by the feedback community, address these questions. Organizations seeking to adopt and/or improve their feedback practice can use these Principles as a guide to foster effective, equitable, safe listening.

It is our hope at Feedback Labs that the larger community committed to transforming lives through feedback - nonprofits, funders, government and other stakeholders - will seek to enhance the Principles over time as the power of this work continues to proliferate. Please give us your input by emailing principles@feedbacklabs.org!

The Why of Constituent Feedback

1. It supports human agency.

People are the experts in their own lives but they are rarely treated as experts. Feedback practice recognizes the agency that people possess and provides a way to express it.

2. It cultivates power in people.

Funders and providers who systematically listen and respond to feedback cultivate power in the people they seek to serve.

3. It enhances learning and effectiveness.

Listening to and acting on feedback as part of the normal course of operations creates a culture of responsiveness and learning that make interventions more adaptive and effective.

The How of Constituent Feedback

4. It's conversational.

Gather feedback from deliberate, compassionate and safe conversations *with* people, not from data *about* them.

5. It's inclusive and insight driven.

Share and interpret feedback in a timely manner with people receiving services in order to generate mutual understanding, insights, and solutions.

6. It's responsive and continuous.

Act on feedback to improve the experiences of people receiving services. Measure improvement by continuously asking for more feedback.

7. It's reported externally.

Report feedback data to other relevant stakeholders, not just feedback providers, to model transparency and foster collective learning.

8. It's free of harm.

Gather and use feedback in ways that does not harm those who offer their perspectives (e.g., physically, emotionally, economically, or in any other way).

A quick word on how the principles were developed.

At the 2017 Feedback Summit, a working group was formed consisting of the major nonprofit infrastructure platforms and other key actors - Guidestar (now Candid.), GlobalGiving, Charity Navigator, Keystone Accountability, Acumen Lean Data, Bridges Fund Management, Development Gateway, Listen for Good, Out Sell Inc, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and later the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The purpose of the working group is to leverage the collective of influence of these organizations to incentivize the use of feedback in the social sector. Over the last 18 months this group, also known as the "Irritants" for change, has continued to collaborate with the help of Feedback Labs staff. At the 2018 Feedback Summit the group unveiled Version 0.9 of the core principles of constituent feedback. Input was received from Summit attendees and then the draft principles were posted on Feedback Labs website for several months for public comment.

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