Effective Patient Communication

Module 2: Sharing Bad News

Module development supported by a grant from the Picker Institute / Gold Foundation 2010 Challenge Grant
Learning Objectives

- Define bad news
- Demonstrate use of the SPIKES model when sharing bad news with the patient
- During the patient encounter, attend to the major emotional components of sharing bad news, especially expressions of fear, anger, sadness, denial, and guilt
Expected Outcomes

- Recognize challenges and supports to effectively sharing bad news with the patient & family
- Demonstrate the SPIKES model communication strategy when sharing bad news with the patient & family
- Demonstrate empathy when sharing bad news with the patient
The Task of Breaking Bad News

“If we do it badly, the patients or family members may never forgive us; if we do it well, they may never forget us.” (Buckman, 1992)
What is Bad News?

Information that negatively alters the patient’s view of the future

(Buckman, 1992)
Challenges

- Lack of:
  - Guidelines
  - Training
  - Experience
  - Good role models

- Concerns of:
  - The provider
  - The patient & family

(Siegmund, 2008)
Supporting Patient & Provider

- Patient & Family are supported by:
  - Being included in conversations & planning
  - Being treated as care partners

- Provider is supported by:
  - Training & Practicing good communication skills
  - Learning ways to effectively cope with emotionally charged issues
  - Having another person available who knows the patient
SPIKES Model: The Six Steps

- Setting
- Perception
- Invitation
- Knowledge
- Emotions
- Strategy & Summary

Setting the Environment

- Provide privacy
- Introduce self
- Determine who else should be present
- Ensure no interruptions
- Provide comfortable space
- Create welcoming environment
Perception

- Prepare before speaking
- Ask about patient’s perception of what is going on

(Renoir/ Bjoertvedt, 2010)
Invitation

- Ask questions to invite the patient into conversation
- Ask how much information the patient wants to hear

(Pissarro, 1881)
Knowledge

- Deliver the message
  - Use plain language
  - Be mindful of body language
  - Get to the point
  - Give information in small chunks
  - Pause
  - Wait for reaction
- Use “teach back” to verify that message was received
Emotions and Empathy

- Be prepared for patient’s and family’s emotional response
- Anticipate fear, anger, sadness, denial, guilt
- Be mindful of your own response
- Comfort the patient
Strategy and Summary

- Assess patient’s readiness for planning
  - Negotiate next steps
  - Verify support structure
  - Acknowledge & answer questions

- Summarize plan
  - Use “teach back” technique
  - Follow-up
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Discussion of the Video

- How well did the doctor handle the situation?
  - What worked well?
  - What could have been handled better?
- Have you experienced a scene like the one shown?
  - What was your role?
  - Describe the encounter
What’s Next?

- Expectations
- Reminders

(Mahmud, 2008)
Special Thanks

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The DHMC Patient and Family Centered Care Department, and Chaplaincy
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