

BREAKING BAD NEWS WITH SPIKES

Set up	<p>Think about what you want to say in advance You may wish to suggest to the patient they are accompanied by a friend or relative Choose a time and place which will allow for privacy and quiet considered discussion. Establish a rapport with the patient and maintain eye contact Allow enough time for the patient and/or their relative to express their emotions and ask questions</p>
Perception	<p>Use open-ended questions to determine the patient's understanding of their condition. This will help you tailor the way you deliver the information and where you begin. Check that the patient is able and willing to hear what you say. They may give you an opening to start the discussion or they may try to avoid hearing what you are saying</p>
Invitation	<p>Most patients will indicate that they want full information, but some may shun information as a coping mechanism If patients do not want to hear details you can offer to answer any question in the future or speak to their families or friend Use language appropriate to the patient's level of understanding. It can help to reflect the patient's words and body language Avoid unnecessary jargon and euphemisms, which could impair the patient's comprehension Be sensitive to how the patient is reacting and provide information at an appropriate pace</p>
Knowledge	<p>Warning the patient that you have bad news may reduce the shock of disclosure Give the patient and their friend/relative enough time and space to absorb the information and ask questions If there is any doubt about the prognosis, explain this and the options for clarifying uncertainty Give the patient information regarding the next steps, such as follow-up appointments. If this is not possible, offer them a realistic timescale of events and reviews Reassure the patient of ongoing support. This will help them feel less isolated</p>
Empathy	<p>Don't make assumptions about what the patient might be feeling. Encourage them to express their concerns and respect their wishes about how much information they are prepared to hear Observe and validate the patient's emotions and give them enough time and space to express their reactions Remember that all patients are different</p>
Strategy & Summary	<p>Make sure the patient has understood by asking them to briefly summarise the main points of the conversation. Encourage them to express their concerns Provide reading material for the patient to absorb when they are ready</p>