Queen’s University Regional Palliative Care Rounds
October 17, 2014

Dr. Ray Viola

Breaking Bad News
Session Objectives

1. Describe models for communicating bad news
2. Identify situations when bad news is provided
3. Provide input into design of learning session for breaking bad news
Breaking Bad News

• How have we learned to communicate bad news effectively and compassionately?

• How should we teach communication of bad news?
Breaking Bad News Badly

• Can learners learn from viewing this?
• Are bad examples bad for preclinical undergraduate med students?
  – Other learners?
Reason for This Topic

Difficult Conversations

3-hour Clinical Skills session in 2nd half of 2nd year Queen’s Medical School
– Focus on breaking bad news
– On-line learning module
– 10 students and 2-3 tutors per session
  • Pre-clinical students
– Standardized patients (SPs) – 4 role plays
Reason for This Topic

• Reviewing learning tools for the session
  – On-line module
  – Videos for self-learning
  – Videos for group sessions
  – Role plays

• Application to other learners
  – Residents
  – Other Health care professionals
Difficult Conversations: Objectives

Students will:

• Develop a structure for approaching a clinical interview involving a difficult conversation that includes breaking bad news
• Practice using the SAD NEWS model when breaking bad news
• Demonstrate effective interviewing and communication skills
• Describe application of this model to other clinical situations
SAD NEWS Model

- **Set Up and Sit down**
- **Ask, don’t tell**
- **Deliver the news**

- **No** fancy lingo
- **Expect, permit and respond to** Emotion
- **Wait**
- **Support and Summarize**
Breaking SAD NEWS Learning Module

Web-based module developed by Adam Szulewski based on content by Dr. Linda O'Connor and Dr. Bob McGraw

Queen's University Clinical Skills Program
Breaking SAD NEWS
Learning Module

Introduction

• Recall the last time you received bad news
• What was helpful for you?
• What could the bearer of bad news have done to make it easier for you?
Breaking SAD NEWS Learning Module

The SAD NEWS model

– Developed based on SPIKES model
– Emphasizes that after bad news has been delivered
  • anticipate the emotional response
  • wait for the patient to signal that he/she is ready to move on
Breaking SAD NEWS
Learning Module

S - Set up and Sit down

• Prepare for the task
  – Think about what you are going to say and the steps you will use

• Find out who is in the room with the patient
  – Does the patient want someone present

• Select a quiet and private space
  – Important to sit down
A - Ask, don't tell
• Ascertain what the patient knows about the situation
  – Gives insight into how the patient may react
• Gives you a starting point to begin your explanation and to offer support
Breaking SAD NEWS
Learning Module

D - Deliver the news

• Eventually you have to deliver the bad news
• Preface with a warning statement
  – “I am afraid that I have some bad news to share with you”
  – “I’m sorry, but …”
  – “I wish that I had better news to tell you”
Breaking SAD NEWS Learning Module

N - No fancy lingo

- Use straightforward language
  - State that the patient has died, rather than “passed on”
  - Use cancer instead of “growth”, “tumor” or "malignancy"
E - Expect, permit and respond to Emotion

- Anticipate a range of emotions
  - Emotion should be supported and validated
- Let the patient express emotion without interruption
- Offer a tissue or personal contact (touching arm or holding hand) when appropriate
Breaking SAD NEWS
Learning Module

W - Wait

• Important to pause after disclosing the news
  – Tempting to continue talking right after
  – Silence and emotion are uncomfortable

• Patient may not hear anything else you say

• Wait for a cue that the patient is ready
  – A question or eye contact
Breaking SAD NEWS
Learning Module

S - Support and Summarize
• Answer questions and offer clarification
• Give information in chunks
• Check that the patient understands
• Summarize next steps
2nd Year Meds Clinical Skills
Difficult Conversations

• In this session, you will practice breaking bad news in scenarios with Standardized Patients
• 1:30 – 2:15 Introductory Plenary
  – View video interview by Dr. Robert Buckman
• 2:15 – 3:00 Practice with SPs (2 roles)
  – Feedback by SPs, peer assessors & tutors
• 3:00 – 3:20 Debrief
• 3:20 – 4:00 Practice with SPs (2 roles)
• 4:00 – 4:30 Discussion and summary
  – View video interview by Dr. Buckman
Difficult Conversations

• Clinical videos (Dr. Buckman)
  – Sudden death of spouse in ER
  – No further anti-neoplastic treatments

• Clinical roles by SPs
  – New born genetic disease diagnosis
  – Spouse’s permanent disability after stroke
  – Cancer recurrence
Other Communication Models for Breaking Bad News
SPIKES

• S: Setting and Starting
• P: Perception
• I: Invitation
• K: Knowledge
• E: Emotions
• S: Strategy and Summary

Dr. Robert Buckman

Buckman R. 2010.
ABCDE

- A: Advance preparation
- B: Build therapeutic environment-relationship
- C: Communicate well
- D: Deal with patient and family reactions
- E: Encourage and validate emotions

SHARE

- **S**: Setting up a supportive environment
- **H**: How to deliver the bad news
- **A**: Additional information that patient would like to know
- **RE**: REassurance & addressing emotions with empathic response

PREPARED

• P: Prepare
• R: Relate
• E: Elicit patient and caregiver preferences
• P: Provide info
• A: Acknowledge emotions and concerns
• R: Realistic Hope
• E: Encourage questions
• D: Document in the chart

National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia
## Comparing Five Models

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Breaking Bad News Better

• Show buildup of proper approach with series of videos, each demonstrating improvement in one aspect?
  – Build into an interactive on-line module?
• A ‘perfect’ demonstration video could be prepared with practice?
• But, are non-rehearsed, ‘good-enough’ videos better
  – inherent short-comings demonstrate challenges posed by these interviews?
Teaching Breaking Bad News

• Is preclinical an appropriate time to introduce this?
  – Wait until clinical years begin to get experience first?
• Avoid emotions when first learning model?
Medical Bad News Scenarios

- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- Survival
- Disability
- Treatments
- Complication
- Limitations
  - Driving
- Error
- Death
Other Health Care Professionals

Bad News Scenarios

– Nurses
– Dietitians
– Social Workers
– Spiritual Care
– Physiotherapists
– Occupational Therapists
– Pharmacists

What training do you get for breaking bad news?
Summary – Breaking Bad News

• Several models exist to aid communication
  – All provide similar steps
• Best combination of learning tools?
• Approaches for different learners?
References